



PEOPLE'S NEWS

News Digest of the People's Movement

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Expanded PESCO involvement



In mid-June, a memo was brought to cabinet seeking approval for Ireland to join an EU defence project to help minimise threats to undersea gas, electricity and data cables. The project is part of the EU's permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) which the EU is driving much further than originally intended. Von der Leyen has even touted the idea of a defence commissioner.

She wants a specific EU budget line for defence and more money for joint procurement of military equipment, as the EU shifts into what EU Council president Charles Michel has called a "war economy". French president Emmanuel Macron wants to double the EU's €1 trillion budget, partly to pay for its new scaled-up military ambitions.

Assurances



When the EU recently decided to funnel €5 billion through an off-budget peace fund for Ukraine, Ireland obtained assurances that its contributions would not go towards lethal weapons, an opt-out that Ireland says is part of a policy of "strategic ambiguity" on defence. So, neutrality will be saved by strategic ambiguity and talking out of two sides of your mouth while we send neutral mine sweepers to Ukraine and depend on assurances that our taxes will not be used to fund lethal weapons. Somehow, it's on par with the assurances that US military aircraft transiting Shannon are not carrying lethal weapons or ammunition.

Partners in crime



Since October 7th, the EU has provided political cover and material support for Israel. This support continued as Israel was placed on trial for genocide at the International Court of Justice.

Were the EU to have applied pressure in October by imposing sanctions, an arms embargo and prohibiting the transit of US military equipment through Europe, Israel's genocidal war on Gaza may have been at least, curtailed? The EU chose not to act then, and it continues to fail in its legal and moral duty to act now. This political cover and material support, particularly in light of the ICJ's interim ruling which put all states on notice of a plausible case of genocide, makes the EU directly complicit in it.

[Partners in Crime - EU complicity in Israel's genocide in Gaza](#)

PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT
GLUAISEACHT AN PHOBAIL 

The next monthly protest against EU Militarisation will be held on **Wednesday July 17th** at the EU Offices, [Europe House, 12-14 Mount Street Lower, Dublin 2.](#) (control/click for map) commencing at 1:00pm.

No to an EU army!

Withdraw from PESCO now!

No to EU Battlegroups!

Active neutrality now!

Try to get along, if only for a short period.

Ireland to start talks on security agreement with Ukraine



Kyiv Independent [reports that](#) Ukraine will soon start negotiations on security guarantees with Ireland, and is ready to sign the bilateral agreements with Estonia and Lithuania, Ihor Zhovkva, deputy head of the Presidential Office, said in an interview with Interfax Ukraine.

The agreement – according to the report - follows the pledge made by the G7 during the NATO summit in Vilnius in July 2023 to commit to Ukraine's long-term defense. While Ireland is considered a "neutral country," the agreements "are not only about weapons, it is also about the economy, about sanctions," and issues like Russian assets, Zhovka said.

Von der Leyen's 'geopolitical' commission

Official internal documents have slammed the current "geopolitical commission" of Ursula von der Leyen. Her self-proclaimed 2019 geopolitical commission pushed her beyond her role as the head of the EU executive, prompting concerns among national leaders about impartiality and politicisation of the institution and casting doubt on her suitability for the job.

This so-called geopolitical commission has been seen "as a way for the commission to be less impartial," Michel explained, noting that there is a need for an "impartial commission" when it comes to, for example, foreign affairs — where the EU executive doesn't have competences. But her handling of Israel's attack on Gaza is likely her biggest controversy and was even criticised by Leo Varadkar.



Click above

Is EU support for Israel and Ukraine in contravention of the treaties?



The EU, despite sharing many characteristics of a federal state, does not hold the sovereignty to engage in war or non-proliferation activities. This limitation is a fundamental principle within the EU's legal and institutional framework.

It is imperative to clarify that neither the European Commission (EC) nor the European Parliament (EP) possesses the legal authority to engage in war or support any military conflict. This article looks at the legal constraints governing the EC and EP, outlines their powers and the implications of exceeding these boundaries, potentially constituting war crimes under international law.

[Read more here](#)

Dáil votes to better protect Ireland's fishing waters!



