

## The EU deal with Turkey is fraught with dangers

It is the most pressing geopolitical issue facing Britain today, so if I were advising the PM I would tell him to let the deal die



Mr Cameron is grateful for the help he has had from Chancellor Merkel in his EU renegotiations. Photo: EPA



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By David Owen

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In many ways, the most pressing geopolitical issue facing Britain (irrespective of whether we vote to leave the EU – and I hope we will) is how we handle Turkey. This week, EU leaders will attempt to ratify a deeply-flawed emergency deal with Ankara in the hope of solving the migrant crisis. As a result of objections from several countries, the deal is already on life support. If I were advising the Prime Minister, I would tell him to let it die.

*The proposed Turkey deal is one more demonstration of the EU's dangerous short-termism*

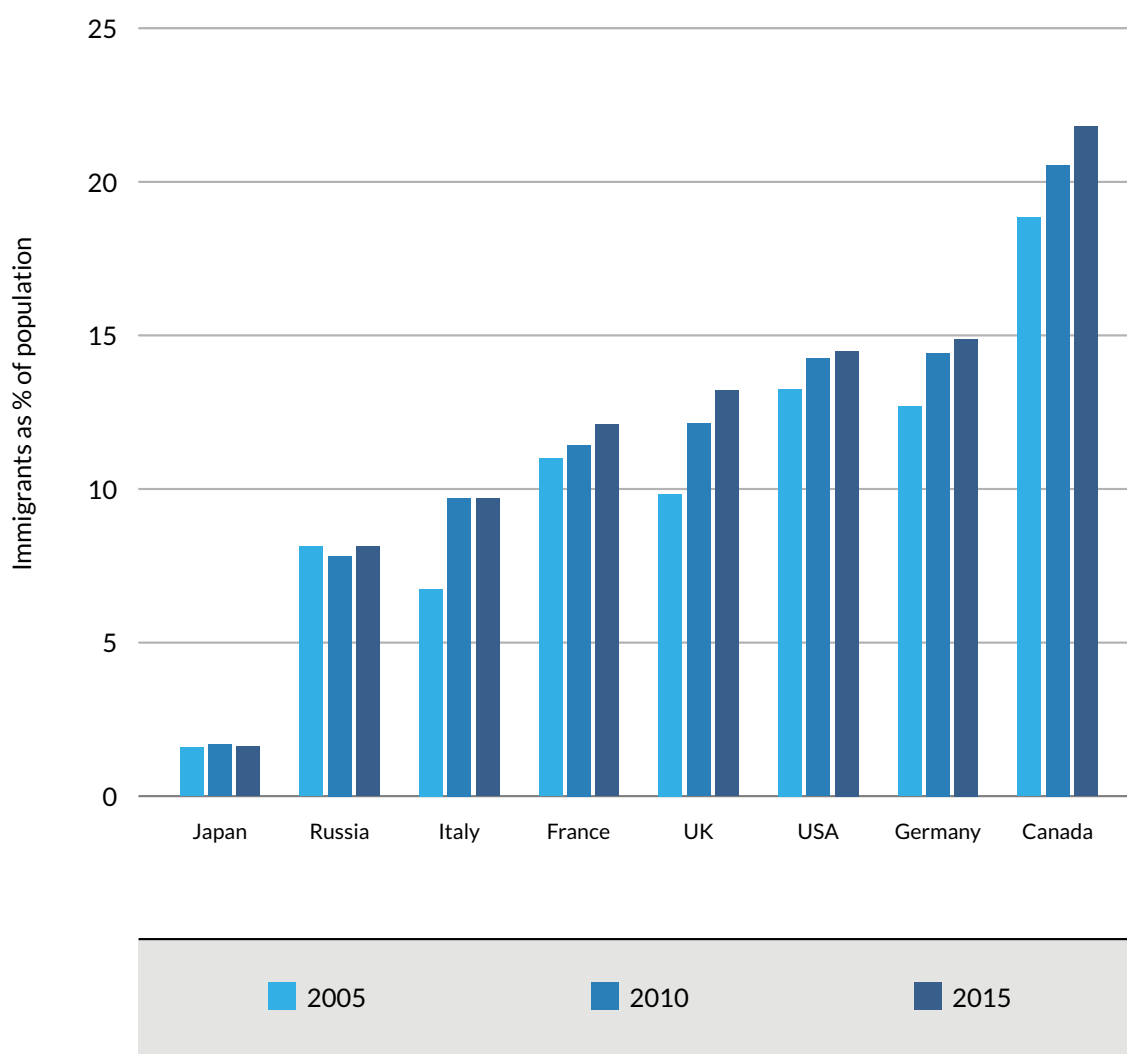
If he does not, David Cameron will find himself arguing in favour of advancing the date of entry to the EU of 80 million

