



PEOPLE'S NEWS

News Digest of the People's Movement

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'Defence' now EU's 'number one focus' says Irish officer taking up leading military role in Brussels



A senior Irish Military officer who will be part of the Irish team leading the EU Military Committee says that the EU has realised the importance of security.

Colonel Tim O'Brien is part of a team of nine military experts selected to go to Brussels as Defence Forces chief of staff Sean Clancy prepares to take up the chair of the EU Military Committee – essentially, Europe's top military job. Clancy will take up the role as head of the EUMC in this summer – bringing O'Brien and the rest of his cabinet as they start a three-year term. O'Brien, in an interview with *The Journal*, said that security and defence had now become the “number one focus” for the EU.

You can read the article [here](#)

Unity is strength



A large number of groups campaigning against militarism and for retention of the Triple Lock came together outside the Dáil on March 26th on the occasion of a [Social Democrats motion](#) demanding that the proposal to abolish the Triple Lock [be put to the people](#). It was an initial and impressive show of unity between disparate groups and is the way forward on this issue – despite our differences. Let's hope it continues and is mirrored by a similar unity among the opposition political parties. This proposal can be defeated!

Above: Social Democrats Foreign Affairs and Defence Spokesperson Sinéad Gibney is on the extreme left of the banner with Cllr Aishling Silke on her right.

Keep the Triple Lock – protest on April 16th!



Our monthly protest in favour of neutrality has now entered its eight year and almost 100 protests. Now, the government is pushing ahead with scrapping the Triple Lock guarantee against involvement in foreign wars. It is important to emphasise that the Irish people rejected the EU's Nice Treaty in 2001 because of their concerns about its military implications and how it would move us closer to a nuclear armed NATO.

Bertie Ahern's government of the time instructed the people to vote again in order to obtain a Yes vote. In the second Nice referendum in 2002 Ahern introduced the Triple Lock whereby no

Irish troops over twelve in number could take part in overseas missions without the approval of the Cabinet, the Dáil and, most significantly, the UN. When concerns about Irish neutrality led in turn to the defeat of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU's Constitution, in 2008, the Brian Cowan's Government again insisted on a second referendum vote to change the result and repeated its assurance to voters on the Triple Lock - in principle to be maintained indefinitely. All parties subscribed to this "solemn" undertaking. The Programme for Government of the last government led by the FF and FG parties included a clear commitment that all Irish overseas military operations would be subject to the Triple Lock.

It is absolutely outrageous that the FFG+ Government are reneging on the explicit Nice and Lisbon Treaty commitments. This is a clear betrayal of the Irish people's wishes and of the "solemn" undertakings made to them in the Nice and Lisbon referendums. Naturally the Government will make no mention of these commitments because they do not want the people to be reminded of them. Their contention is that Russia and China as UN Security Council members should have no veto on sending Irish troops abroad. They make no mention of the similar veto that America, Britain and France have as Security Council members - and have had now for nearly eighty years. Without the Triple Lock Irish troops could have taken full part in the disastrous 2003 Iraq war, the 2011 Libyan war and the 2011 Syrian war – in none of which the Western Powers had a UN mandate. Abolishing the Triple Lock would enable Ireland dive fully into the Ukrainian-Russian war along with the rest of the EU as is now being mooted. So, do try to get along on April 16th.



The return of Bolkestein – the EU's '28th regime'



In 2004, Frits Bolkestein, the EU commissioner for the internal market, introduced a controversial proposal that would later be named the [“Bolkestein Directive.”](#) This directive sought to allow companies to provide services in other EU countries under the labour conditions of their home country. The concept, known as the “country-of-origin” principle, caused significant alarm. Many feared it would enable workers from lower-wage countries, such as Polish plumbers, to offer their services in higher-wage countries like Ireland but for their home country’s minimum wages.

The [“28th regime”](#) poses a significant risk: it would enable large corporations to bypass national labour protections, union rights, and collective bargaining agreements. The EU touts this plan as a means of modernisation and innovation, but in reality, it paves the way for further labour market deregulation without sufficient protections for workers. Just as the Bolkestein Directive was defeated through the mobilisation of thousands of workers, it’s crucial that we remain vigilant and prepared to challenge this new proposal before it becomes law. Bolkestein died in February at the age of 91.

Militarisation will lead to war - scientists

CORRIERE DELLA SERA

More than 2,500 scientists have signed an appeal against the EU plans

for militarisation, published by the largest Italian circulation *Corriere della Sera*: “As scientists - many of us involved in fields on which military technology is developed - as intellectuals, as citizens aware of the current global risks, we believe that today it is the moral and civic obligation of any person of good will to raise their voice against the call for a European militarisation, and urge dialogue, tolerance, and diplomacy. Abrupt militarisation does not preserve peace; it leads to war. The last thing we need today is the Old Continent ... becoming a new warlord.”