Don't be silly, it can't do that; the EU decides how much fish we can take! Instead it has voted to "defend critical infrastructure" and approved a plan to allow Ireland join an EU military scheme purportedly to defend critical seabed infrastructure against sabotage, terrorism and espionage.

But, is it Ireland's responsibility to defend this infrastructure if it is attacked over their many thousand miles length? That is surely the responsibility of those who own and control them. Attack by a hostile state would only happen anyway in a war involving EU/NATO and Russia, in which case we are likely to be more worried by the danger of atom bombs flying round and the safest course for Ireland would be to remain as uninvolved as possible – in other words to seek to follow a meaningful neutrality policy and halt the lurch towards a de facto alignment with NATO and participation in more and more aspects of EU militarisation.

Independent TD Catherine Connolly accused the Government of trying to erode the country's neutrality "bit by bit."

The Critical Seabed Infrastructure Protection project is part of the PESCO framework where EU member states purportedly cooperate to improve the capabilities of their armed forces. The infrastructure project is led by Italy and already has seven EU member states participating in it. A plan to participate in cyber defence exercises, which will be led by the European Defence Agency (EDA). The government didn't explain exactly how the new measure would prevent "friendly" sabotage such as the 2022 Nordstream pipeline attack! But not to worry, all embarrassing enquiries into this matter have been conveniently closed down.

EU-Ukraine 'security' agreement in full



The Agreement was signed by President Zelensky on the margins of EU summit in Brussels, June 27.

*"For the first time, this agreement will enshrine the commitment of **all** 27 Member States to provide Ukraine with extensive support, regardless of any internal institutional changes," Zelensky said at the end of the signing ceremony. Click photo for text.*

European Defence Industry Summit: arms lobbyists and EU leaders are best buddies



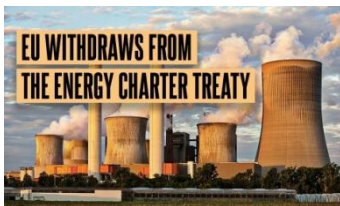
On the same day the [Letta report](#) on the EU market was released the European Defence Industry Summit took place, co-organised by the European Business Summits and the main [arms](#)

[industry lobby, ASD.](#)

The guest of honour was the EU President Ursula von der Leyen, alongside other EU leaders like Commissioner Thierry Breton in charge of the arms industry, the Estonian prime minister Kaja Kallas, the Belgium minister of defence Ludivine Dedonder and MEP Nathalie Loiseau, chair of the EU Parliament defence subcommittee, as well as many high level EU civil servants, all cosying up for the day with arms companies' CEOs. According to [B2pro](#), "Europe's defence awakening is too slow" for the arms industry.

Read the [ENAAT Brussels Report](#):

The EU decides to exit the Energy Charter Treaty



EU member states have unanimously agreed to leave the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT), a long-standing international agreement that protects fossil-fuel investments. The treaty allowed oil and gas companies to sue governments for decisions that pose a threat to their investments. It is often used to claw back money if governments adopt policies against fossil-fuel projects, hindering the energy transition. This has led to increasing criticism in recent years from campaigners, the EU Parliament and member states alike.

For example, in 2021, the German companies RWE and Uniper sued the Netherlands over the Dutch coal phase-out law while "And here in Ireland, Lansdowne Oil and Gas plc, a partner of Barryroe Offshore Energy, is challenging the Irish government on their decision not to grant a licence which would have been inconsistent with our climate targets.

The majority of ECT disputes are claims against an EU country by an investor from another EU member state. The EU Commission first proposed an exit from the treaty last year, after member states including the Netherlands, Germany, and Spain made the individual decision to leave the treaty over climate action concerns. Nine member states had left by the time Ireland decided to do so.

EU/NATO's mutually-reinforcing roles – Commission Report



The ninth progress report on the implementation of the 74 common proposals endorsed by the EU and NATO Councils in December 2016 and December 2017 points out that **close EU-NATO cooperation is more important than ever** and that the two organisations continue to play **complementary, coherent and mutually-reinforcing roles** in supporting international peace and security to the benefit of all EU member states and NATO allies, with a view to upholding and promoting the shared values and interests of the Euro-Atlantic community. We are practically members of NATO – all that remains is to sign along the dotted line! The ‘public’ version of the Report is [here](#)

Top Commission positions chosen by cabal behind closed doors

A small group of EU leaders nominated Ursula von der Leyen for a second term as EU Commission president on at a European Council summit. They also selected former Portuguese prime minister António Costa as the next EU Council president and Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas for the next foreign policy chief.