*in foreign policy matters.*

Turks – with the free movement of people and labour that comes with it. This deal was initially made between Chancellor Merkel and Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu. Without any authorisation from the House of Commons, Mr Cameron supported it. Then, when Turkey upped the ante, demanding more money and visa-free access to the Schengen borderless zone, Mr Cameron again raised no objection.

Yet speeded-up EU entry for Turkey has profound implications for the UK. As it stands, not many Britons realise that they have already accepted the automatic right to admission to Britain of current migrants – once those migrants have lived for five years in any other EU country. Accelerated Turkish membership on top of this means a staggering increase in potential immigration. This is no scare story. It is a simple fact.

### The UK compared to other G8 nations



That fact is why there are suggestions that leaders at the current summit will struggle to come to an agreement. I think some compromise deal will be cobbled together, probably worse than the one already on the table, as compromise deals usually are. But either way, the deal has many dangers in it

– not least that most do not intend to honour it.

Many make no secret of the fact that they have absolutely no intention of advancing Turkish membership. Once the immigration crisis is over they will ensure that Ankara's human rights record actually slows down Turkey's EU application.

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off abandoning its whole Ataturk orientation to Europe.

I cannot think of any British prime minister (other than Tony Blair, in accepting “autonomous defence” decision-making in the EU) who would enter into such a cynical arrangement. And when Turkey sees that a Nato ally such as Britain could behave so perfidiously in the EU, I fear it will conclude that its Nato membership is not helpful and that it would be better

Yet the very last thing we in Britain should do is to jeopardise in any way Turkey's confidence in Nato. We need each other in overcoming the decades-long challenge that Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant presents.

How did we get ourselves into this terrible mess? It was foolish of the EU to pretend that Schengen countries could have freedom of movement of people and labour without at the very least having secured external borders. But the situation was compounded by Germany last year ignoring existing EU promises, opening its borders, then panicking under internal political pressures and unilaterally imposing on the EU this unsatisfactory deal with Turkey. The British voice has never been heard cautioning against this policy. Britain has simply folded, just as we folded over the totally unacceptable EU treatment of Greece. British policy in the EU was once noted for its integrity. Our word was our bond. Now it is just like many other states' policies in the EU – pretension is everything.

Of course Mr Cameron is grateful for the help he has had from Chancellor Merkel in the seriously inadequate renegotiation of Britain's membership of the EU. He cannot be expected to betray her now, by actively attempting to kill the Turkey deal. But he should lift no finger to save it. In particular he must support the objections of the President of Cyprus on his delicately poised attempt to reach a settlement.

The proposed Turkey deal is one more demonstration of the EU's dangerous short-termism in foreign policy matters – of which the reckless wording of the Ukraine accession agreement has been the most dangerous example, one which risked dragging the EU to war with Russia.

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policy is actually one central argument for leaving the EU.

Britain's priority must be to re-establish itself as Nato's clearest and strongest voice this side of the Atlantic and reassure Turkey in its own Nato membership. British foreign and security objectives will be far stronger and more coherent if this country no longer has to pay lip service to the misguided EU "common defence" policy that started at Maastricht. The inevitable failure of the euro also started then. Both have created a dysfunctional EU and we must seize our opportunity to leave.

*Lord Owen was Foreign Secretary from 1977-1979*

Some diplomats claim that we will lose influence leaving the EU. I ask: how much influence did we have on EU policy to Ukraine? How much consultation took place with David Cameron when President Hollande and Chancellor Merkel flew to Minsk to negotiate a settlement of the fighting in East Ukraine that still continues? Regaining control of our foreign