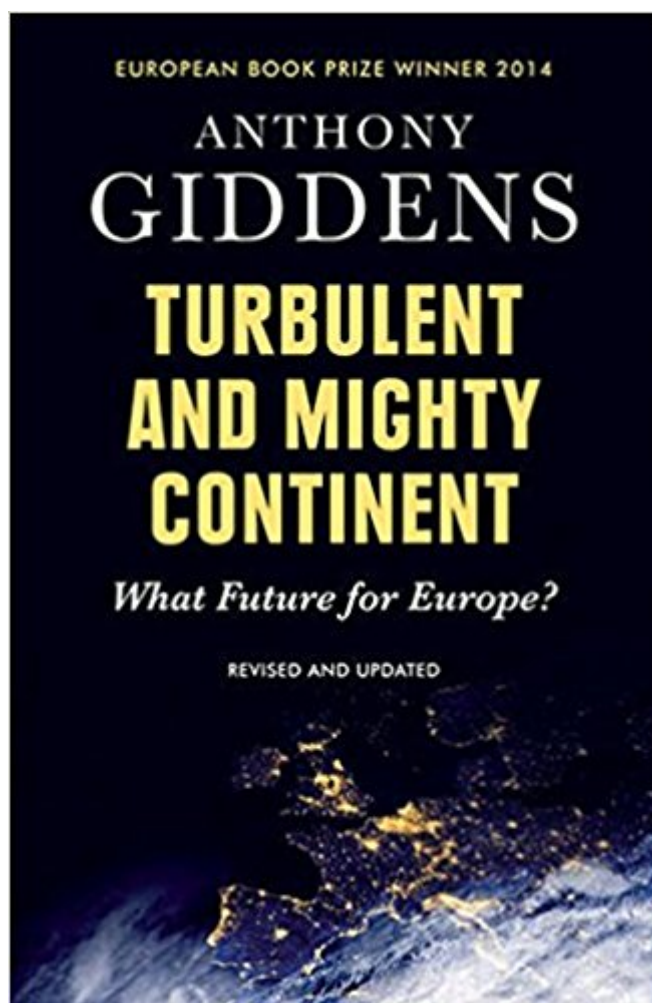


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# Turbulent And Mighty Continent: What Future For Europe?



## Synopsis

Winner of the 2014 European Book Prize. A "United States of Europe", Winston Churchill proposed in 1946, could "as if by a miracle transform" that "turbulent and mighty continent". "In this way only", he continued, "will hundreds of millions of toilers be able to regain the simple joys and hopes which make life worth living". Today, nearly seventy years later, over 500 million people live in the member states of the European Union – a greater number than in any other political community save for China and India. The currency of the Union, the euro, is used in economic transactions world-wide. Yet the EU is mired in the greatest crisis of its history, one that threatens its very existence as an entity able to have an impact upon world affairs. Europe no longer seems so mighty, instead but faces the threat of becoming an irrelevant backwater or, worse, once again the scene of turbulent conflicts. Divisions are arising all over Europe, while the popularity of the Union sinks. How can this situation be turned around? Now published as a revised and updated paperback that takes account of the May 2014 elections to the European Parliament, *Turbulent and Mighty Continent* makes a powerful case for a far-reaching and fundamental renewal of the European project as a whole.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Winner of the European Book Prize for Non-Fiction "Rich in insights on conceptualising problems and identifying solutions." LSE Review of Books "A significant intervention into the debate about Europe's future." Gerhard Schröder, former Chancellor of Germany "An

indispensable book at a time when clear thinking about the EU is vital. Deserves to be actively debated across Europe at such a critical juncture in the continent's history." Javier Solana, former EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Secretary-General of NATO "In the 1980s the famous Cecchini Report played a crucial role in fostering the single currency. I expect this book by Tony Giddens to play a similar role in the creation of the more integrated Europe essential to us all twenty five years later." Giuliano Amato, former Prime Minister of Italy "A great book about the possibilities for European social democracy in the modern world." Progress Online "From the perspective of a new entrant country like Romania, Giddens' views are as relevant as they are to the founding member states. A must-read for all who are concerned about Europe's future, whatever shade of opinion they may hold." Ana Birchall, MP and Member of the European Affairs Commission, Romanian Parliament "A must-read from one of the leading thinkers of our time, for all who want the European Project to adapt and progress, and preferably do so with the United Kingdom as a committed member of a stronger but also more flexible Union." Kemal Dervis, Vice-President for Global Economics at the Brookings Institution and former Turkish Minister of Economic Affairs "...Giddens succeeds in cutting through much of the turgid intramural debate on Europe to offer a clear diagnosis of the European Union's dilemma, and a powerful argument in its favour." Survival: Global Politics and Strategy "The author raises a wide range of subjects: global warming, energy consumption, immigration, digital economy, diplomacy. His viewpoints are clear. This oeuvre offers a logical and thought-provoking perspective." Politique Etrangère "This latest work by Anthony Giddens is a brilliant and subtle contribution to the future of Europe." Europe's World "The book provides a comprehensive and relatively accessible overview of the diverse problems facing contemporary Europe." Political Studies Review

Anthony Giddens is former Director of the London School of Economics, Life Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, and Member of the House of Lords, UK.