The proposal comes from a deal made behind closed doors by six heads of state from Germany, France, Poland, Spain, the Netherlands, and Greece. It is largely seen as a done deal because MEPs from the EU's three largest parliamentary groups are expected to back it. However, some are asking why a group of six member states gets to decide on the EU's top positions when these leaders should serve 27 member states. Naturally, smaller member states don't matter and Ireland did not get an opportunity to “punch above its weight”.

While leaders from the group of six have already congratulated von der Leyen, she'll still need the approval of at least 361 of the 720 MEPs in a secret vote coming later this month. Theoretically, the votes from the majority coalition of von der Leyen's EPP, along with the Socialist and Liberal parties would suffice, but some MEPs can be expected to dissent in the secret ballot. If more than 38 MEPs dissent, von der Leyen could fail to win approval.

The obsolete concepts of transparency and the rule of law



Nobody embodies the EU's elite-driven nature better than its president, Ursula von der Leyen. And no action of hers embodies its excesses better than her decision, in April 2021, to single-handedly sign off on a €35-billion deal for the purchase of 1.8 billion doses of the BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine. According to [one analysis](#), the price per dose she agreed was 15 times higher than the cost of production — meaning that the EU overpaid the vaccines by tens of billions of euros. Adding fuel to the fire, the *New York Times* later [reported](#) that von der Leyen had personally negotiated the deal via a series of text messages and calls with Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla.

[Read more here](#)

EU Migration Pact



The Dáil has voted in favour of opting into the [EU Migration Pact](#) by a slim majority – 79 to 73. The Pact aims to overhaul the EU’s immigration policies, making laws uniform across the bloc. Justice Minister Helen McEntee, applying incontrovertible logic said, that not joining other EU countries in signing up to the Pact would leave Ireland isolated.

The legislation has been [widely condemned by humanitarian organisations](#) for [restricting people’s](#) right to seek asylum and codifying the EU’s most hostile border practices – like using detention centres and outsourcing processing.

Opposition parties had taken issue with some aspects of the Pact, but agreed with other measures such as the sharing of data among EU states. The features they opposed include a provision that will allow countries to suspend their asylum systems in “emergency” situations and the use of detention centres to keep asylum seekers in a kind of legal limbo while their claims are “screened”. Ireland has handed over significant sovereignty to Brussels, which will now be empowered to make decisions that will not necessarily be in our interests.

More austerity on the way- the example of Greece



While Greece is known as the birthplace of democracy, more recently, it has also come to be known as a kind of policy laboratory for the EU. No other country has suffered so directly from the austerity measures prescribed by Brussels. At the same time, it is the country – within the NATO alliance – that has allocated the highest percentage of its GDP to military spending, reaching 3.5 per cent this year – even more than the United States. In line with the programme of the EU Parliamentary Groups that won the EU elections, this approach – greater austerity and high military spending – will mark the budgets for the coming years. This squaring of the circle can only mean significant cuts in social spending. [Read more here](#)

Lufthansa eyes military contracts



Lufthansa's subsidiary, Lufthansa Technik, wants to get involved in maintenance of military aircraft.. And what has this got to do with Ireland?

[Lufthansa Technik Mobile Engine Services](#) is based in Celbridge Co Kildare while [Lufthansa Technik Turbine](#) is based at Shannon.

Lufthansa Technik is carrying out maintenance work on the US Navy's Poseidon patrol aircraft and wants to get involved in maintenance of 60 CH-47F Chinook heavy transport helicopters recently ordered by Germany though not necessarily in Ireland. When NATO replaces its AWACS aircraft with the new E-7 type over the next few years, the LHT CEO believes there is a good chance the company will get involved in the maintenance business for the E-7 which is based on the B737, which is very familiar to Irish engineers.

