



PEOPLE'S NEWS

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The EU Constitution would bind us to support the Euratom treaty

John Gormley says 'it puts a bomb' under the referendum



The Treaty establishing the Constitution for Europe has a binding protocol attached which was added without debate at the last minute. This protocol links the provisions of the European Atomic Energy Treaty to the Constitution and applies the financial provisions of the Union to the European Atomic Energy Community. The Euratom Treaty binds EU member states to “create *the conditions necessary for the speedy establishment and growth of nuclear industries*” while “*facilitating investment to develop nuclear energy*”. The EU Commission is responsible for the financing of Euratom through the EU budget and decisions on loans etc. are made in secret. There is no public consultation. The Commission is pro-nuclear and is presently considering funding a nuclear reactor in Romania – a prospective EU member.

John Gormley of the Green Party, who was an Alternate Member of the Convention that drew up the Constitution warned during the debates that the inclusion of Euratom in the Treaty would ‘put a bomb’ under the Constitution. The argument was that the complexities of the Constitution would be reduced to the question, ‘are you for or against nuclear energy?’¹ There is little doubt but that Irish voters would vindicate the view of John Gormley and choose to vote ‘NO!’

Two concerns arise from the addition of this protocol: with the accession of the new member states in May, a majority of member states now have nuclear reactors but there are no common safety rules that can be enforced, and secondly there is now a danger that the balance of forces in the EU in favour of the aggressive promotion of nuclear power may change, through the dual effect of the accession of the new pro- nuclear member states and the powerful *binding* Constitutional protocol. This could result in the diversion of larger portions of the EU budget to the development of nuclear power. Public opinion in Sweden and Germany has achieved a phase-out of nuclear power. These hard won outcomes may now be reversed by the Euratom protocol.

People's Movement – Gluaiseacht an Phobail calls for principled opposition to the proposed Constitution based on the content of this protocol but also based on other articles, principal among them being Article I-10 which provides that: “*The Constitution, and law adopted by the Union's*

¹ Cit: p134, *The Accidental Constitution*, Norman, P. Eurocomment: Brussels 2004. Available @EU Observer.com

institutions in exercising competences conferred upon it, shall have primacy over the law of member states”, thereby emasculating our sovereignty and reducing the Oireachtas to the status of a provincial government

We call on all democrats to assist us in our opposition to this proposed Constitution, to help us locally by forming branches to campaign during the referendum, by arranging local meetings, in their workplace, union, in tenants or residents association etc. We will provide a speaker to outline our opposition and to answer any questions. Why not organize a coffee morning in your house? We will send along a member to outline the important aspects of the Constitution and to have a chat about it.

Ratification round-up

Schröder wants Constitution ratification in 2004.



The German Chancellor has indicated that his country will seek to ratify the EU Constitution by the end of this year. Gerhard Schröder said "The German constitution does not allow for a referendum. We will have a parliamentary process and we want to ensure this happens before the end of the year", said the Chancellor. However, a poll by German news magazine *Stern* has shown that 81 percent of Germans surveyed would like a referendum. If the German parliament does approve the Constitution before the end of this year, Germany could be the first of the 25 member states to adopt the treaty and being the largest country and founding member of the EU this would send an important signal to other countries - all of which have to ratify the Constitution before it can come into force.

Mr Schröder's announcement comes just a day after France decided that it will put the Constitution to a referendum - probably in the second half of 2005. Meanwhile, the Greens (who are in a governing coalition with the Social Democrats), the Liberal and the Communist parties are intensifying the campaign for a referendum. The EU has two years from 29 October - the date the treaty will be signed - for the treaty to be ratified in the member states.

Dutch will hold Constitution referendum in December 2004.



The Netherlands is likely to hold a referendum on the before the end of this year, during its own EU presidency. It is likely to be held in December 2004 - the last month of the Dutch EU presidency. One of the initiators of the Dutch EU referendum, the Green member of the Dutch parliament Farah Karimi, said that "if everything works out well", the referendum could even take place as early as November. Once the final text is ready, the Foreign Ministry source said it would be sent without delay to the Dutch parliament, which will organise the referendum about 50 days after the text is signed.

The Dutch referendum, the first nation-wide poll in the history of the country, will be non-binding. All major centre-right and centre-left parties have declared their support for the EU Constitution, but given the increasingly eurosceptic tone of the public debate in the Netherlands, the outcome of the Dutch referendum is uncertain.

Spain to vote in February 2005.



