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Enough is enough!



For decades, the political establishment has taken the people of Ireland for granted. They have made solemn promises and broken them, pursued policies that serve the powerful, and drifted from the core values that define us as a nation. We have had enough of double speak, hypocrisy, and the betrayal of the principles that have long guided our foreign policy. The role of the President is to be the people's voice, and that voice is now shouting "Enough!" That

is why we endorse Catherine Connolly to be our next President.

[Read more here](#)

The EU is facilitating a social dumping disaster!



The EU Commission is prioritising its 'competitiveness through simplification' agenda. One of its main strategies for this is the creation of a '28th Regime', in other words, a parallel set of EU rules that (some) companies can choose to follow instead of the rules of the 27 member states. This is highly controversial because it is intended to include areas like labour rights and taxation.

These are currently under national level authority, whereas the parallel EU rules will be weaker than those of most EU member states. Trade unions warn against the emergence of a two-tier labour market and a race to the bottom in social rights if companies are allowed to simply ignore national rules and instead go for more lenient EU ones. And as for taxation, what company would not welcome an option to pay less than the national requirement, if that offer is on the table? [Corporate Europe Observatory's report on the '28th Regime', is here.](#)



EU military industries set to grow revenue dramatically



EU military industries may grow their revenue from EU customers by an average 10.5% to 11.5% a year for the next decade, as most countries commit to NATO's 2035 spending targets, financial research firm Rothschild & Co. Redburn has said.

Rising military budgets already led to a “material jump” in order backlog that is yet to be fully reflected in financial results and profit outlooks of the continent’s defense industry, the analysts said. European Union countries lifted defense spending by 19% to a record €343 billion in 2024, with spending set to rise to €381 billion this year, according to the European Defence Agency.

That would then see the industry’s EU revenue at least tripling by 2035, or a compound annual growth rate of 10.5% to 11.5%. As it rearms, Europe will “materially outgrow” the United States, which is planning to keep defense procurement steady at about 1% of GDP.

What a coincidence



On the eve of the vote on the two motions of censure, von der Leyen's Commission presented its proposal for a regulation to strengthen protections for EU farmers in the face of the free trade agreement with [Mercosur](#). MEPs from all political groups dealing with agriculture are on the warpath, accusing the Commission of having betrayed farmers not only on trade with Latin American countries, but also with the proposed Multiannual Financial

Framework (budget), which combines the CAP and cohesion under a single fund.

[On Mercosur](#), the Commission assures that, thanks to its regulation, “in the unlikely event of an unforeseen and damaging increase in imports or an undue decrease in prices for EU producers, swift and effective protections would come into play.” Specific provisions are also made for certain sensitive agricultural products such as beef, poultry, rice, honey, eggs, garlic, ethanol and sugar. We’ll see if it’s enough to [satisfy the IFA](#) which opposes the deal. [Read here about the reaction of the EU Parliament.](#)

“ReArm Europe” by any other name



Von der Leyen's rearmament is changing its name again – Ursula von der Leyen initially called it “ReArm Europe”: the €800 billion rearmament plan announced in February. Then, faced with criticism from some leaders, that the title was too alarmist for the public, Ursula von der Leyen renamed it “Readiness 2030.” This was the title given to the White Paper presented in March to implement the rearmament plan. But even this name doesn't seem to fit. Last week, von der Leyen announced that the roadmap requested by the heads of state and government for their next European Council will be called “Preserving Peace – Readiness Roadmap 2030.”

Social Europe??



Violations of workers' rights in Europe were classified as 'sporadic' when the index was first compiled by the International Trade Union Confederation in 2014. But Europe is now considered a 'repeat' offender following the biggest decline seen in any region worldwide over the past 10 years.