The EU’s propaganda machine: Funding NGOs to promote EU ‘values’



The report below explores the EU Commission’s increasing use of its budgetary powers to promote its political agenda under the guise of advancing ‘EU values’. It reveals how the EU leverages programmes to fund non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and think tanks, many of which are explicitly aligned with the Commission’s vision of deeper EU integration. The Commission has allocated over €45 billion to "Resilience and Values" with a staggering €1.8 billion specifically earmarked for "Rights and values". In effect, many EU citizens who are opposed to ‘more Europe’ as the answer to every problem are funding the promotion of greater EU federalism.

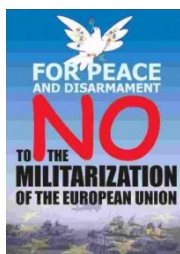
Then there’s the IIEA – Ireland’s EU propaganda centre. The IIEA's accounts show that such fees are paid by various Irish State Departments (e.g. Department of Defense, Department of Agriculture), Irish semi-state companies (e.g. ESB, Enterprise Ireland, the DAA), and Irish private companies (e.g. AIB, Bank of Ireland) – about 50% funded from the Irish exchequer. It’s not clear how much comes from the EU. [The Report is here](#)

A missed opportunity or business as usual



The High Representative Kaja Kallas and EU foreign ministers should have unequivocally condemned Israel's atrocity crimes and other serious violations of international law during the [EU-Israel Association Council](#) meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar [at the end of February](#). Kallas and EU foreign ministers should signal an end to the bloc's reluctance to acknowledge and address Israel's [war crimes, crimes against humanity](#)—including [apartheid](#)—and [acts of genocide](#). They could have made clear to Sa'ar that there will be consequences for past and ongoing abuses, including – at a minimum - sanctions on officials responsible for ongoing abuses and suspending weapons sales. They should also have announced an immediate review of Israel's compliance with its human rights obligations under the EU-Israel [Association Agreement](#), following Spain and Ireland's February 2024 [request](#) to suspend it over Israel's grave abuses. But they didn't.

The EU's Anti-Democratic Militarisation



Europe is being swept up in war frenzy unseen since the 1930s. Earlier this month the EU unveiled a massive €800 - billion rearmament plan, ReArm Europe. Most of the money (€660 billion) will come from Member States, which will be allowed (expected, in fact) to overshoot the bloc's public-spending limit – that is, to take on more debt – up to a maximum of 1.5 percent of GDP for a period of four years, provided they spend the money on defence. The remaining €140 billion will be raised directly by the EU Commission on capital markets – although ultimately, this money will also have to be paid back by Member States.

After spending the past two decades pressurising countries to slash welfare and public investment in the name of “fiscal sustainability”, Brussels is now championing a massive spending spree – for war. Evidently artillery, missiles, ammunition and drones are more fiscally sustainable than schools, hospitals and infrastructure. [Read the latest article from Thomas Fazi here](#)

Everything you always wanted to know about Eurobonds



Even casual followers of EU affairs are likely to have come across the issue of common borrowing – sometimes referred to as common debt, joint debt or Eurobonds. It is one of the most controversial issues currently being discussed by EU leaders. This is largely because France and Germany, the EU's two traditional agenda-setters, vehemently disagree on the subject: Paris strongly backs the policy, while Berlin is staunchly opposed. The Irish government is in favour of Eurobonds. They form part of the structure of the '[ReArm Europe](#)' proposal. [Read a straightforward explanation here.](#)

Neutrality on show

France, the UK, and Ukraine were preparing a peace treaty to present to the US, which was discussed at the summit of mainly NATO members called by Macron on Thursday last. Nations that supported this agreement would form a “coalition of the willing.” On the eve of the summit, Spain’s Pedro Sánchez called for the creation of a European army, specifically “EU armed forces with troops from all 27 member countries, working under a single flag with the same objectives.”

Instead, he had to scale back his ambition and announced plans for chiefs of staff of both countries to dispatch a "Franco-British team to Ukraine" to meet with Ukrainian counterparts within “three weeks” to identify "strategic locations" where future Western troops could be stationed. These forces will be neither "peacekeeping troops" nor "frontline combat units," he added.

The team will also assess "the structure of Ukraine’s army of tomorrow," including its size, equipment, and even the designation of its soldiers. In Moscow, a Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson accused Paris and London of attempting to disguise their intervention as a “kind of peacekeeping mission.” You can read Micheál Martin’s statements [here](#)

Below: Poland’s Prime Minister Donald Tusk, Ukraine’s Zelensky, France’s Emmanuel Macron, Britain’s Keir Starmer and Von der Leyen, other NATO leaders and a grinning champion of Irish neutrality, pose for a family picture during a meeting as part of the 'Coalition Of The Willing' summit in support of Ukraine at Elysee Palace on March 27, 2025 in Paris, France. The leaders of Germany, Italy, Spain, Poland, the Netherlands, Denmark and other Nordic states, as well as Canada, and the head of the NATO, Mark Rutte, were also present. (Photo by Ahmet Okur/Anadolu via Getty Images)



Malta will not back EU military funding



Maltese Prime Minister Robert Abela has reiterated that Malta will not participate in any initiatives that finance military weapons or armies as long as a Labour government is in power with him as prime minister. Abela said Malta did not support participating in an EU loan intended to finance the purchase of military equipment or lethal weapons. Abela insisted that Malta’s neutrality is safeguarded, and any decision by EU countries to finance military equipment remains voluntary.

