

France's "people power" protests



■ **May 1968:** Student and worker uprisings force President **Charles de Gaulle** to dissolve parliament and, a year later, to step down

■ **1986:** Conservative government shelves plan to implement university reform in face of mass protests

■ **1994:** Conservative Prime Minister **Edouard Balladur** abandons law cutting wages for young people in job training in face of month of protests

■ **1995:** **Jacques Chirac** becomes president. During next decade, public sector jobs double to 25% of 27.7 million workforce



■ **Dec:** Three weeks of strikes over public-sector pension reforms push conservative Prime Minister **Alain Juppé** from office two years later

■ **Feb 2005:** Conservative education minister **François Fillon** forced to withdraw key elements of school reform after pupil-teacher protests

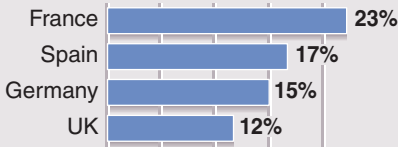
■ **May:** French voters say "non" to proposed EU constitution, rejecting it by 54.9% to 45.1%



■ **Oct-Nov:** Riots in immigrant suburbs of French cities – afflicted by up to 50% unemployment – are most violent since 1968. **President Chirac declares state of emergency**

■ **Feb 2006:** Some 400,000 demonstrators take to streets after parliament passes law to reform 35-hour working week

Youth unemployment rates (2005-06)



■ **Mar-Apr:** Unions and students stage national strikes in protest over Prime Minister **Dominique de Villepin's** (right)



law which allows employers to fire workers under age of 26 without cause during two-year trial period. President Chirac signs law into effect but passes it to parliament – where the governing party is led by de Villepin's rival, Interior Minister **Nicolas Sarkozy** (right) – for amendment

