



Hugely increased military spending on the cards—onward to a nuclear-armed EU army?

“We need a new approach to building a European security union with the end goal of establishing a European army.”—Jean-Claude Juncker (16 November 2016).



Recent moves towards the creation of EU military structures—facilitated by provisions of the Lisbon Treaty—gives rise to the possibility of EU nuclear-armed forces in a militarised Union.

Last week the EU Parliament adopted a resolution that includes setting up an EU Operational Headquarters, establishing a “political leadership” for EU military operations, and raising the military budgets of all member-states to at least 2 per cent of their GDP.

In 2014 Ireland’s GDP was €250 billion, so that’s a total of €5 billion that we would be expected to spend on the military *each year!* And with the Parliament having given the nod, the Commission is sure to plough ahead. (For comparison, €893 million was allocated to roads, railways and buses in 2014.)

The total military budget for 2014 of €898 million included an annual provision of €22

million for pensions. So, military spending was below 0.3 per cent of GDP—the lowest in the EU. The budget for 2016 is €90 million, of which €224 goes to pensions, while, arising from the White Paper on Defence, the Government plans to spend €437 million in military capital expenditure over the lifetime of the plan, to 2021.

The EU Parliament’s proposal would mean a six-fold increase in Irish military spending. It follows the decision of NATO members to meet the commitment they made at the 2014 NATO summit to spend at least 2 per cent of GDP on defence by 2024.

This proposed target of 2 per cent will place a big burden on Irish taxpayers—or, given the Government’s preference for tax cuts, lead to further cuts in public services and infra-structural investment. Remarkably, there has not been any mention of the military-related developments in the media; and perhaps I missed our political parties kicking up? No: the numbing EU consensus now extends to military issues.

The EU high representative for foreign affairs and security, Federica Mogherini, continues to promote the idea of an “EU superpower.” Leading politicians and commentators are beginning to pick up the idea, previously launched by a number of experts, of the EU developing its own nuclear military forces, on the basis of French and British nuclear weapons. However, for this the French and British arsenals would not be sufficient, according to a suggestive article published in one of Germany’s leading opinion-forming dailies.

Last weekend the chairperson of the

Munich Security Conference, Wolfgang Ischinger, demanded that Germany's "ultimate objective" be "to maintain the EU" and to "prevent Europe's further disintegration."

For this, the vigorous promotion of the militarisation of the EU would be helpful—along the lines of the old concept of distracting attention from internal crises with aggressions abroad. According to Ischinger, EU countries must agree to a "European defence union with tightly enmeshed armed forces" and "a consolidated procurement and armaments system." In this way "a great deal of money could soon be saved and considerable supplementary combat power generated."

The objective would be "to finally do the job right, to bring the EU—also militarily—into the 21st Century; Germany must insist on the EU becoming a global player in an insecure world."

And within the EU, what Germany wants, Germany gets, especially in this instance, when it can depend on support from France and Britain.

Ischinger expressed the "hope" that, "through the Trump shock," "willingness" for the accelerated militarisation of the EU could have "dramatically grown." The "West" label could serve as the identifying feature of a future, more combative EU. Germany and the EU must "now take on the responsibility for the ideas and values of the West."

Ischinger also addresses the formation of an "informal EU group of four or five," "which can talk to Washington"—similar to the recent Berlin summit, when Barack Obama met the heads of state and government of the five largest EU countries—guess who!

The integration of the seriously crisis-stricken France and Italy would permit the German government to steer political decisions while simultaneously masking its dominance, and avoiding resistance to an alleged EU leadership group.



The EU's militarisation campaign continues apace. In early October the German minister of defence, Ursula von der Leyen, and her French counterpart, Jean-Yves Le Drian, signed a declaration of intent to enhance their collaboration in the field of tactical air transport. Germany and France will share Super Hercules military transport planes, to be stationed in France, by 2021. Two weeks ago the EU defence ministers agreed on further measures to be formally adopted by the EU's heads of state and government at the its December summit.

Last week Ursula von der Leyen met her Portuguese counterpart, José Alberto de Azevedo Ferreira Lopes, to promote the meshing of the EU member-countries' military forces. The armed forces of these two countries are already closely co-operating in naval training and foreign operations.

Last week the EU Parliament provided new impetus to the EU's war policy, urging the EU to establish "multinational armed forces," in which "all member-states" should participate in one way or another. Setting up an EU Operational Headquarters is a "precondition for effective planning, command and control of common operations," the resolution said. This is aimed at the establishment of military structures independent of NATO.