[According to the Index:](#)

- 41% of countries in Europe violated the right to establish and join a trade union.
- 37% of countries in Europe impeded the registration of unions.
- 54% of countries in Europe denied workers access to justice.
- 17% of countries in Europe restricted free speech and assembly.
- 32% of countries in Europe arrested and detained workers.
- Workers experienced violent attacks in 17% of countries in Europe

EU public support for military spending in decline, says poll



Support to spend more on national defence is on the decline, a poll produced for Euractiv by Polling Europe shows. A two-thirds majority (67%) said they were in favour of increasing military spending. However, that was a decrease of 7%, compared to the 74% who were in favour in April 2024. At first glance, the data show a north-south split, with 59% of respondents in southern Europe, compared with 76% in central and Eastern Europe and 73% in northern Europe, supporting higher military budgets. However, individual countries can have an outsized effect on the broader picture. Italy had (48%) supporting an increase in defence spending when compared with Spain (68%).

Almost half of respondents (48%) favoured the European Commission-coordinated defence investments, whereas 41% preferred the decision to be made nationally, rejecting an EU Army. A north-south divide opened up once again, with 60% in southern Europe favouring the Commission in the driving seat, compared with 53% in central Europe and 42% in northern Europe. Ireland was not included in the poll.

More missing texts!



Months after the landmark ruling in the [Pfizergate](#) case, the European Ombudsman has launched a new investigation into Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's use of text messages. Teresa Anjinho, the EU's Ombudsman, is opening an inquiry into how the Commission handled an access-to-documents request for von der Leyen's texts with the French president about the Mercosur trade negotiations. The Commission said it couldn't provide the texts because the EU executive's Signal is set to auto-delete messages, saying that von der Leyen never keeps any of her Signal messages, but instead uses the app's "disappearing messages" feature to auto-delete all exchanges, including those with EU leaders. How convenient!

EU Commission shelves Lisbon Treaty guarantee



The EU Commission has quietly shelved a reform of the regulation on public access to documents from the Commission, Council and Parliament. The proposed update to Regulation 1049, which dates from 2001, was dropped from the EU commission's

2025 work programme. These rules are essential for civil society, lawyers and journalists, with transparency guaranteed in the Lisbon Treaty. "Decisions shall be taken as openly and as closely as possible to the citizens," Article 10 states. A commission spokesperson said that case law had since evolved, and that the proposal had been hamstrung by disagreement among the EU institutions since 2011.

By maintaining the *status quo* officials can still deny access to documents if they believe that their publication "would undermine the protection of international relations" or "the financial or economic policy of the community or a member state." So, the inner-workings of council negotiations, for example, will continue to be shrouded in secrecy as indeed are many of the workings of the EU.

"The biggest attack on workers' rights in over a decade"- ETUC



In her State of the EU speech, Von der Leyen has once again claimed that the Commission's so-called 'simplification' agenda is just about "less paperwork, less overlaps, less complex rules" and reducing "bureaucratic costs for EU companies".

Earlier that week a statement supported by 470 trade unions and civil society groups including SIPTU and Forsa, denounced the "unprecedented wave of drastic cuts to regulations that protect labour and social rights, human rights, digital rights, and the environment". And also that same week, almost 200,000 citizens wrote to the European Commission insisting it must "stop any rollback of EU nature laws under the guise of 'simplification'".

In terms of new deregulation initiatives, her speech announced a forthcoming Single Market Roadmap with deadlines to remove "barriers" by 2028. Many of these 'regulatory barriers', however, are entirely legitimate rules that exist to address societal problems. In a post, the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) commented: "Too many barriers, EU say? We need more to fight fraud and exploitation!, referring to their campaign to stop exploitation of workers in subcontracting chains while the ETUC reacted to the draft strategy with Esther Lynch calling it "the biggest attack on workers' rights in over a decade."

Workers' rights in Europe are at their 'worst level' in at least a decade as a result of government crackdowns on the right to strike and union busting by employers, the annual Global Rights Index published today shows



A further surrender of sovereignty



The Commission's hopes were high earlier this month that an agreement would be reached over a new binding defence Regulation – [EDIP](#). But, it didn't work out that way – not yet! According to a [Parliament note](#) on the regulation, EDIP:

“Establishes EU control over defence product design”; Includes Ukraine's defence industry on the same terms as the EU, from the get-go; “Introduces the Structure for European Armament Programme (SEAP), to support long-term military cooperation and procurement”. SEAP effectively forces groups of countries to apply for funds together and for the outputs to be made to a set of harmonised standards; and “creates the first EU-wide Security of Supply regime, with a new Defence Security of Supply Board to coordinate responses to supply disruptions and ensure continuity during crises.”

