



THE PASSAGE TO EUROPE

How a Continent Became a Union

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Pub Date: July 30th, 2013

ISBN: 978-0-300-18112-8

Publisher: Yale Univ.

Authoritative historical overview of the European Union by a policy adviser and speechwriter for the current president of the European Council.

Originally published overseas in 2012, this volume won several awards, including the European Book Prize, for its unique approach and relevance for understanding current developments. Dutch political philosopher van Middelaar offers an erudite

alternative to the persistent drumbeat about the coming, market-driven disintegration of the European Union. He provides a clear account of the origin of the EU, the political and philosophical issues and conflicts that shaped its evolution, and the turning points in its development. The author develops his views while assessing all three elements in the EU's political and institutional infrastructure: the inner core of the European Commission in Brussels; the intermediary circle of the European Council, comprised of the heads of state of EU member nations; and the outer circle made up of the nations themselves. The outer circle's geographic boundaries to the east and southeast remain undetermined; nations such as Ukraine and Turkey are still hoping to qualify. In discussing the birth of the EU, van Middelaar draws comparisons with the creation of the United States. He places its evolution and key turning points in the international context of relations with the U.S. and the impact of the Cold War. He provides an added dimension relevant to current events with his discussion of the effect on Europe's political institutions of President Richard Nixon's 1971 decision to take the dollar off the gold standard and the subsequent Middle East War, as well as the consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union after 1989.

An intriguing presentation of views seldom reported so readably and in such depth, offering a fresh new perspective to American readers.