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The FF/FG coalition government and the “Coalition of the Willing”



[The FF/FG Government clearly aligns Ireland with the stance of "Coalition of the Willing"](#) The "ironclad security guarantees" on offer from Starmer, Macron, Merz, Tusk et al must by implication, involve military intervention by the EU in Ukraine; but most probably without the US. And now, Simon Harris has said that he is [“open to considering](#)

[with Government colleagues and military leaders”](#) the deployment of Irish troops to a peacekeeping mission in Ukraine

This sort of fundamental re-alignment of Ireland's place in the world runs completely contrary to our history and international traditions; but has always been on the cards, once the Government embarked on abolishing the Triple Lock guarantee against involvement in foreign wars. **See an update on the last page at the end of this issue.**

Rearming Europe - €127 billion already requested



Eighteen member states have put in requests for Commission-issued loans to finance military projects, with Poland asking for over a third of the total asked. The EU Commission said on Wednesday that Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Finland had requested access to so-called SAFE loans by its soft deadline of 29 July. The total money they requested amounts to €127 billion with Poland seeking approximately €45 billion.

Euractiv previously [reported](#) that Ireland was also interested but as this is a soft deadline government probably hopes that the Triple Lock will be abolished by then and they can proceed without creating further controversy.

The EU Parliament has launched a lawsuit, arguing that MEPs have been sidelined by the EU Commission on its plans for €150bn in loans to boost EU defence production, [based the regulation on article 122](#). The article allows the commission and the council, to leave the EU Parliament in the dark, stating that ‘ The President of the Council shall inform the EU Parliament of the decision taken.’ Transparency, EU – style!

The EU Commission surrenders to corporate interests



The EU is currently rolling back a wide range of its most ambitious agricultural, climate, and digital laws. The [EU Competitiveness Compass](#), sets out a roadmap for “simplification.” The goal, according to the commission, is to “nurture Europe’s innate strengths, harness its resources and remove the barriers at European and national level.” the document reads. There is a useful EUobserver [explainer here](#)

Since then, the EU has presented six so-called ‘Omnibus’ simplification packages filled with revisions to reduce the number of rules for businesses and sectors, putting private interests and short-term business growth over climate and human rights obligations. It seeks to shift the burden of identifying and assessing certain impacts from businesses to other actors. And, there is a 'Defence Omnibus' proposal.

This simplification will favour the wealthiest, at the expense of the most vulnerable, highlighting the Commission’s priorities, favouring multinational corporations over workers and citizens. It further weakens the ‘do no significant harm’ measures of the EU taxonomy, cuts the vast majority of EU businesses out of the [Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive](#), hollows out the [Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive](#) and completely decimates the [Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism](#). All of these measures were just adopted over the last five years, and so the decision to reverse them represents a complete surrender by the Commission to corporate interests.

Could military conscription be introduced in Ireland?



During the Lisbon Treaty debates, we cautioned against over-emphasising the possibility of conscription, as high tech military applications and a greater reliance on airpower required highly trained operatives rather than conscripts. However, we have since witnessed two large armies engaged in conflict in Ukraine and conscription, fuelled by Russo phobia is on the agenda again.

EU member states with conscription include: Denmark, Greece, Lithuania, Finland, Austria, Sweden, Latvia, Estonia and Cyprus with Italy and Germany actively considering its re-introduction. As the EU engages in an accelerated militarisation and is rapidly building military administrative structures, resembling an EU Army, Could conscription possibly be introduced in Ireland?

[Read more here](#)

Wise words from Noam Chomsky



"As long as the general population is passive, apathetic, diverted to consumerism or hatred of the vulnerable, then the powerful can do as they please, and those who survive will be left to contemplate the outcome."

Largest EU member states veer towards populism



The European Movement, which pushes for closer EU integration, polled more than 3,500 people in seven of the largest EU countries. The poll found that just 36 percent of people are “consistent supporters of democracy” — valuing the right to have their say at elections and recognizing the importance of parliamentary checks and balances. The remaining 64 percent were only “inconsistent” supporters, more likely to say they’d prefer a strongman leader. Democratic values were strongest in Sweden at more than 50%, and fell as low as 30 percent in France and Romania. In Spain, only one in four consistently voiced support for democracy.

Over half of respondents (52%) think their country should pursue an equal balance of national interest and collaboration within the EU on defence and security, while a third (34%) think their country should pursue its national interest above all else. [The full results are here.](#)

No Protest in September



Regrettably, our regular monthly protest will not be held in September as the third Wednesday coincides with the return of the Dáil, and our experience in previous years suggests that there will be barriers erected and/or that we would be swamped by other groups. In order to continue on the third Wednesday of each month, it has been decided to resume the protests on Wednesday 15th October.