These proposals significantly shift responsibility for defence from member states to the federal EU level. They are also posited as the basis for all future EU military expenditure. If it passes it will fundamentally change how the next seven-year EU budget is spent. Defence is at the heart of sovereignty. Until now it has always been the prerogative of EU member states. The latest move to integrate EU defence is being held back, by the EU Parliament. The Parliament is treating the closing negotiations over EDIP like just another policy file and is trying to show the institution's relevance.

It has taken a year and a half to reach consent of twenty – seven governments, including Ireland, to expose their military procurement to far more input from EU level. The Irish government has surrendered further sovereignty without even a public debate. The EU moves incrementally and this binding Regulation will eventually be passed. It's just another step on the road to an EU army.

Murphy vs. the Commission



The EU's spending watchdog and the Commission are telling two very different stories. Last week, the Commission [said](#) the auditors had “once again given the EU's annual accounts a clean bill of health” and confirmed “steady and continuous improvement in the management of EU funds.” But speaking to MEPs, ECA [European Court of Auditors] President Tony Murphy [painted](#) a starkly different picture, warning of “pervasive errors” in EU spending, leading to a negative evaluation for the sixth consecutive year. Murphy went further, slamming the Commission's proposal for the next seven-year budget, now under fire from lawmakers, regions, and farmers, saying “it's even worse” as member states would no longer be required to check actual costs.

That's what they're like!



Greens co-leader Bas Eickhout spoke to the EU Parliament about MEP Mélissa Camara, who was arrested in Israel as she participated in the flotilla protest of Gaza's blockade. As he expressed concern that she “may be taken to a maximum-security prison,” hoots and cheers broke out. “I hope this is on record how people are reacting here,” he said.

Endemic corruption in the EU



The EU is hardly a leading light when it comes to countering corruption. RAND [estimates](#) [chapter 2] that up to €990 billion in GDP terms is lost to corruption on an annual basis in the EU, while [Transparency International](#) said earlier this year that Europe was on the slide in the fight against fraud and corruption. Irish GNP was €410 billion in 2024, so up to twice the value of Irish GNP is lost annually to corruption in the EU.

EU military spending picks up

German military-industrial giant Rheinmetall has inaugurated the EU's biggest ammo plant. The factory will churn out up to 350,000 155 mm artillery shells per year starting in 2027, a key ingredient for fighting a full-scale war in the 21st century, remember the anticipated 'resource wars of the 21st Century?' The project benefited from €20.6 million in EU money according to a LinkedIn [post](#) from a policy officer in charge of the ASAP ammunition production programme at DG DEFIS. Rheinmetall also got €47 million in EU cash for its explosive powder factory in Romania.

EU military spending can come from surprising budget lines. Take the Latvian drone factory which von der Leyen visited recently. It was supported by post-pandemic recovery funds!

Read David Cronin – [how Rheinmetall sells Israel's suicide drones](#)

The rich get richer



Despite trade wars and other geopolitical crises the rich are getting richer. So far this year, the EU added 39 additional billionaires to its list of nearly 500 super-wealthy, a new [Oxfam report](#) finds. That means a new billionaire was created every 9 days in the EU.

The wealthiest 3,600 Europeans hold as much wealth as the continent's poorest 181 million, according to the report, which highlights how tax policies across the continent have helped the wealthy keep and accrue more money. "We put it in relationship with the tax system, because it's not like this is an accident. This wealth inequality is linked to political choices," according to the author of the Report. How true!

Perceptive and unfortunately, still true



"That there are men in all countries who get their living by war and by keeping up the quarrels of Nations, is as shocking as it is true." Tom Paine: *The Rights of Man*, Dublin 1791. It was a foundational text of ideas for the Society of United Irishmen.