The EU Parliament is also calling for "the establishment of a Council format of Defence Ministers to provide sustained political leadership" and for the launching of "an EU security and defence White Book." The resolution calls on the member-states "to aim

for the 2 per cent GDP target in defence spending” so as to finance not only expensive arms programmes, such as “developing a European drone industry,” but also military research projects, valued at half a billion euros.

Because “the political priorities of NATO and the EU may not always be identical,” the EU must be capable of independently waging wars. The EU Parliament therefore “warmly welcomes the strategic autonomy concept.”

While Federica Mogherini makes reference to the EU as a “superpower” to bolster hegemonic ambitions, German politicians are beginning to envisage the establishment of EU nuclear forces. The foreign policy spokesperson of the CDU-CSU parliamentary group in the Bundestag, Roderich Kiesewetter, demanded that Germany convince France and Britain to provide a “nuclear umbrella” for the EU.

The nuclear umbrella would be costly but could be financed “through a joint European military budget due to begin in 2019.” An editorial in a leading German daily raises the question of a European “nuclear deterrence capacity”—for which “the French and British arsenals ... would be insufficient.”

The penny hasn't dropped yet



The leader of Fianna Fáil, Mícheál Martin, recently addressed a student meeting in Queen’s University, Belfast, on the topic “Brexit: Challenges and opportunities.”

The address followed fairly predictable lines: “Brits haven’t a clue”; “Brexit is all to do with infighting in the Tory party”; “the North must not be dragged out of the EU against its

will”; “all Irish political parties love the EU”; and “none of them want a ‘hard’ Brexit.”

There was more than a fair share of hyperbole: Britain was seeking to “repeal the twentieth century,” and Brexit is “one of the biggest mistakes of a modern democracy.”

The fact is that the Irish state is quite unprepared for Brexit, as are the Irish media and public opinion, for most Irish people expected the “Remain” side to win, and some, like Martin, clearly still think and hope that Brexit will not happen. But if the Republic seeks to remain in the EU when the UK leaves, it is the EU acting collectively on the basis of qualified majority voting under article 50 of the Treaty on European Union that will decide the Irish state’s future relations with Britain, not Northern Ireland and not the Republic’s government acting independently.

In this situation it is inconceivable that the interests of the Irish state and people will have priority or will be taken adequately into account by the twenty-six other member-states. If the eventual EU-UK agreement does not suit the Republic, and if the Irish government has cast its vote against it, it will have to abide by it if it remains an EU member.

On the other hand, the many problems that would arise for the Republic if it should seek to remain in the EU when Britain and Northern Ireland leave, and which have been emphasised since the vote on 23 June, would largely disappear if Brexit were to be accompanied by an Irish exit.

The reality is that the objective political and economic interests of the Irish state, and the country as a whole, lie in leaving the EU along with the UK, and Ireland having a special agreement with Britain governing all relevant matters.

In 2014 the Irish state became a net contributor to the EU budget for the first time, so that in future any EU money that comes to the country under the common agricultural policy, EU cohesion funds, Erasmus pro-

grammes, research grants or whatever is Irish taxpayers' money coming back, having been recycled through Brussels to keep some bureaucrats there in business. In the North too, EU grants and subsidies are really UK taxpayers' money being recycled.



The Irish state does one third of its trade with Britain and Northern Ireland, one third with America and the rest of the world, and only one third with the euro zone. As the British pound falls vis-à-vis the euro and the dollar as the UK moves away from the EU, the Republic desperately needs an Irish pound that can fall along with it, so maintaining competitiveness in its principal export markets: the UK and America. This is why the Irish state urgently needs to get its own currency back. It was economic and political madness ever to give it up.

Irish public opinion and business opinion are likely to be well in advance of the Republic's politicians in support of leaving the EU along with the UK. On 31 October the *Irish Daily Mail* published the result of a survey that showed that almost four in ten Irish people would choose open borders and free trade with the UK over the EU. The result is remarkable, because the survey was taken before the adverse effects of Brexit had yet begun to be felt on the Irish economy and relations with Northern Ireland if the Republic should seek to stay in the EU when the UK leaves.

If the Irish state were to seek to stay in the EU while the UK leaves, the least disruptive arrangement for it would be the so-called "Norwegian option," though even that would cause us big problems. But even if the British government under Theresa May were to go for that, and secure it, this is unlikely to lead to any stable, long-term arrangement. For the basic fact is that the UK and the EU and euro zone

are now going to go their separate ways.

