



PEOPLE'S NEWS

News Digest of the People's Movement

www.people.ie | post@people.ie | facebook.com/peoplesmovementireland

No.272:

February 15th 2025.

Articles may be used or adapted in whole or in part including changing titles if desired, and circulated without any need of reference to or acknowledgement of the source.

No wonder people are cynical



The Journal has reported that new Irish defence forces helicopters will use tech from the blacklisted arms manufacturer and largest supplier to the IDF, Elbit Systems. This flies in the face of his own comments committing to do the exact opposite as the government rolls back on almost all major commitments on Palestine. The people of Palestine are still suffering as residents of Gaza, having returned, search for bodies in the ruins of their homes while Israel strikes with impunity in the West Bank

Still pushing for an Irish military industry

Lobbyists for international arms manufacturers organised a secret meeting with Department of Defence officials – and instructed attendees to maintain secrecy about it. The Irish Defence and Security Association (IDSA), arranged the private briefing with Department of Defence assistant secretary general Eamonn Murtagh at the Royal Marine Hotel in November 2024.

The lobbying group said in the invitation there would be “no advance publicity or social media promotion” of the meeting. IDSA had agreed with the Department of Defence to invite state bodies and agencies – including IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and the Departments of Enterprise and Foreign Affairs.

The invitation outlined how IDSA, pointing to Ireland having “no defence industry strategy or industrial participation policy”, seeks clarity on industry's role in defence contracts as well as the development of policies to “determine when the government would indeed require [not “if”] industrial participation.” Assistant secretary Murtagh briefed IDSA members on the department's “recent restructuring” and its meaning for the military industry.

The November briefing was part of a wider programme of private meetings between the [arms industry lobbyists](#) and state officials both during 2024 and scheduled for 2025.



Why not become a friend of the
People's Movement on Facebook?

www.facebook.com/peoplesmovementireland

Click above


Harris briefing - EU states in “full war preparation mode”



A high-level briefing document for new Defence Minister Simon Harris reveals that many of Ireland’s EU partners are now in “full war preparation mode.” The document highlights how military neutrality, traditionally accepted in Ireland and other EU countries, may no longer be as tolerable due to a shifting geopolitical climate. The EU’s defence strategy is at the forefront of discussions, with many member states calling for a strategic shift towards militarisation, though this month’s informal summit, meant to find the €500bn for the military industry failed to deliver a concrete plan whose next shot is the EU’s Defence White paper in March.

[The document predicts](#) that Ireland will face increased pressure when it assumes the EU presidency in the second half of 2026, particularly during negotiations on the next EU budget, where defence will likely be a major focus. Poland, which holds the presidency for the first half of 2025, has already emphasized European security. Additionally, the EU’s upcoming White Paper on Defence in March will further heighten the focus on military matters, signalling a major change in EU priorities.

Keep the Triple Lock – protest

PEOPLE’S MOVEMENT
GLUAISEACHT AN PHOBAIL 

The next monthly protest against EU Militarisation **will be held on Wednesday February 19th** at Dáil Eireann, Kildare St. commencing at 1:00pm.

No to an EU army!

Withdraw from PESCO now!

No to EU Battlegroups!

Keep the Triple Lock

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

Our next protest is on Wednesday 19th February at 13:00 outside the Dáil. Please try to join us at this crucial time.

As you are probably aware, the Programme for Government seeks to “reform” the Triple Lock and that a draft law to put that measure into effect is now ready to be brought to cabinet.

Ireland is currently part of the EU German – led Battlegroup and with increasing consideration being given to the deployment of EU military on a large scale, the appointment of a “Defence

Commissioner” and the new Commission being even more belligerent than the previous one, it is increasingly likely that a Battlegroup will be deployed during this term. To facilitate active Irish involvement, the provision in the Triple Lock, requiring a UN mandate for the deployment of Irish troops would have to be abolished.

The negative impact of such a move will affect us all and endanger our future security. Irish troops could participate in the EU’s and NATO’s military ventures, in some cases, no doubt, making Ireland a conventional target or even a target for non-state actors.

