

THE EUROPEANS. An eye-witness report by Caroline de Gruyter

An informative, newsworthy and extremely accessible book about the mysteries of Brussels and the 'new' Europe.

Non-fiction, 304 pages

The man and woman in the street have discovered Europe. And Euro-scepticism is on the rise - with the resounding 'no' in the Dutch and French referendum on the European constitution in 2005 as a high-water mark. But what *is* this mysterious phenomenon we call 'Brussels'? Who are the 150,000 souls who work for or at European institutions, lobby groups, non-governmental organizations and law firms? In *The Europeans*, journalist Caroline de Gruyter - who worked as a Brussels correspondent for the leading Dutch newspaper NRC Handelsblad for five years - goes looking for the roots *and* the reality of a 'united Europe'. Based on numerous interviews with Europeans from all over the European Union, the chapters of this book each center around one of the many types of characters one encounters in Brussels. Aged 14 till 89, they talk about their lives, their work, their hang-ups and their identity. In this way, a personal, highly readable and up-to-date picture emerges of the world we call 'Brussels'. About 'Eurokids' and lobbyists; about single career women, Euronetworks and the denizens of the European Union. About old political ideals, and how today's professionals see them. And, of course, about the big question: is something like a European identity really emerging from all this?

Caroline de Gruyter (1963) worked as a reporter and foreign editor for *Elsevier* magazine in The Netherlands. In 1992 she received the Golden Pen Award for her reports on the war in former Yugoslavia. She was correspondent for NRC Handelsblad in the Middle East (1994-1999) and in Brussels (1999-2004). Since 2004 she works for the same newspaper in Geneva. Her earlier publications include *Mohammed Skaik's Coffee House* (1997).

'There are at least 150,000 fairly privileged people from all over Europe living in Brussels. Many of them have been here for a long time. Some of them do have Belgian friends, but many of them socialize almost exclusively with each other. They play tennis together, set up book clubs together. Switching from one language to the other around a dinner table is something most of them no longer even notice. Some of them feel strong ties with their native country, yet there is a growing group who no longer know what that means. And it is this dilemma which binds them. For if you no longer have a clear national identity, who are you anyway?'

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Publication date: September 2006