

The history of a union

This is Europe

HENDRIK VOS

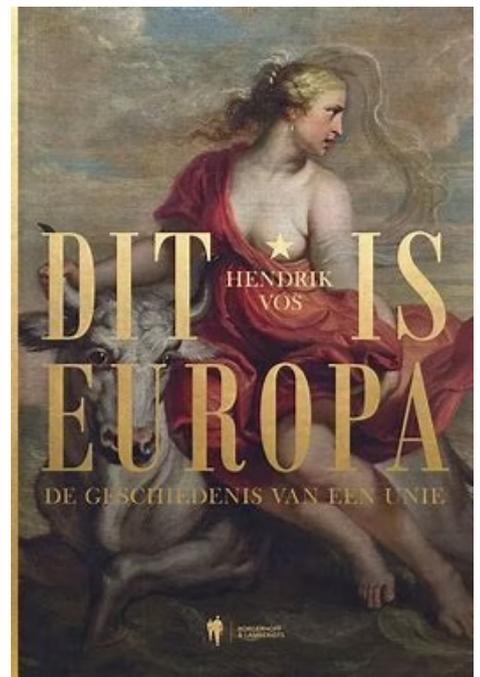
After centuries of division, six European countries joined hands. Borders blurred and barriers vanished. The continent united by establishing institutions and signing treaties. But above all the story of Europe was written by people.

Prime ministers, presidents, chancellors and commissioners determined the direction taken, each in their own time and in their own way. They became allies or rivals. Some couldn't stand each other, some became soulmates. They wrote history in musty meeting rooms, but also in beautiful palaces, or in the cellars and vaults of monasteries and castles. They met in downmarket hotels, in the mountains or on boats.

This book is a journey across the continent on the trail of the main players and of the chance passers-by who found themselves on the stage with them. In a journalistic and often humorous style, Hendrik Vos turns to light-hearted anecdotes. He describes how, for example, the European constitution ended up inside a broiler chicken, what a blow-up doll has to do with the free market and how cows made their way into a fourth-floor conference room. He tells the story of ministers who played the cello, drank port with Coca-Cola or prowled the corridors in knitted slippers.

The trajectory of European unification did not follow a set pattern. Instead it took an erratic course full of unexpected twists and turns. There was never an established strategy or a broadly based plan, and yet, step by step, the European Union came into being.

With this book Hendrik Vos has written a history of Europe that everybody will want to read.



AUTHOR



Hendrik Vos (b. 1972) is a Belgian political scientist. He is a professor at the University of Ghent, where he is also director of the Centre for EU Studies. He specializes in European Politics, Decision-making in the European Union and Current Issues in European Politics. Vos is a popular guest in political talk programmes on radio and television and participates in the public debate by writing opinion pieces for newspapers.

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