Von der Leyen's U-turn ignores transparency and inclusion

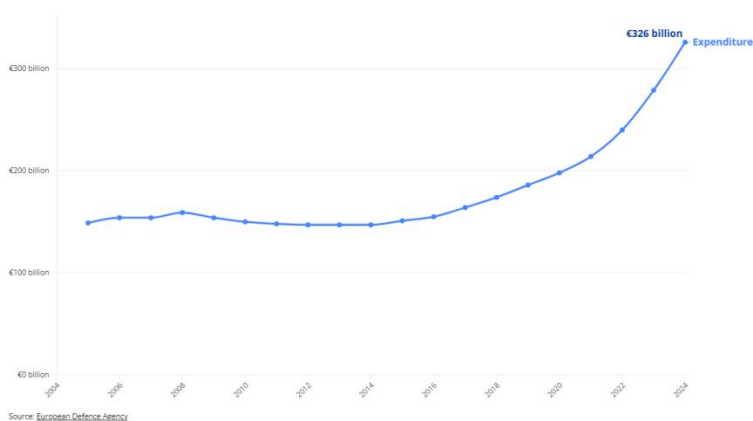


During her first Commission mandate, Ursula von der Leyen [defended](#) the EU Green Deal as a “strategy for growth that gives more back than it takes away”. Now, in a complete reversal, her second term’s slogan is deregulation, particularly when it comes to legislation setting the bar for environmental and human rights protection. Currently, the commission is running invitation-only consultations where corporate lobbies outweigh civil society organisations and trade unions – but that’s business EU – style: ignoring the principles of transparency and inclusion enshrined in EU treaties.

In all, thirty - one companies, 13 percent of them representing oil and gas interests, are [given a seat](#) to shape requirements on environmental and human rights due diligence, the victims of corporate abuses and those at the frontline of the environmental crises will go unheard.

[Read more here](#)

Member states' military spend in 2024 - an astonishing €326 billion



Between 2021 and 2024, EU member states’ total military expenditure rose by more than 30%. [In 2024, it reached an estimated €326 billion.](#) **That was a 30% rise in member states’ expenditure between 2021 and 2024** Expenditure is expected to rise by more than another **€100 billion in real terms by 2027.**

French exceptionalism



Back in 2016 Jean-Claude Juncker, then-president of the EU Commission, was asked why he let France get away with its fiscal slippage and not impose sanctions. Juncker replied that he did so because it is France. Nothing much has changed since then, except that the Stability and Growth pact now formally allows for such escape clauses.

The French sense of exceptionalism in fiscal policies is legendary. France had an excessive deficit procedure for five consecutive years since 2009. The EU Council’s target for France to correct the deficit was postponed year after year due to ‘adverse economic events’. Ever since there has been an annual haggle between Brussels and Paris over the governments figures that usually turn out to be too optimistic, much to the exasperation of the Germans.

[Read more here](#)

The Excessive Deficit Procedure can be changed!

Member state governments will be able to increase military spending without breaching the EU's deficit budget rules under plans to expand what can be classed as defense investment. The costs of military staffing and equipment maintenance — which currently count toward a country's deficit figures that are strictly policed by the EU Commission — could be considered alongside core military spending.



The EU's spending rules aim to keep national budget deficits — the amount governments spend relative to what they bring in — at less than 3 percent of the size of the economy and public debt at no more than 60 percent. But countries can be granted more time to get to these levels if they invest in military equipment. They can also escape a punitive measure if their extra spending is related to the military.

[Read more here](#)

EU influence declines in West Africa



The handover of the last French military base in Chad marks the end of a 60-year military presence and a significant loss of influence for France and European interests in the Sahel. This shift follows Chadian President Déby's decision in November to end military cooperation with France, influenced by growing anti-French sentiment in the region. The move reflects a broader trend since 2022, with French forces withdrawing from Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, and more recently, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire signalling a desire for French troops to leave.

France's withdrawal from Chad, while a blow to its authority, also signals a decline in EU influence in West Africa. Many of the countries in the region are now focused on forging their own alliances and asserting their sovereignty. In their quest for independence, they are eager to make their own decisions without external influence. France, having mismanaged its relationships with regional leaders, will face challenges in maintaining its foothold as the departure of French forces opens the door to other global players. This shift marks a turning point, as African nations seek new partners and chart their own futures.

A bit of history – forty years ago



On 2 February 1985 Greenland left the EEC to become the first country to quit the bloc since the founding Treaty of Rome came into operation in January 1958. The departure, originally set for 1 January, was held up by a dispute over access to dwindling stocks of fish.

Greenland entered the community with Denmark in 1973 despite the fact that 71% of its voters opposed membership in the Danish referendum on the EEC the previous year. A Greenland referendum in 1979, then approved home rule by 70% to 26% of the voters, permitting Greenlanders to decide for themselves whether they wished to stay in the EEC. Greenland remained part of the Kingdom of Denmark and under the Danish constitution, but power was devolved to a locally elected parliament, the Landsting.