What about the Green Deal?

Two of the consecutively hottest years on record have just been recorded; the Mediterranean is warming a fifth faster than the rest of the world’s seas, and lives and livelihoods are at risk across the continent. Yet despite more intense climate risks than ever, the EU is investing in weapons with more zeal and aggression than it has ever approached the climate emergency. [Figures released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute](#) show that world military expenditure reached a record €2.43 trillion in 2024. The EU arms race has only deepened in 2025.



The EU’s climate ambition meanwhile is in retreat. Ursula von der Leyen who took over the commission presidency in 2019 on the platform of a Green New Deal, has replaced her environmental rhetoric with dark warnings of military threats and aggressive economic competition.

[Read more here](#)

An EU Army by any other name!



EU commissioner for defence and space, Andrius Kubilius hopes to start a broader discussion about creating a “European Defence Union” this autumn. In his view, the UK, Norway and Ukraine should be a part of it. Launching that kind of a project means more reflecting on equipment needs, adequate financing and regulations, he said. Kubilius told Firepower that he’s making a checklist to prepare the EU for a possible war by 2030, which he plans to have ready to present to EU leaders by October.

The EU should look to its own oligarchy

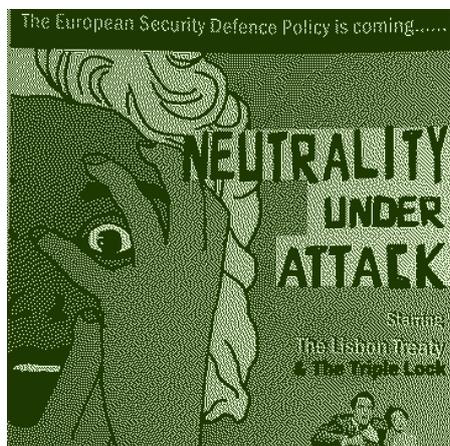


How can the EU continue to claim [democratic legitimacy](#) while ignoring how its own policies, institutions, and public discourses are being warped by the [power of the super-rich](#)? [Oligarchic capture](#) is not just corruption; it is a structural, systemic condition where [extreme wealth translates into political power](#) - almost always quietly. Meanwhile, the EU in June [promised to award Georgia candidate status](#) if the country fulfilled a number of conditions, perhaps the most [unclear](#) was that [Tbilisi display](#) a “commitment to ‘deoligarchisation.’”

[Europe’s billionaires](#) do not simply accumulate wealth—they help shape the very rules, narratives, and institutions that govern the European project. From [tax codes](#) to [agricultural subsidies](#), from [philanthropic networks](#) to [media empires](#), oligarchs are shaping the future of the EU while a research funding culture sidelines, critical scrutiny of the EU’s own structures and contradictions.

[Read more here](#)

Rundale themed issue: Neutrality and the Triple Lock



[The Neutrality Roadshow: Popular Political Education against Militarisation](#)

[The Triple Lock and the Case of Ireland in Mali](#)

[Dismantling the Triple Lock will put people in harm’s way. So why is the government doing it?](#)

[The Struggle for Active Neutrality, the Triple Lock, and Peace](#)

<https://www.rundale.org/2025/07/31/themed-issue-understanding-irish-neutrality-and-the-triple-lock/>

Military emissions put EU Green Deal at risk



Estimates indicate that military and related activities are responsible for approximately 5.5% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. With NATO member states now targeting defence spending levels of up to 5% of GDP, these emissions are expected to

rise significantly in the coming years. As most EU Member States are part of NATO, this surge in defence spending will significantly impact EU climate targets.

Yet, under current climate policy frameworks, most notably the EU Green Deal, military emissions remain almost entirely unaddressed in terms of formal reporting obligations. This highlights a critical policy gap which has far-reaching implications for both climate governance and security policy. A Scientist's for Global Responsibility assessment [is here](#)

There is a real opportunity for Ireland to lead on this issue by reporting total military emissions and establishing a common transferable standard for doing so. It would provide a focus in the interim for climate activists to campaign in order to highlight awareness around the issue.

[Read more here](#)

Back for another bite of the cherry

The Trump administration is weighing sanctions on the EU and member state officials responsible for implementing EU rules for online platforms. Reports indicate that measures such as visa restrictions are under consideration. The background to this potential move is that American internet companies object to the requirement in the EU to remove openly discriminatory, Nazi-glorifying or otherwise inflammatory content from social media.