Spain is hoping to be one of the first EU countries to ratify the [EU Constitution](#). Spanish Premier Zapatero said, "My intention, as we set out in the election manifesto ... is to hold a referendum so that all Spanish citizens can express themselves about the new text of the Constitution. The vote could come towards the end of February. Spaniards will be asked "Do you approve the treaty instituting a constitution for the European Union"? Both the government and the leading opposition party will campaign for a yes vote.

The British government may delay its referendum until after its Presidency, which will last from July to December 2005. This would enable Downing Street to use its Presidency to "sell" Europe to the public first before holding the poll in 2006. Tony Blair has said that: "There's absolutely no need to have the referendum straight away." The Belgian government favours a quick referendum like the Dutch. Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt said he would like the Belgian referendum to take place on the same day as the Dutch poll - possibly in the form of a "Benelux referendum" involving Luxembourg as well. However, the Belgian parliament still has to decide whether or not to hold the referendum, and major French-speaking parties are still undecided.

The Portuguese government has announced plans to hold a referendum on the [European Constitution](#) in 2005. A proposal will be put to Lisbon Parliament in September, paving the way for a referendum next year. Both the government and the opposition are expected to back a yes vote. Meanwhile, Finland's Prime Minister Martti Vanhanen has said that he will give his opinion on whether his country should hold an advisory referendum on the Constitution in the coming few weeks. An advisory referendum is not binding upon the government.

France to have referendum.



During the traditional Bastille Day speech, French President Jacques Chirac said that he would organise a referendum in the second half of next year. "The French are directly concerned, and therefore will be directly consulted. There will be a referendum". The big headache will come if one of the large member states rejects the Constitution. When a small country (Ireland) rejected the Nice Treaty, the question was put to the voters a second time. This is an unlikely possibility in the case of a big country. In 1992, France only just managed to squeeze through the Maastricht Treaty with 50.95% voting in favour. Other countries presently intending to hold referenda are Denmark, Luxembourg and the

Czech Republic. Bertie is keeping his counsel but it is thought that late 2005 is a likely date for the Irish referendum. By then, parliamentary ratification is likely to have been completed in those countries not holding referenda. It is possible that some referenda will also have been carried, thereby increasing the pressure on the Irish electorate.

Fórum Náisiúnta um an Eoraip.



Bunaíodh Fórum Náisiúnta um an Eoraip tar éis do phobal na hÉireann diúltú do Chonradh Nice i reifreann. Chun an tAontas Eorpach a thabhairt níos cóngaraí dos na daoine a bunaíodh an Fóram. Dúirt Brian Cowen ag an bhFórum i mí Eanáir mar fhreagra ar cheist "má theastaíonn síocháin uainn, beidh síocháin againn le slándáil". Freagra coinníollach, sotalach, bagarthach. Bhí seisiún den bhFórum sa Chaisleán ar an gcéad lá d'lúil agus Brian Cowen ag freagairt na gceisteanna. Labhair 23 duine; mná ab ea ceathrar acu. Chuir breis is leath na gcainteoirí a n-ínní in iúil i dtaobh bunreacht don Aontas Eorpach, ó thaobh neodrachta, cearta ban, neamhaird ar an bpobal, caiteachas ar airm, agus neodracht. Tagraíodh do na Náisiúin Aontaithe - iad a neartú agus béim a chuir ar chursaí sóisialta an Aontais. Bítear ag caitheamh anuas ar dhaoine nuair ná teastaíonn uatha a bhflaitheas náisiúnta a chaitheamh uathu. Níl mórán caiteachais ar chursaí "cosanta" fós agus mar sin tá an eacnamaíocht láidir. Thagair beirt do chursaí "iomaíochta", nó an príobháidiú atá i gceist leis an Lisbon Agenda. "Níl aon tagairt don neodracht sa Bhunreacht" arsa John Gormley.

Thug Bertie Ahern óráid ar chomh críochnúil is a bhí Uachtaránacht na hÉireann ar an AE. As 9 leathanach, bhí trí líne i dtaobh na hIaráice ag cur síos ar an idirbheartaíocht a bheadh ag an AE leis an Iaráic tar éis don gcumhacht a bheith "tugtha ar ais" do mhuintir na hIaráice an lá roimhe sin. Níor luaigh sé Aerfort na Sionainne. Dúirt Patricia Mc Kenna go gcaitear \$1 trilliún sa mbliain ar airm sa domhan agus labhair sí ar an áisíneacht airm a bheadh dhá bhunú ag an AE. Cheap Brian Cowen go raibh na tagairtí do dhiúrcaíin eithneacha a bheith dhá úsáid ag an AE greannmhar agus dúirt sé dhá uair é, ag caitheamh anuas ar lucht na neodrachta. Bhí cúpla duine ag gairí aige. Bhí an focal deireannach aige. Tá sé níos práinní ná riamh an AE a dhímhíleatú.

