

THE IRISH EXPERIENCE

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EU ACCESSION AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

- Ireland had a long period of preparation.
- Programme of modernisation and adjustment began in the 1960s.
- Two of the three main political parties supported EEC membership.
- Active public debate from early 1960s.

PARALLELS WITH TURKEY

- Long lead-in.
- Ongoing transition and modernisation process.
- Pressures of globalisation.
- Convergence between adoption of *acquis* and development demands.
- Accession offers assistance in doing what has to be done in any case.

DIFFICULT POLITICAL DECISIONS

- Dismantling protectionism was difficult for indigenous industry.
- The two largest political parties agreed.
- The general public tolerated it, with the help of successful attraction of FDI.
- Difficulty in formulating referendum question.
- Difficulties in relation to neutrality policy.

DIFFICULT DECISIONS: MISTAKES.

- Protocol on motor assembly industry:
 - a complete failure (happily!).
- Insurance sector:
 - protectionism is still bad!
- Fishing sector:
 - failure of foresight.

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

- Expectations were mixed during negotiations.
- Fears about prospects for industry:
 - allayed by success in attracting FDI.
- Expectations in agriculture proved to be understated.
- Fears of centralisation unfounded because of EEC policy response.
- Cultural and social fears not borne out.
- Expectation of liberation from UK economic dominance realised.

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

- Rapid growth of service sector not predicted.
- Predictions of EU defence policy unfounded.
- Expectations of emergence of strong EU foreign policy presence premature.

JOINED UP GOVERNMENT

- Emergence of co-ordinated Government approach to EU issues took some time in Ireland.
- Internal fiscal adjustment pressures led to rational approach to management of EU structural support.

I hope that these thoughts have been
useful to you.