

Robert Kilroy-Silk writes...on Why Turkey Should Not Join the European Union

*Note: This article was first published in the Sunday Express on 19 September 2004*

Jack Straw wants Turkey to join the E.U. The Foreign Secretary argues that negotiations should begin in October. He wants the vast, poor, Muslim county to join the club in a few years' time. The man's a fool.

The talks should be aborted now. Turkey should not be allowed to join the community. It has a terrible record of torture and on human rights, and large numbers of its politicians supporting the criminalisation of adultery, with the law to be directed mainly against women. It has, as former French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing said, major "cultural differences" with Europe.

But more important than this is that its membership will be immensely damaging to Britain. It is we who would bear the enormous burden. And no-one, of course, has asked the British people if this is something that they are prepared to do.

The price we would have to pay would be high. Vast amounts of money would need to be directed to Turkey just to bring it up to the level of the poorest members of the E.U. Britain would pay - or rather, the people of Nottingham, Derby and Leicester and elsewhere would pay, again, as they do now to support French farmers.

But no-one has asked them if they are willing to cough up. It has been decided for them, as always, by the politicians in Westminster who think they know best. Jack Straw will not enquire of his hard-working constituents of Blackburn whether they are happy, for example, to have lower pensions in order to subsidise the Turks. He will simply make the decision for them.

Nor will he or any other government minister come clean about the consequences for immigration. Yet these are serious. Once Turkey becomes a member of the E.U., tens of thousands of Turks will make their home in cities like Nottingham and Derby -and everywhere there is an existing Turkish community.

Jack Straw will deny this, of course. The government will mislead us, again, just as David Blunkett misled us about the number of people likely to come to Britain when the eight eastern European countries joined the community in May of this year.

When the three UKIP MEPs voted against their entry because of the threat of increased immigration they were sneered at, ridiculed. We were told that there would be 13,000 new arrivals from these countries at most.

Last week, the government was forced to confess that it had got it wrong. It had been too complacent. Far too complacent. In the month of July alone, 191,000 arrived - a 300% increase on July last year!

These were people from the poor countries of eastern Europe looking for work. The Turks are even poorer. How many of their 80 million do you think will make their way here, once they are legally entitled to? There will be hundreds of thousands.

Is that what you want? Will you be content with this? If you are, that is fine. It is your decision. If you are not, then you had better make your views known to your MP now, before it is too late.