Relations between Britain and Ireland that touch upon Northern Ireland should be settled bilaterally, as they always have been. But this will be difficult if not impossible to ensure if the Republic remains an EU member when the UK leaves. If the Republic remains a member of the EU when the UK leaves, the north-south border within Ireland must inevitably have a wide range of EU-related aspects added to it, affecting trade, travel and diverse laws and legal standards on each side. Such divergence would adversely affect good relations within Ireland as a whole.

Leaving the EU, getting its own currency back and with it control over interest rates or the exchange rate, and regaining the ability to negotiate commercial treaties with other states would put Ireland, like the UK, in a better position to develop trade and other economic links with the world outside the low-growth EU and euro zone, with its dysfunctional currency, ageing population, and bureaucratic zeal for ever more EU centralisation.

It might perhaps be only a matter of time before more pragmatic sections of Fianna Fáil break ranks with Mícheál Martin and begin calling for Ireland to leave the EU. The state's departure from the EU, along with a desirable accompanying bilateral trade deal between Britain and Ireland, accords with the economic and political interests of most people in Ireland, as will gradually become apparent over the next couple of years.

CETA—what next?

The Government has signed up to the controversial Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between the EU and Canada without any discussion in the Dáil. A non-binding resolution opposing CETA was earlier passed in the Seanad.

The negotiations on CETA were completed in 2014, and the agreement was signed on 30 October 2016. The signing was delayed for a

few days because of objections from the Walloon Parliament in Belgium.

The EU Commission promoted CETA as a “mixed agreement” while maintaining its strict legal view that it is an “EU-only” agreement. As a mixed agreement it must be ratified by each EU member-state and must receive the EU Parliament’s consent.

The signing of the agreement does not mean that it comes into force immediately. The next step is a consideration of the agreement by the EU Parliament, probably in early February 2017. Provided that it gives its consent, much of CETA could come into force provisionally in the spring of 2017.

Only those areas of the agreement falling within the EU’s competence may be provisionally applied. Critics argue that this could cover most of CETA. The Commission has said that the controversial provisions on the investment court system will not be provisionally applied. They will not, therefore, come into force unless CETA is ratified by member-states.

In the Republic, ratification involves a two-step process. The state has signed the agreement subject to ratification; but after the agreement has entered into force the Oireachtas must also decide whether the agreement should also be part of the domestic law of the state, and this falls to be determined by the Oireachtas.



Could public pressure force a referendum on CETA? It would be very difficult. The only way this could be achieved would be through invoking article 27 of the Constitution of Ireland. This article provides for the referring of a bill to the people “if a majority of the

members of Seanad Éireann and not less than one third of the members of Dáil Éireann” jointly petition the President not to sign the draft legislation without the will of the people being sought beforehand. The subject of the draft legislation would have to contain “a proposal of such national importance that the will of the people thereon ought to be ascertained.”

The draft bill that the petitioners would be seeking to stop would be one to incorporate CETA in Irish law. At the moment there does not seem to be the stomach among TDs or senators for a campaign along those lines. This might be because of “realism” or just plain lack of political will.

As regards Northern Ireland, while the United Kingdom remains in the EU it will be subject to CETA’s provisions once it comes into force. The precise date of Brexit is not yet known, but given the time needed to ratify it in all EU member-states (assuming it is ratified) there is a possibility that the UK will have left the EU by the time CETA comes fully into force. While the situation is not entirely clear, the general view is that the UK would need to renegotiate its trade agreements with non-EU countries after Brexit.

It has been suggested that if Brexit occurred after the full ratification of CETA, the UK could be bound by its investment provisions for twenty years!

Corporation tax

Ireland has a completely unsustainable economic model. It offers low corporate tax rates and legal or barely legal tax avoidance to foreign investors.

But the ruling by the EU Commission to force Apple to pay €13 billion to the Irish government, Luxleaks, the Panama Papers, the Bahamas leaks etc. have emboldened the EU Commission to push towards a harmonisation of corporation tax: the common consolidated corporate tax base. And Brussels intends to

have the project operational by 2021. It's a sign that the Irish model may not be sustainable for much longer.

The Government has been resisting such a change, but with Britain out of the EU it will lose a vital ally in the fight against EU-imposed tax harmonisation, and Germany, France and Italy are waiting to push ahead, as they have long campaigned to prevent member-states from offering lower taxes to attract investors.

