

# ELIO DI RUPO

b. July 18, 1951

## BELGIUM PRIME MINISTER

**In 2003, with Di Rupo's support, Belgium became the second nation to legalize same-sex marriage.**

*"My life is a fairy tale. You could not make it up."*

Elio Di Rupo is the prime minister of Belgium and head of the Socialist Party. He is the first openly gay man to lead a nation.

One of seven children born to Italian Catholic immigrants, Di Rupo was raised in a small town in Belgium's French-speaking Wallonia region. His father died when Di Rupo was one year old. Because his illiterate mother was unable to raise seven children, Di Rupo and two of his siblings were raised in an orphanage.

Di Rupo earned a master's degree and a doctorate in chemistry from the University of Mons-Hainaut. As a student, he became active in the Socialist Party. In 1982, his political career began when he became a municipal councillor in Mons, where he later served as mayor.

Di Rupo has served as a member of Parliament, a member of the European Parliament, and as Belgium's deputy prime minister.

In 1996, Di Rupo's personal life came under fire when he was falsely accused of having sex with underage males. During the media frenzy, he recalls being pursued by journalists, one of whom blurted out, "Yet, they say you're a homosexual!" Di Rupo replied, "Yes. So what?" His political future was not hindered. Three years later, he was named president of the Socialist Party.

In 2011, Belgian journalist Francis Van De Woestyne documented Di Rupo's rise from rags to riches in a biography titled "Elio Di Rupo. Une Vie, Une Vision" (One Life, One Vision). In 2012, Di Rupo was appointed prime minister by King Albert II.

Prime Minister Di Rupo is credited with saving his nation from an economic crisis. In 2003, with Di Rupo's support, Belgium became the second nation to legalize same-sex marriage.



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