It is a reasonably good summary of the last discussions on the EU, but there is hardly anything new under the EU sky. This is disappointing for a sociologist so much known worldwide

Anthony Giddens is unabashedly a pro-European. His analysis is thus going to side with the survival of the European Union as it was intended: to be a Super Power to face rising China. The European continent has seen some challenging events unfold in the past 30 years, from ethnic wars to

economic downfall. While Giddens does not mention anything new, he does talk about redistribution of wealth from rich to poor countries in Europe. That's been going on for a while anyway, and a bane in Germany's eye. Germany has been supporting and bailing out the Greek and Portuguese economies for years and the taxes on its citizens keep rising. How much more can Germans tolerate before its people succumb to violent protest? Giddens mentions the European Social Model (ESM) many times throughout this book. The ESM was at its zenith in the 1970s, when the economy across Europe was strong and immigration was not yet out of hand. Liberal social policies kept the poor surviving and the strong, stronger. Austerity measures are not very popular with citizens of the affected countries, since ultimately it is the citizens who suffer the most from any changes to the norm. Giddens is right when he says repeatedly how important the International Monetary Fund, or IMF, has been to the survival of Europe. Without the IMF, there could be no EU. And without the guidance and support of both Germany and France, there would be no strong Europe now. With the recent events in Ukraine and Russia, this book has regained importance. If Russia places economic cutbacks on Europe in the form of reduced energy exports, could the EU survive? This is not an easy read, but chapters are broken down for further clarity. Readers should take time to soak up Giddens's analysis and come up with their own opinion of the importance of the EU in today's world.

Anthony Gibbons is a pro-European union advocate who is disturbed at the recent turn of events after the financial crisis of 2007. He sees Europe as a potential backwater or increasingly irrelevant. But is that really true? This is a book that brings up some relevant points but the lack of cohesive government and the one standard of money is a loser in my opinion. Countries tied together while trying to maintain their own national identity is a loser in my opinion. Anthony Giddens point of view is probably more informed than mine and good to read.

This book makes a pretty good case for the challenges Europe faces in the coming years as it recovers from the 2008 financial crash and tackles with what the EU is and can be, and the future of the Euro. The author maintains that great creativity must be used as the recovery is slow and it can't just rely on some normal course of events to handle the job. He actually wants Europe to look to the US for direction, as our economy is currently the best in the world and we've confronted immigration and done pretty well, for example. Some points from the book....1. Europe is no longer mighty, but still must face some internal differences. Most countries have mounted up enormous debt and the Welfare state approach which has existed for years, can't stay that way because governments can't

afford to do so without major changes, like with pensions, using a more defined contribution approach as the US does. The author describes such an eventuality as a social investment state - embrace opportunity and risk - flexsecurity.<sup>2</sup> The three main EU institutions are the Commission, Council and Parliament. EU1 has evolved into EU2, where rule, so to speak, is decided, but that's the problem - no voting by all EU people, just basically out of sight with basically France and Germany's leaders making the decisions.<sup>3</sup> Climate change is big, but the EU is mixed up. It should evolve into renewable energy like getting off coal first since that is the worst pollutant, so even advance more into fracking as the US is doing, since natural gas can replace coal. The author sees coal as worse than nuclear.<sup>4</sup> The IMF has turned into a big player, also the ECB. But, unlike the US, there is no EU bond like US Treasuries.<sup>5</sup> The author thinks an economic federalism has to occur, call it EU3. Each state must have some voice. It could take up to ten years.<sup>6</sup> English should be made the official EU language, with everyone speaking/writing both English and their native country's language.<sup>7</sup> The author talks about a representative democracy, but with more visibility, a monitory democracy, maybe incorporating advances in social media....a global village. Embrace a re-industrialization like the US - 3D printing, etc.<sup>8</sup> Austerity is bad, but still reform is necessary in most states.<sup>9</sup> Smart growth needed - reform education, innovation, R&D, information and communication technologies.<sup>10</sup> Take action on tax havens and tax avoidance. Income inequality is a problem.<sup>11</sup> Interculturism must replace multiculturalism in a globalized world - accepting people as different, not expecting assimilation.<sup>12</sup> The author, basically agreeing that China is more democratic than the US. The US being a showbiz democracy, more about showmanship than leadership, while China has deep discussions before agreeing on a 5 year plan.<sup>13</sup> The EU tried to be in the forefront on climate change, wanting to establish a carbon tax and have a trading system, but it ran into all kinds of problems, with any reduction of emissions mostly due to the recession. CA has had more success with such a trading system. Obama met with major nations and at least came up with an informal agreement, where the dysfunctional EU was essentially left out. So, basically the world has done nothing to reduce emissions, while also we have entered an anthropocene age, where humans have influenced nature everywhere. Conservation is no longer relevant, must use artificial means like biotechnology to recreate what has been lost. Again, the EU is especially dependent on more creatively doing things, rather than looking to the past.<sup>14</sup> As for energy, the EU is messed up. Coal is the worst, and reducing nuclear energy just means greater use of coal, plus natural gas is best until renewables dominate, but EU lags the US in fracking knowledge. Anyway, the book is very good in showing how Europe is facing a critical time where it faces many challenges while not very united as needed, so must embark on more creativity to solve

the problems, hence even more important to look to the US, which does lead in creativity even with its dysfunctional government.

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