EU gifts billions to Egypt despite rights record



The EU has signed off on €1 billion in financial assistance to Egypt. This deal is one of the most expensive financial assistance deals the EU has ever signed off on with a country outside the EU. However, by failing to ensure the Egyptian authorities adopt clear benchmarks for human rights and rule of law as a pre-condition for funding, the EU is breaking its own rules. Thousands of people including [journalists](#), critics, [opposition politicians](#), peaceful protesters, [refugees](#) and human rights defenders are unjustly languishing behind bars, in squalid conditions, for exercising their human rights. The EU should have ensured that Egypt released those arbitrarily detained before proceeding with the deal.

Furthermore, On 15 March 2024, von der Leyen informed Parliament President Metsola of the intention of the Commission to disburse the funds using the emergency procedure in [Article 213 TFEU](#), which allows the adoption of funding decisions without Parliament's consent 'when the situation in a third country requires urgent financial assistance from the Union'. This procedure bypasses any scrutiny by MEPs. Von der Leyen justified the emergency procedure by referring to the economic and geopolitical situation in Egypt. It would have been too honest to say that it was part of a [migration deal](#)! On 17 March, two days later, the EU signed the [EU-Egypt Strategic Partnership](#) with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. This partnership includes €7.4 billion offered by the EU in grants and loans up to the end of 2027. The disbursement, replicates similar deals Brussels has made with Tunisia, Mauritania and Turkey to curb migration into the EU.

Former EIB chief under investigation



EU prosecutors tasked who investigate serious financial crimes are probing the former president of the European Investment Bank (EIB). The European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) has said in a [statement](#) that its investigation the former president of the European Investment Bank involved "two individuals suspected of corruption and abuse of influence, as well as the misappropriation of EU funds."

Werner Hoyer, who [retired](#) from his post as EIB president at the end of last year, faces a corruption case. Hoyer has denied any wrongdoing through his lawyer, who said that the EPPO's probe focuses on the departure of an EIB employee and the compensation paid to him in this context. Hoyer signed off on the exit package.

The EIB functions as the EU's lending arm and is becoming instrumental in boosting military spending and integration across the bloc by offering loans, guarantees and investment in the public and private sectors.

As of March 2020, Ireland had paid in capital of €1.64bn. Rest assured, it's in safe hands!

The acceptable face



EU Foreign Ministers last month to invite Israel's Foreign Minister Katz to discuss the country's compliance with its human rights obligations under the EU-Israel Association Agreement in response to an Irish initiative with Spain, "In order to discuss the situation in Gaza (...) the respect of human rights" as well as how Israel intends to comply with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling calling on it to cease its offensive in Rafah," Josep Borrell said at the time. But since then, the Israeli minister has not replied to the invitation, a sign that Israel might be waiting to see who will take over his position.

Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas will now do so and would be acceptable to Israel. Kallas stated last November: " Hamas is waging a ruthless campaign of terror with zero regard for human life, including the lives of Palestinians. Israel is fully entitled to defend itself. But it must do so in a way that spares innocent lives and adheres to the norms of international law." It's a familiar refrain.

The EU's designs to accelerate militarisation



The EU is gearing up to boost military spending across the continent amid a perceived threat from Russia and fears of a wavering U.S. commitment, creating avenues for funding military projects through EU-level institutions. The collection of incremental moves aimed at steering the Brussels bureaucracy towards military outcomes flies in the face of the EU's founding myth as a peace project and overturns the primacy of member states in military matters, primarily in the interests of the bloc's arms manufacturers – no matter how it's dressed up!

The funds newly made available for research and development and potentially for military procurement could reach into the billions of euros and the reshuffling of EU decision-makers through the recent elections has the potential to strengthen these trends.

[Read more here](#)

Mercosur still very much in play



The EU is preparing for swift approval of a long-stalled trade agreement with the Mercosur bloc – Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay – now that the elections are over, according to Rupert Schlegelmilch, Brussels' top negotiator.

Schlegelmilch has toured the four Mercosur countries to iron out the technical details of the agreement, which, if signed, would be the EU's largest to date, covering 10% of the world's population and 20% of global GDP. "The agreement is very much alive. The fact is that the Commission is still negotiating, we have a mandate from all the member states, including France, to do this," he stressed.