New eurosceptic group formed in European Parliament.



A new anti-EU group has been formed in the European Parliament and in an attempt to get as many MEPs on board as possible, it will have two different wings, defined by their degree of Euroscepticism. One of these wings will be headed by Jens-Peter Bonde. The veteran MEP, who says he is against complete withdrawal from the EU, will be joined by the Swedish eurosceptic Junemovement, the French Mouvement Pour la France, and Dutch MEPs from the ChristenUnie.

The other wing, will be comprised of more hardline anti-EU groups - the UK Independence Party and the nationalist Roman Catholic Polish League of Families - who advocate withdrawal from the EU. There will be two co-presidents of the group - one will be Mr Bonde and the other, UKIP MEP Nigel Farage.

Mr Bonde, has said working against the Constitution will be his main platform during the coming five years. The group will have over 30 MEPs including the Irish independent MEP Cathy Sinnott.

Constitution to be adopted in Rome.



EU leaders have agreed that the [European Constitution](#) should be officially adopted in Rome in late October. Traditionally the treaties have been signed in the country that holds the presidency of the Council at the time it is agreed, in this case Ireland. The Constitution, if ratified by all countries, will replace the original Treaty of Rome which the European Economic Community in 1957. The signing date is significant as it is two years after this day that the Constitution is supposed to go into effect - if it is ratified by all 25 member states.

With some member states facing significant public opposition to their EU policies, there was also talk of a 'Committee of Wise Men' whose job would be to communicate the Constitution to the EU citizens. But Irish Europe Minister Dick Roche said that leaders themselves should sell the Constitution to voters: "I personally believe if (leaders) believe in the constitutional treaty, they have to get out there and explain it to the people".

Irish presidency leads the charge to a militarised EU.



The EU summit held in Brussels in June under the Irish Presidency endorsed the EU 'headline goal' of deploying 60,000 troops in military rapid response for crisis management tasks by 2010. The latest plan which involves deploying multinational 'battle groups' for this task, was similarly endorsed. It is planned that these troop deployments will occur before 2007. The Summit also launched the EU's first military planning cell to co-ordinate such work. This will be based in Brussels and will commence work by the end of the year. It will complement existing cells in NATO co-ordinate with other operations centres.

Throughout these developments, spearheaded by the Irish Presidency, not a word was uttered to the Irish public on the matter. We would do well to recall the words of ex-Commission President Jacques Delors, who pointed to the need for EU militarisation 'in order to fight the resource wars of the 21st Century'.

Meanwhile Ireland called on the incoming Dutch EU Presidency to beef up EU military capacity, stating that "battle groups", should be priority of Dutch Presidency but that it should also focus efforts on the development of civil and military capability of the EU, as well as civil-military co-ordination.

In a report on the progress achieved in the area of European Defence Policy (ESDP), sent to the European Council, the outgoing presidency called on the Dutch presidency to define the military needs of the European Union in relation to its new military objectives up to 2010 and to organise a conference on EU Member States' commitment to military capability. The Netherlands should also work towards developing the EU's rapid reaction forces and call on Member States to provide their initial

contribution in order to constitute a small operational capability for "battle groups" by 2005 with the goal of attaining complete capability in this area by 2007.

They should also, according to the Irish Presidency, consolidate the implementation by the end of the year of the European Weapons Agency, organise a conference on commitment proposals from EU Member States on civil capability in November 2004 and assess the "ATHENA mechanism created in February 2004 for the management of funding common costs of European Union military operations.

Push to impose common corporation tax rules in a two-tier structure



French and German plans to create an inner core within the EU have been bolstered by a European Commission move to increase EU co-operation on tax. The Commission is attempting to build support among EU governments for a ground-breaking scheme to create common rules for corporation tax within a limited number of EU states. It has circulated a paper to national capitals and believes that it has enough favourable responses to proceed with its plan.

This would not impose minimum tax rates – a fear of the Irish government – but would create a common set of rules within participating countries for calculating company's tax liabilities by harmonising the corporate tax base. It would be the first time that EU provisions for an inner core of member states would be used.