The CCCTB project is aimed at harmonising the definition of taxable profit among the EU's member-states. Its second aim is to establish a system for redistributing corporate tax revenue between EU countries.



The highly sensitive issue of establishing a common minimum tax rate does not appear in the proposal, and tax remains a matter of national competence. Brussels says it has no intention of encroaching on the member-states' right to set their own tax rates; but CCCTB and the sharing out of tax revenue among member-states could lead to a similar outcome.

Then there's Trump, whose only mention of Ireland during the campaign was about it being a tax haven. Following his election, a senior economic adviser warned that "a flood of companies" will leave Ireland and other countries when Trump's new tax regime kicks in. Whether it is ever introduced is another matter; and even if it is it is more likely to affect future than existing investment: who'd want to abandon an effective tax rate of 2 per cent?

That effective rate, however, does pose a huge question for the Irish public and policy-makers, as foreign direct investment in Ireland

is in effect tax-free, and if CCCTB is implemented who's going to pay the shortfall? Surely not the Irish taxpayer!

Perhaps the confluence of Brexit and the long-term loss of a business model will persuade Ireland to consider following Britain out of the EU. This will obviously depend on whether Ireland can find an alternative model inside the EU—which is unlikely, given the constraints of the Fiscal Treaty and competition policy—and on whether the euro zone successfully manages the various crises facing it, and whether the advantages of leaving outweigh those of staying.

All aboard the gravy train!

Revelations that sixteen former members of the EU Commission are receiving monthly payments from the Commission's coffers even though several of them have already found new, well-paid jobs, and the flood of media coverage of scandals with former commissioners in the leading roles, have forced the president of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, to adopt a number of new measures.

Juncker has proposed a ban of three years on former presidents of the Commission conducting lobbying activities, and a two-year cooling-off period for other commissioners. It is legitimate to ask why they receive three years' money as a retainer yet after a mere two years can work as lobbyists.

The list of who receives the so-called transitional allowance of at least €99,996 per year was acquired by the German weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*. A letter to *Die Zeit* from the Commission, dated 21 October, listed "the names of the former commissioners of the Barroso II Commission that are receiving a transitional allowance."

They include the former commissioner for trade Karel De Gucht from Belgium, who also sits on the board of the steel giant Arcelor Mittal and the Belgian telecoms company Proximus. The Commission's letter did not

specify how much money the ex-commissioners are actually getting, but *Die Zeit* calculated that De Gucht is entitled to receive almost €125,000 per year.



Former commissioners receive the transitional allowance for three years after leaving office, and they should pay tax on it. This amounts to between 40 and 65 per cent of the salary they held while in office, but if they start having income elsewhere that will be deducted from the allowance.

A fact sheet from the Commission's web site says the transitional allowance is capped. "If the former Commissioner takes up any new gainful activity, the amount of the new job's salary, added together with the allowance, cannot exceed the remuneration as a member of the Commission." While De Gucht's entire income is not public, Belgian media have reported that he could earn €144,000 per year at Arcelor Mittal alone.

In April the former Danish commissioner for climate action Connie Hedegaard landed a job at the refrigerator and air-conditioning company Danfoss, but according to the letter from the Commission she still receives the monthly bridging allowance.



The former president of the Commission José Manuel Barroso took up a job at Goldman Sachs, the American bank with a controversial role in the Greek debt crisis during Barroso's term, while the former commissioner for the digital agenda Neelie Kroes was outed as having had an offshore firm during her time in office.

Barroso and Kroes are not on the list of those receiving the transitional allowance, but more than half of those who were members of the second Barroso Commission are on the list, two years after they left office.

Some on the list have new political jobs, such as Dacian Cioloș, who is now prime minister of Romania, and Andris Piebalgs, who since June leads the centre-right Unity party in Latvia. The list also includes an active member of the EU Parliament.

The former commissioner for the budget Janusz Lewandowski receives an allowance from the Commission while at the same time receiving a salary of over €8,000 per month for his work as a member of the EU Parliament.

Two people who were commissioners for a mere three-and-a-half months are receiving the allowance two years after they left office: Jacek Dominik and Ferdinando Nelli Feroci, who were part of the second Barroso Commission from 16 July to 1 November 2014. *Die Zeit* said the Commission originally refused to disclose the list but changed its mind after the paper threatened to take its case to the EU Court of Justice.