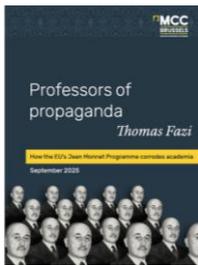
State of the Union address 2025



Ursula von der Leyen’s State of the Union presents a real contradiction. Delivered in the now-familiar Orwellian register, the speech was filled with words like freedom, liberty, peace, prosperity and independence — even as the EU continues to pursue policies that undermine all of these, by pushing for war and militarisation, cracking down on free speech, sabotaging Europe’s economies with self-defeating energy and trade policies, and further subordinating the continent to Washington’s strategic agenda.

On the one hand, she spoke about affordability, jobs and the pressures of rising prices. On the other, the actual substance of her speech leaned toward competitiveness deals with industry and yet more of the deregulation she seems so proud of — the very deregulation that threatens the hard fought for protections of workers, communities and the environment.

Professors of propaganda



A new report reveals how the EU’s Jean Monnet Programme, ostensibly an academic initiative, is in fact a taxpayer-funded, global propaganda network designed to embed pro-EU narratives, quash dissent and shape public opinion far beyond the classroom. This programme, part of Erasmus+, funnels an estimated €25 million of public money every year into universities worldwide, transforming academic institutions into vehicles of institutional propaganda.

The interview that wasn’t an interview - von der Leyen- style



Ursula von der Leyen prefers short videos or carefully placed op-eds. Press conferences and sit-down interviews are rare. So it was no surprise when eight major newspapers – including *Die Welt*, *El País*, and *Le Figaro* – splashed an “exclusive” interview with her. But only *Le Soir* revealed the back story; Brussels had imposed conditions: no in-person meeting, only pre-submitted written questions, then answers drafted by von der Leyen’s communications team without the possibility of edits. This “control freak” format, *Le Soir* wrote, made it impossible to ask follow-up questions or deviate from the Commission’s jargon. The question list was whittled down from 18 to 15, after months of wrangling. Catherine Connolly wouldn’t – or wouldn’t want to – get away with that!

More secrets

Ursula von der Leyen failed to take notes or minutes during critical interviews last year with candidates for her second College of Commissioners. Under the Pfizer judgment — [here in paragraph 59](#) — “the EU Commission is under such principle bound to the duty of note-keeping.”

The man who brought us into [PESCO](#), says he's 'never been so glad' Ireland is not in NATO but nothing about the cost of EU militarisation.



Leo Varadkar has said he has “never been so glad” that the country is not a member of NATO as the military bloc races to boost military spending. Varadkar warned that Western leaders will be taking money out of services like schools and hospitals to fund what he described as an “arms race”. “To put that in context, 5% of GDP in Ireland works out at about €25 billion in defence spending a year. That’s more than we spend on health, more than double what we spend on education.

“It would mean a quarter of all government spending being allocated to defence. As Taoiseach, I increased defence spending and I brought Ireland into Europe’s common security and defence (Pesco) pact in 2017, but I have never been so glad that we are not a member of NATO.” He added: If implemented, European countries will spend a fortune on missiles, bombs and drones and fighter jets and aircraft carriers. Meanwhile, pensioners, schools, hospitals, care homes and children’s services will struggle to get by.” That was before the recent budget, which he doesn’t seem to have commented on.

EU Council agrees to incentivise defence investments in the EU budget

Member states’ representatives have approved the Council’s position on a proposal aiming to incentivise defence-related investments in the next seven – year EU budget. This is designed to implement the so-called ReArm Europe plan, an EU initiative to increase military spending. Ireland contributed €3.7bn to the EU budget in 2023. This is likely to have increased, but has the government told us that we are subsidising EU militarisation?

The EU – India trade agreement



The EU and India are now in the final stretch of negotiations on a major trade agreement [FTA]. But a crucial element appears to be missing: a credible and enforceable Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) chapter. For trade unions and workers across the EU, TSD chapters are not a technical detail — they are a defining test of whether the EU is committed to the values it claims to uphold. A trade deal that lacks strong commitments to labour rights would undermine workers in both EU and India.

Labour rights in India face serious limitations. Millions of workers are in informal employment. Trade unions face systemic constraints. The country has yet to ratify core International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining. ILO Conventions set down basic human rights in the labour field that are universally applicable. The EU-India FTA should insist that fundamental conventions should be ratified and enforced, including being subject to the dispute settlement mechanisms that apply to other areas covered by the agreement.