The regulatory burden applies under the Digital Services Act. The extraordinary idea of penal sanctions comes in the wake of Washington's success in customs negotiations with the EU. The Trump administration has forced the European Commission to accept an agreement that experts consider "catastrophic" for the European economy. In future, customs duties of 15 per cent will be levied on imports from the EU to the US, while deliveries of goods and services from the US to the EU will be duty-free!! We're in the EU boat as the price of surrendering competence for trade deals to the EU via the Lisbon Treaty. So much for the value of pooled sovereignty!

[Read more here](#)

Here is an interesting document from the EU Parliament research service on EU-NATO cooperation.



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922_EN.pdf

The use of cohesion funds for military purposes

EU member states are getting the go-ahead to use the EU's current regional fund for military-related projects, according to an unpublished agreement seen by Euractiv. EU ambassadors signed off on the wording for the €392 billion cohesion policy – the fund that makes up roughly a third of the EU's 2021–2027 budget and is designed to help poorer regions catch up economically.

The shift has already drawn [some criticism](#) for potentially cutting funding for social and economic programmes in favour of military spending. The review opens the possibility for EU countries to use the regional funds to support the defence industry, as well as to upgrade infrastructure to match military requirements.

Final approval for the new priorities for cohesion funding now appears very likely, given the key approval of EU ambassadors and successful negotiations between the Council and Parliament. EU ministers will still have to sign off on the deal at an upcoming official meeting, and MEPs will need to agree at their next plenary session. As usual, the poorest will suffer, while the richest gain and, will the government flag this development?

The Swiss provisions for troop deployment: a sort of Triple Lock?



Swiss troops could be deployed to Ukraine to participate in a peacekeeping mission only with a mandate from the United Nations or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), according to Ursina Bentele, spokesperson for Switzerland's Defense Ministry.

"Under Article 66 of the Federal Act 'On the Army and Military Administration,' a UN or OSCE mandate is mandatory for Switzerland's participation in a military peacekeeping mission. Participation in peace enforcement operations and, consequently, combat actions is ruled out for Switzerland," she said. Bentele emphasised that even if the above-mentioned organisations issued a mandate, Switzerland would not be able to act without a request, which would require approval from the government and parliament.

[Read more here](#)

Ich bin ein Belarusian



In a surreal performance, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen gave a speech through the fence to Belarusian border guards. Flanked by Polish PM Tusk, she preached "European values" to cameras and uniformed men on the other side, who probably wondered what the hell was going on.

Perhaps it was simply a PR stunt for Tusk as he battles Poland's new president or a failed attempt to "reach" Minsk and Moscow or maybe she simply fancies herself as emulating JFK's famous speech. Either way, the EU's foreign policy has become street theatre with no audience.

The EU response to genocide

[The EU has given Israeli technology start-ups](#) run by ex-IDF soldiers nearly half a billion



euros in research grants since the start of the Gaza genocide. Some of the founders of these tech start-ups have served as reservists in Gaza, and in at least one instance the technology has been deployed to aid the genocide.

The Horizon Europe program, described by the EU as ‘a scientific research initiative to develop a sustainable and liveable society in Europe,’ has awarded around 475 million euros to 348 Israeli start-ups and research projects since October 2023, many of which are run by former IDF soldiers and intelligence officers.

She’s not Commander - in Chief



Ursula von der Leyen has gotten a blunt reminder that she is not Europe’s commander-in-chief. Germany’s defence minister, Boris Pistorius, on Monday insisted that the EU had “no competence whatsoever” to station troops in Ukraine and said it was “totally wrong” to talk about it publicly at this stage.

Defence is a national competence and is not governed by Treaty provisions – but there was not a murmur from our government.

Pistorius’s words were a rebuke of the speech von der Leyen had just given on her roadshow across EU capitals – during which she laid out a three-point plan to bolster Ukraine after the end of Russia’s invasion: strengthen Kyiv’s army, deploy a multinational “reassurance,” and the country’s accession to the EU.

She also referred to “pretty precise plans” for a multinational force in a *Financial Times* interview. Perhaps she was referring to the “Coalition of the Willing”; to which Michael Martin seems intent on hitching our wagon. Readers will recall that the last such Coalition didn’t work out very well, leaving hundreds of thousands dead.

The EU suppresses internal criticism.



Some EU civil servants have accused the EU of muffling dissent over its Gaza policy are getting nervous about what they describe as an institutional crackdown on freedom of speech as they accuse institutions of “intimidation” toward officials protesting the Commission’s Gaza policy.