TiSA proposals would undermine civil liberties

The Trade in Services Agreement is a "trade" agreement being negotiated by twenty-three members of the World Trade Organisation, including the European Union. New leaks from Greenpeace confirm the problems identified in previous leaks, including serious threats to freedom of expression and protection of the personal data of European citizens.



“The proposals on privatised censorship are particularly worrying,” said the executive director of European Digital Rights, Joe McNamee. “Creating a power to undermine our free speech with no accountability is reckless and contrary to literally all relevant provisions of international law.”

In September 2016 Wikileaks and Greenpeace published [other documents](#) on TiSA. In the light of the new leaks, what’s new from a civil liberties viewpoint?

1. Liability protections: While having provisions to promote freedom of expression will be a step forward, the latest US proposal in TiSA does not respect the rule of law and would remove rights to freedom of expression. The proposal is that internet companies would not be liable for any damage caused by voluntary restrictions of individuals’ free speech if they undertake such restrictions “in good faith” because they feel that that the communications are “harmful or objectionable.”

The proposal even extends to when this damage is caused in implementing regulation-by-algorithm—in other words when technical means, such as automatic filtering, are used to do so. This would privatise the regulation of the human right to receive, impart and seek information. It would almost inevitably lead to the privatised censorship of completely legal information by governments (through pressures to on-line companies) or by on-line companies themselves (acting in their own commercial interest).

2. Net neutrality: While the EU has proposed some improvements to the text on net neutrality, the principle that all the internet traffic has to be treated equally, which is crucial

for fair competition between on-line services, for innovation, and for freedom of expression, the leaks show that the proposal by the United States and Colombia officially opposes these improvements.

3. Data flows: The leaks show that the pressure to include “data flows” and the “free flow of data” in the agreement is persistent. The EU Commission announced previously that data protection will be left out of TiSA. However, the Commission’s Directorate-General for Trade has stated that they will guarantee free data flows and provisions against data localisation. Bringing these topics into the discussions will almost inevitably bring data protection and privacy to the negotiation table.

A big coalition of organisations around the world is worried about the proposals in the draft core text and the e-commerce, telecommunications, financial services and localisation annexes of TiSA. These leaks are not reassuring.

TiSA is being negotiated formally since March 2013. A ministerial meeting to conclude the talks was scheduled for 5–6 December, but the meeting has been cancelled because of outstanding issues and the recent developments in the United States.

First steps towards a European FBI and CIA



A plan to establish a European Public Prosecutor’s Office are well under way. Critics have described the move as another EU “power grab.”

Member-states should control their own criminal law and decide how to utilise their police and prosecution services. Which criminal acts are prosecuted and which are not and where a state's criminal law priorities lie should be matters that each state decides for itself.

The alleged need for a European Public Prosecutor's Office is to tackle fraudulent activity involving EU funds.

The guiding principle should be more effective co-operation to combat all forms of crime, especially fraud, not the establishment of yet another supranational body.

More effective co-operation between member-states in the fight against crime is important, but a European PPO is neither necessary nor desirable. There are already agreements and organisations, such as the anti-fraud bureau OLAF, for this purpose. Subsidies that have been used fraudulently should be immediately returned and payments ceased. There's no need for a European PPO to achieve this.

A number of years ago most countries would have seen a European PPO as unthinkable, yet it now appears that this is on the cards. There is already support for broadening the powers of a European PPO to additional criminal offences.

It is already being said also that this PPO will be the prelude to a real European police force and European criminal courts. Some Euro-federalists are already dreaming out loud of a European CIA and a European FBI. It would be naïve to believe that this will end with a European PPO that concerns itself solely with fraud.

Certainly, more effective co-operation in the fight against crime, but *No* to the transfer of powers, *No* to a European PPO. If a majority of member-states are in favour, Ireland can nevertheless decide not to participate. For once the Government should do the right thing on an unwelcome EU initiative.

Dangerous new definitions of "terrorism"

A terrorist offence includes "seriously destabilising" a whole set of vague structures, from the "political" to the "economic" (EU directive).

A new anti-terror law backed by EU states, including Ireland, contains provisions that could be used to crack down on civil dissent, given its vague notions of terrorism.

It borrows heavily from recent laws in France that allow the authorities to tell internet firms, without any judicial supervision, to block sites that "glorify" terrorism.

But those measures have already led to a series of embarrassments and errors. Orange, a French telecoms firm, shut down Google and Wikipedia for an entire morning in October in France. Both had been added to Orange's terror watch list. People were instead re-directed to a French Interior Ministry web site, where their IP addresses were then identified. "There is no list of blocked sites, and there is no right of appeal, until pretty much after the fact," said a spokesperson for a French digital rights NGO, Adrienne Charmet. "Once we start accepting this type of blocking it is difficult to stop expanding it to other subjects."

