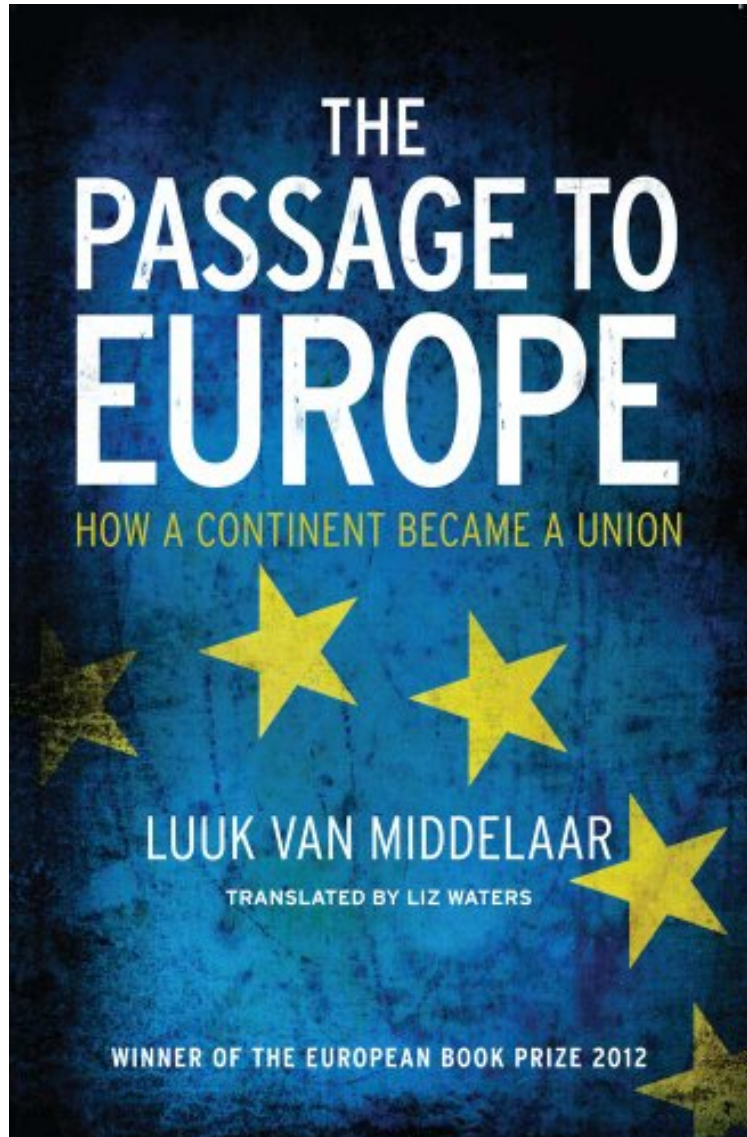


[Mobile ebook] The Passage to Europe: How a Continent Became a Union

## The Passage to Europe: How a Continent Became a Union

*Luuk van Middelaar*

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**Luuk van Middelaar : The Passage to Europe: How a Continent Became a Union** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Passage to Europe: How a Continent Became a Union:

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The untold story of the crises and compromises that united a continent As financial turmoil in Europe preoccupies political leaders and global markets, it becomes more important than ever to understand the forces that underpin the European Union, hold it together and drive it forward. This timely book provides a gripping account of the realities of power politics among European states and between their leaders. Drawing on long experience working behind the scenes, Luuk van Middelaar captures the dynamics and tensions shaping the European Union from its origins until today. It is a story of unexpected events and twists of fate, bold vision and sheer necessity, told from the perspective of the keyplayers from de Gaulle to Havel, Thatcher to Merkel. Van Middelaar cuts through the institutional complexity by exploring the unforeseen outcomes of decisive moments and focusing on the quest for public legitimacy. As a first-hand witness to the day-to-day actions and decisions of Europe's leaders, the author provides a vivid narrative of the crises and compromises that united a continent. By revisiting the past, he sheds fresh light on the present state of European unification and offers insights into what the future may hold.

From Publishers Weekly This supremely erudite account of Europe's transformation by van Middelaar (Politicide), a Dutch philosopher and advisor to the European Council president, demonstrates that integration "failed to put an end to power politics between member states," with continual crises testing the legitimacy of the union since the 1950s. Charles de Gaulle's instinctive realpolitik made him fiercely protective of French sovereignty, leading to a constitutional crisis in 1966. Other quandaries-whether a European Army was desirable and practicable to face the Soviet Union, or how best to navigate German reunification after 1989-make the author pose an apt question: "Is Europe real, or does it exist only on paper?" Otherwise brilliant, the book suffers from the philosopher's instinct toward the abstract over the concrete. Van Middelaar writes awkwardly of the continent's citizens as an amorphous mass, referring to the creation of a "new European public that speaks in unison." When chances do arise to explore public opinion as the product of flesh-and-blood humans-a challenge to the Maastricht Treaty in the German Constitutional Court being a salient opportunity-van Middelaar retreats into political theory. Nevertheless, his encyclopedic knowledge of and intimacy with European affairs will make even a specialist blush with envy. "A discerning, balanced, gracefully written book, flavoured with the insights of political science but filled with the meat of European Union history over six decades." Tony Barber, Financial Times