

# Turkey – another reason to vote to leave

A few months back, we published an article comparing the EU's courtship of Turkey with its deliberate antagonism of Russia. Neither country has much going for it politically, but the article concluded by saying that "if one is forced to decide between which of the two 'sons of a bitch' ought to be 'our son of a bitch', the case for choosing Turkey isn't very convincing."

The latest Briefing Note from Global Britain adds further to the argument against Turkish membership of the EU. Do we really want to grant free movement to the citizens of a country with a population of almost 80 million and one which has borders with, among others, Syria, Iraq and Iran?

As the briefing note points out, The prosperity of the average Turk is between 40% and 50% of that of citizens of Germany, France and the UK, which means that Turkish accession would cause a similar influx to the immediate post-2004 enlargement period when large numbers of Eastern Europeans took advantage of the higher wages in the west. One of the main arguments used by the political Left against the EU is that it is a capitalist project built on cheap labour. They may have a point. In the 1980s there were plenty of unskilled positions across the member states filled by workers from Spain and Portugal; in the first decade of the New Millenium, it was the former Soviet Bloc countries providing the cheap labour. Turkey is the next potential source of imported workers who will further depress wages for manual workers in the UK – or maybe not??

The briefng note points out, in particular, the opposition of the French. However, it also singles out the most enthusiastic supporters of Turkish membership – the leadership 0f the

Conservative Party. Asked by Ken Clarke as recently as October 2015 whether the present government, like its predecessors, supported Turkish membership, David Cameron replied, "I can confirm that the British Government's policy has not changed."

We might be spared Turkish membership because of opposition not only from France but also from Austria, Greece and Cyprus. In fact, if all goes well, we could be out of the EU and even seeing the EEA replaced with a genuine Europe-wide Free Trade agreement under the auspices of UNECE (and thus not including the free movement of people) before Turkey ever joins.

If we escape the worst case scenario by whatever means, however, it will be in spite of, rather than thanks to, Mr Cameron.

***Please feel free to print out copies of this briefing note if you can find suitable recipients for them!***

Photo by Michał Dubrawski 