

No way to treat a friend

*French attitudes to Turkey's admission to the EU are highly revealing,
says Anthony Scholefield*

The reactions of French opinion formers to Valéry Giscard D'Estaing's statement that Turkey's admission to the EU would mean '*the end of the EU*' proved highly revealing.

On the one hand, Giscard was obviously a hero of European integration and must be supported. On the other hand, the trend of progressive multi-cultural opinion reacted automatically in wanting a non-European country warmly welcomed into the EU.

Some of the EU's leaders have now woken up to the fact that Turkey will be the largest country in the EU in the reasonably near future. Its population of 66 million will rise to about 100

million by 2050. By then, its labour force will be the size of those of Germany and Britain combined.

Yet the EU is constrained by its decision to give association status to Turkey in 1963 and its formal recognition as a candidate in 1999.

One of the most incredible facts about the EU is that there is no definition of the ultimate geographical size of the EU, a feature it shares with the old Soviet Union. All the British political parties are in favour of 'enlargement' but none of them defines where the EU's borders will finally be. As Hubert Vedrine, former French Foreign Minister, said '*if Europe does not draw the line we will end up with a union of 40 states including Russia, the*

Ukraine, Turkey, the Balkan States and North Africa'. Try asking your local MP, irrespective of party, where he or she envisages the borders of the EU will ultimately be.

The problems of the addition of the huge Turkish labour force will make the integration of the Eastern European countries look like child's play. So, one should expect to see EU politicians continue to prevaricate and Giscard to slip from the pantheon of progressive European thinkers.

Perhaps the best comment on Turkey's European ambitions came from one of a small but influential band of US eurosceptics: "*Getting Turkey into the EU is no way to reward a loyal friend.*"

Eurozone economies: latest figures

2001: GDPs @ current prices & exchange rates expressed in \$ billions

Country	GDP	%	Cumulative %	Country	GDP	%	Cumulative %
Germany	1846	30.3	30.3	Austria	189	3.1	92.6
France	1310	21.5	51.8	Finland	121	2.0	94.6
Italy	1089	17.9	69.7	Greece	117	1.9	96.5
Spain	582	9.5	79.2	Portugal	110	1.8	98.3
Netherlands	380	6.2	85.4	Ireland	103	1.7	100.0
Belgium/Lux	249	4.1	89.5	Total	6096	100.0	

Note that Germany and France alone account for more than half of eurozone GDP. Note also that the German economy is 41 per cent bigger than the French economy.

The four biggest eurozone economies, Germany, France, Italy and Spain, account for almost 80 per cent of eurozone GDP.

The comparable GDP figure for the UK is \$1424 billion. Had the UK been a member of the eurozone, total eurozone GDP - other things being equal - would have been \$ 7520 billion and the UK share of that would have been 18.9 per cent.

Source: OECD: Main Economic Indicators, September 2002

Great minds agree about the euro

Interviewed by the German economic magazine DM Euro in its November issue, Milton Friedman, the Nobel prizewinning economist, had no difficulty in identifying the euro as the source of Germany's worsening

economic woes: "If it wasn't for the euro, then Germany wouldn't have its current problems," he said.

Sir Edward George, the outgoing Governor of the Bank of England is evidently of the same opinion.

Appearing before the Treasury Select Committee on November 27 2002 he said that Germany's problems stemmed from "a lot of effects that reflect [its] involvement in monetary union.