

This study explains in an accessible manner the key elements of the relationship between the Swiss Confederation and the European Union.

The author begins by summarizing the main steps in this special and evolving relationship which has long oscillated between membership and marginalization.

He also guides us expertly through the thickets of referendums (no fewer than fourteen from 1972 to the time of writing!) in which Swiss citizens have been given the opportunity to pass judgment on the European question.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, this volume explains why the Swiss still oppose joining the European Union. It examines the thorny questions of identity, reservations on policy matters (preserving neutrality, direct democracy and Swiss-style federalism), not to mention doubts regarding the economy, which have done so much to shape public opinion and the official strategy of the Swiss Confederation.

Paradoxically, the closer Switzerland gets to the EU through bilateral agreements, the more distant prospects of joining the EU seem to become. This is the conundrum at the heart of the relationship between the Swiss Confederation and the European Union which is expertly explored in this volume.

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ISBN 978-90-5201-576-7



P.I.E. Peter Lang, Brussels • "European Policy" series, No. 46

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