He referenced point 10 from a statement from last Thursday’s European Council meeting, which reads: “The European Council recalls that all military support as well as security guarantees for Ukraine will be provided in full respect of the security and defence policy of certain member states and taking into account the security and defence interests of all member states.” Over to you Michéal

The provisions of the EU's Joint White Paper for European Defense Readiness 2030, threatens us all.



European Commission

Last week, the EU Commission released its [Joint White Paper for European Defense Readiness 2030](#). It was endorsed by the European Council of EU heads of state, the White Paper calls for a staggering increase in EU military spending of €800 billion, to prepare the EU for high-intensity war with nuclear-armed Russia.

EU Member States' military spending has grown by more than 31 percent since 2021, reaching 1.9 percent of the EU's combined GDP or €326 billion in 2024. Spending reached an unprecedented €102 billion in 2024, almost doubling the amount spent in 2021," the White Paper boasts, adding: "Based on projections of gradual take-up, defence investment could reach at least €800 billion over the next four years."

The struggle against military aggression, social austerity and attacks on democratic rights begins at home. The coming struggles against militarisation and accompanying austerity must encompass all classes and political persuasions. We must start organising now. Photo: High Representative Kaja Kallas. / Photo: EU

[Read more here](#)

A nuclear - armed Germany?



A recent [editorial](#) in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* has stirred a significant debate in Germany, calling for the country to withdraw from the [Two plus Four Treaty](#), which would pave the way for Germany to pursue nuclear armament. The article argues that Germany's "military preparedness" is hindered by its current treaty obligations, which prohibit the development of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, as well as limiting the German Army to 370,000 personnel. Proponents of the idea point out that Germany has the technological capability to develop nuclear weapons, including nuclear-tipped cruise missiles, but face logistical challenges such as finding a testing site for nuclear weapons.

However, such a move would also require Germany's departure from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), risking major global repercussions. This could prompt countries like South Korea and [Poland](#)—who are already contemplating nuclear capabilities, to follow suit. Public opinion on the issue [is divided](#). Bundeswehr experts argue that these "moral reflexes" must be overcome to ensure military readiness in an increasingly uncertain world.

Shy von der Leyen



Under von der Leyen, the EU Commission has accumulated more political power than at any time in its history –much of that power concentrated in her own hands. She [boasts of having set up](#) a "geopolitical" Commission but continues to avoid even minimal scrutiny. She does *address* reporters but unlike other leaders, she rarely allows them to question her when she can avoid it.

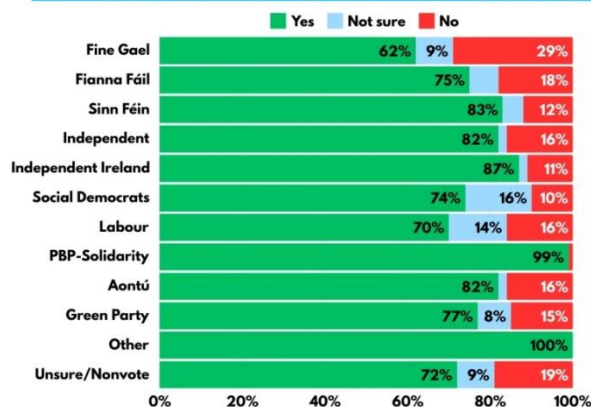
“President von der Leyen is willing to take questions from the press,” her chief spokeswoman, Paula Pinho, [insisted](#). By way of evidence, she pointed to the 140 seconds von der Leyen gave up recently – "without having to do so." The lack of opportunity to seriously question von der Leyen in public is a problem, particularly since the European Parliament seldom gets to do it either.

One of the most important checks on political power is the ability to ask leaders questions they'd rather not answer. EU politics is hopelessly remote – which is a problem in itself, considering the power and public money the Commission now wields. But then, it's just another example of the EU democratic deficit.

A reminder – the latest poll



Across all parties, the majority of Irish people want our current policy on neutrality to stay



Weapons manufactures are the winners

As the EU rushes to rearm, who stands to benefit the most? Much of the funding flows to just a handful of powerful arms firms— companies deeply intertwined with their governments and partially owned by the same American funds that control key US defence contractors.

As military budgets rise, key decisions often remain behind-closed-doors, leaving the EU Parliament in the dark. This new wave of military spending will simply reinforce the dominance of a few industry giants while enriching their shareholders as the EU prepares for war.