David Thomson, a French investigative journalist who works on jihadism, has also had his Facebook account blocked several times. France also passed a law in June that makes it a crime to visit a so-called terrorist web site. Approximately twenty people have since been imprisoned. "It is used to detain or imprison individuals without any proof of them being dangerous or being radicalised," said Charmet. "It presupposes intent. If you just want to consult a web site, does that make you a terrorist?"

The EU directive on combating terrorism contains similar provisions. Internet firms are requested to voluntarily remove the content once asked by the police. But some view the "voluntary" aspect as a means for the

authorities to work around human rights laws. “It is legitimising concepts, firstly, that blocking is an acceptable strategy, in the absence of any agreement on what blocking is,” said Joe McNamee of European Digital Rights. “It is legitimising the notion that it can be done outside the legal framework on a voluntary basis by the internet companies.”



The full text of the bill has yet to be made public, given that it still needs to be voted through the EU Parliament in December. But what constitutes terrorism today, in the context of the fight against Islamic State, is also likely to evolve over time to mean something else ten years from now. Marloes van Noorloos, assistant professor of criminal law at Tilburg University in the Netherlands, noted for instance that “any glorifying remark you could make about Nelson Mandela or Che Guevara, in principle, it is part of the definition.”

The EU directive notes that a terrorist offence includes “seriously destabilising” a whole set of vague structures, from the “political” to the “economic.” So if you speak out against EU austerity policies, or march against the water charges insisted upon by the EU while encouraging people not to pay them ... ? Human rights groups, such as [Human Rights Watch](#), say that such efforts give governments far too much leeway to misuse the directive.

Loads of money!

One of the European political parties, the Alliance for Direct Democracy in Europe (which includes UKIP), has been caught out allegedly misusing EU subsidies. Subsidies to European

political parties and foundations, which are disbursed annually by the EU Parliament, cannot be used by national parties.



ADDE is at fault to the tune of no less than €173,000. But if the EU was serious about ensuring a less corruption-prone set-up it would simply stop the subsidies and ensure that European political parties and foundations are financed instead from contributions from their members, the national political parties.

The monitoring of the subsidy system is highly flawed. The books of the political parties and foundations are supposedly monitored by the EU Parliament. That is always done by the Bureau of the Parliament, but in practice the Bureau always follows the secretary-general’s recommendations, and little attention is paid to the supporting documents. That can quickly lead to abuses.

Furthermore, most of the MEPs in the Bureau are themselves affiliated to European political parties, so that it can be difficult for them to judge other parties objectively, for fear that their own party will be subject to criticism. Political groups in the EU Parliament themselves are financed separately.

It’s a rare old gravy train!

EU and Canadian civil society groups call for rejection of CETA

In a petition organised by the Seattle to Brussels Network, 455 civil society organisations in Canada and Europe “*hereby express our deep concern about the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada. During the long process of*

the deal's negotiations and legal check, we repeatedly pointed out major problems with the CETA text. We provided concrete inputs, which could have triggered a shift towards a more transparent and democratic trade policy with the protection of the environment and people's fundamental rights at its core. But our concerns have not been addressed in the CETA as signed in October 2016. This is why we are stating our firm opposition to the ratification of the agreement.



“Our objections are shared by a growing number of citizens on both sides of the Atlantic. A record 3.5 million people from all over Europe have signed a petition against CETA and its twin agreement, the EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. Over 2,100 local and regional governments have declared themselves TTIP-free and CETA-free. Constitutional challenges against CETA have been filed in Germany and Canada and the legality of CETA's controversial privileges for foreign investors will likely be ruled on by the Court of Justice of the

European Union.”



Despite the controversy, the Canadian government and the EU institutions are trying to expedite the ratification of CETA. In Canada, legislation that would bring the agreement into force has already been introduced, without allowing time for any public consultation on the final agreement. The EU Parliament also is cutting short its internal consultation processes, thereby limiting debate over ratifying the 1,600-page text. After that, large parts of the agreement would be brought into force provisionally—long before the parliaments of all twenty-eight EU member-states have had their say.

The list of organisations that signed is [here](#). It includes the ICTU, Mandate, the TEEU, the People's Movement, An Taisce, Comhlámh, and various religious, environmental and other groups.