The EU’s failure to pressure the country to relent, and to listen to a growing wave of internal dissent that includes high-level College officials, makes it impossible for them to perform their own duties without being in breach of international law. Impatient to make progress, some are considering strike action in a bid to pressure the EU institutions to take a bolder stance.

They say the institutions are actively cracking down on protests in the Council's staff canteen, compelling protesters to resign, and shutting down an internal petition without explanation. The Commission denied that any intimidation occurred.

[Read more here](#)

Defend multilateralism



Confronted with major choices between war and peace, competition and cooperation, and closure and openness, multilateralism, solidarity and cooperation are the right answers. We should safeguard the international order underpinned by international law and the international system with the UN at its core, reform and improve global governance, join hands to tackle global challenges such as climate change, and hold high the torch of multilateralism to illuminate humanity's path ahead.

It's Illegal!



[Putin seems fine](#) with Ukraine joining the EU. But the obstacle is Hungary. Now, there's talk of a workaround to Budapest's veto, which has frozen Ukraine's membership aspirations. Around a dozen countries want to change the EU's rules so that only a weighted majority – not the full complement of 27 states – would be needed to open a fresh cluster of accession negotiations, the stage blocking Kyiv.

Unanimity would remain necessary at the start and end of the process, but not for all the myriad intermediate steps. Ireland holding only 2% of a weighted majority would only have a say at the beginning and end. Effectively, France, Germany, Italy and another smaller state would carry the day. To change the rules, Hungary and indeed Ireland must agree. To proceed would be illegal under the treaties.

Jamming unravels



Allegations that Russia jammed Ursula von der Leyen's private jet caused a sensation but now the story has unravelled. The plane reportedly lost access to GPS signals while approaching Bulgaria's Plovdiv airport. The *Financial Times*, whose correspondent was on the plane, wrote that the aircraft circled for an hour before the pilot landed using paper maps. Brussels and Sofia were quick to blame Russia, calling it "blatant interference."

The alleged attack should have triggered a diplomatic crisis. But days later, the incident is being brushed aside by the Bulgarian government and the EU Commission. Bulgarian Prime Minister Zhelyazkov toned down claims of Russian interference, calling the incident a routine glitch: "There is no need to investigate the situation," Zhelyazkov said, "because these disturbances are neither hybrid nor cyber threats. Air traffic services immediately proposed an alternative landing approach using ground-based aids (Instrument Landing System)..independent of GPS systems." In the end, the *Financial Times* seems to have succumbed to a bit of Russo phobia, which suited the Commission.

Update on FF/FG and the Coalition of the Willing



Taoiseach Micheál Martin has said in a phone call with Volodymyr Zelensky that Ireland stands ready to support a ceasefire in Ukraine, "including through the provision of non-lethal military assistance and our openness to taking part in any 'appropriately mandated' peacekeeping mission in line with the UN Charter".

His comments were in response to the announcement by French President Emmanuel Macron that 26 countries are ready to take part in an international force as part of security guarantees for Ukraine though Macron made it clear that US support would be necessary.

Earlier, Tánaiste Simon Harris said that Ireland is "very clear" that it has no wish to recuse itself from peacekeeping in Ukraine. "If there is a peace agreement, Ireland, as a member of the Coalition of the Willing, will want to assist." "You could see a scenario where if there was a peace agreement, and if part of that peace agreement resulted in peacekeepers being deployed, Ireland could, at that stage consider it, and certainly we're very willing to do that," Mr Harris said.

Harris is essentially saying that 'we' want to assist what may be a US led force or an EU force while Martin refers to mandated peacekeeping mission 'in line' with the UN Charter.

The Russian embassy in Dublin said the comments from Irish Government officials are in contradiction to efforts of Russia and the US in attempting to secure a resolution to the war in Ukraine. It said Ireland cannot be considered to be neutral in the war and described Ireland's position as "openly Russo phobic and pro-Ukrainian". It added that Ireland, as a member of the EU, should recognise that the EU is "rapidly moving away from its originally strictly peaceful integrative agenda", is rapidly militarising itself and has become "a NATO appendage".

In an interview with the Financial Times last week, EU Commission von der Leyen said the EU was drawing up "pretty precise plans" for a multinational troop deployment to Ukraine as part of post-conflict security guarantees that will have the backing of US capabilities, though this was plated down, particularly by Germany and the US has not yet given any guarantees.

What has emerged so far is that our neutrality hangs by a thread and that the current government is hell bent on ditching it as quickly as possible and involving us in military action with possible casualties, as [Putin has just announced](#) that any Western troops in Ukraine would be legitimate targets.