A further right-ward shift in the EU



The EU elections in May moved the EU Parliament further to the conservative right, with a growing extreme-right presence. Progressives – a loose term in relation to the EU Parliament - and in particular the Greens, lost ground.

Now [14 out of 27 EU governments are based upon direct or indirect support from rightwing populists](#) and/or extreme-right parties. These significant changes in the political landscape are reflected in the incoming EU Commission, with a heavily conservative/militarist representation.

There is certainly a lot to worry about out there. The conflict in Ukraine and the genocide in Gaza with its atrocious bombings must come to an absolute end. The disaster that is Sudan, where millions potentially can starve has been hidden by news of conflicts closer to home. And, the advances of the extreme-right became more apparent.

[Read more here](#)

The EU loudly proclaims its support for a two-state solution and then seriously undermines it

At the recent EU Ambassadors' Conference, both the [president of the EU Commission Ursula von der Leyen](#) and EU foreign affairs chief Kaja [Kallas](#) made the usual reference to the “two-state solution.” Yet the EU has consistently undermined the two-state solution and fuelled the conflict in Palestinian territory. The EU leadership has possibly even paved the way for another solution: a mass deportation of Palestinians to Egypt and Jordan, flagged by [US president Donald Trump as a “clean out” plan](#), at his [press conference with Israel's prime minister Netanyahu](#).

For almost two decades, the EU has fuelled the Palestinian division, both geographically (West Bank/Gaza Strip) and politically (Fatah/Hamas). It notably disregarded the Palestinian clear majority for Hamas in the [2006 legislative elections, considered democratic by an EU Electoral Observation Mission](#) and little known to Irish people.

[Read more here](#)

Paul Callan SC



Paul Callan, whose name may not be known to many readers, has passed away. He was chief counsel for Raymond Crotty in the Crotty case on the Single European Act in 1986-7. Were it not for Paul there would have been no Crotty case and therefore no subsequent referendum on the SEA and possibly also on none of the other EU-related referendums that followed.

Paul also acted as chief counsel in the later McKenna case outlawing the one-sided expenditure of public money in referendums, in the 2000 Coughlan case on equality in free referendum broadcasts, and in the 2012 Pringle case on the ESM – all on a “pro bono” basis. Paul retired from practice in 2017 and consequently relinquished his role as ‘Father of the Bar’, which he occupied for many years. The Irish people owe him a debt of gratitude, although most people do not know of his work.

Onward to an EU Army



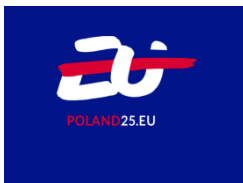
Photo: European Defence Agency

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has called for an EU alternative to NATO, arguing that the EU must take greater responsibility for its own security. “NATO remains the foundation of our defense. But it is evident that we need a pan-European defense,” von der Leyen said during a press briefing in Lithuania last week. Interestingly, the Commission transcript said; “we need an EU-

wide surge in defence.” The strategy for the future of EU defense is set to be presented to EU leaders by mid-March, she said. This is possibly the timeline for abolishing the Triple Lock.

Before the conflict in Ukraine, French President Emmanuel Macron and former German Chancellor Angela Merkel were among the most vocal advocates for the establishment of an EU army. In 2019, Macron urged EU leaders to pursue a policy of “strategic autonomy” from Washington; one of his suggestions was to create a “true, European army.” Italy also supports the idea. Foreign Minister Tajani has argued that the bloc cannot have a credible foreign policy without a joint military.

Poland’s EU Council presidency: a scary vista



On January 1, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk took over the rotating six-month presidency of the Council of the European Union. Above all, this role involves the organisational preparation of the council meetings. However, it also gives the council president the opportunity to set certain thematic priorities.

Tusk made clear from the outset what is central for him: the EU must be prepared for war. Under the motto “Security, Europe!” he presented a militarist and authoritarian agenda in Warsaw. By this he meant not only the arming of the state and its powers at home and abroad, but in all areas of society, which he linked to the buzzwords “information, economy, energy, food and health.” He made clear how far his considerations go with the following sentence: “The sources of Europe’s greatness—freedom, a sense of sovereignty and our culture—are all worth the effort. Some say that they are even worth the ultimate sacrifice.”

From July to December 2026, Ireland will hold the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU. Throughout this six-month period, Ireland will continue the EU’s policy agenda. We already have a flavour and it doesn’t seem to accord with the sentiments of the Irish electorate!

[Read more here](#)