At the moment, tax is subject to national veto in the EU and both Britain and Ireland have consistently opposed tax harmonisation. Under Nice however, a group of eight countries can proceed to implement its own system. It is believed that early favourable indications have come from Austria, Denmark, Finland, Poland, Estonia, The Netherlands, Sweden and Slovakia. The matter will be discussed at a finance ministers meeting in September.

Pressure for common tax base continues



France and Germany have hinted that countries with low tax rates should receive limited Brussels aid, piling on the pressure for countries like Estonia and Ireland. The finance ministers of France, Germany and Poland discussed the linkage and it appears that Poland has now given its tacit backing. It was Estonia that came directly into the firing line of French Finance Minister Nicolas Sarkozy, who pressed the link between assistance and tax rates. "I am thinking of our Estonian friends who have put their tax rate at zero. How can you ask for lots of structural funds and have a fiscal policy at zero. Who can understand that?"

France, Germany and Sweden - countries with corporate tax rates ranging from 35 to 40 percent - fear that companies will shift their investments away from their economies to countries with lower levels of corporation tax. Ireland's Corporation tax level at 12.5%, is among the lowest in the EU.

Cowan points to parameters of debate on Constitution.



Speaking at a recent meeting of the Forum on Europe, Brian Cowan indicated that the debate on the proposed EU Constitution would centre around support for the EU project rather than on the substance of the Constitution. Criticising the position adopted by Sinn Fein, he said that opposition to the Constitution implied opposition to the EU project. He added that 'if we're going to have a debate, we're going to have it on the basis that some people are for Europe and some people are against it, we are not going to have people placing an each-way bet'. Don't be surprised if this position is stretched by the government, to represent the referendum on the proposed Constitution as a referendum on our future membership of the EU!

EU members may host US missile defence system.



Washington is said to be in talks with Poland and the Czech Republic to position the biggest missile defence site outside the US in central Europe. According to the Guardian newspaper, talks have been in train for eight months over the two countries' hosting of part of the US' ballistic missile defence system, dubbed "son of star wars". Prague and Warsaw are keen to set up advance radar warning sites and Poland may even play host to interceptor missiles.

However, Russia has voiced concerns about Washington's plans and the hosting of missile sites, so close to their borders is likely to increase opposition. The plan provides grounds for concern as the US has unilaterally pulled out of the anti-ballistic missile treaty, seen as a key non-proliferation agreement between Russia and the US.

EU expected to have a police force in early 2005.



The setting up of an EU police force is proceeding apace. This force, based on a Franco-Italian initiative at the end of 2003, is expected to be operational in the first half of 2005. A declaration of intent on the subject will be presented for formal agreement to European Union Defence Ministers meeting in September. The Franco-Italian proposal of setting up a European police force was discussed for the first time in October. Based on the model of the French *gendarmérie* and the Italian *carabinieri*, this force will intervene in third countries during the transitional stages between military and civilian phases of crisis management operations.

Since then, the idea has been developed given that the goal is to set up a General Staff by the end of 2004, which will be operational in the first half of 2005. This general staff will be based in Florence and will consist of representatives from Member States of the European Union who are seeking to participate in the force. If needs be, it will be in charge of requesting contributions from Member States and for training personnel sent on missions.

It does seem chillingly familiar!

Eric Van der Linden, EU-Commission ambassador in Slovakia has suggested that Romany children be taken away from their parents and sent to boarding schools. 'I'll say it in quotation marks' he emphasised, 'force Romany children to stay in a kind of boarding schools from Monday morning until Friday afternoon, where they will continuously be subjected to a system of values which is dominant in our society.' Fortunately, the Commission does not support such measures. <http://www.erionet.org/Fresh.html>

We're all revisionists now!

The Final Declaration of the Thessalonika Summit of 2003 on the Western Balkans contains the following statement: '*The EU also invites the countries of the region to take concrete initiatives with the objective of revising history textbooks. The possibility of convening an expert's meeting to discuss the issue could be considered*'. <http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/03/st10/st10446-re04en03.pdf>, page 18, first paragraph.

People's Movement month of action in October.

People's Movement is now planning a Month of Action in October as a preliminary to the launch of a National Campaign against the EU Constitution, in early December.

Public Meetings are planned for:

- **Cabra** on 6th October – Leafleting and information stall at Phibsborough Shopping Centre all day Saturday 2nd October. Meet at Shopping Centre for leafleting and postering on Thursday 30th September at 7:00 pm.
- **Finglas** on 13th October - Leafleting and information stall at Superquinn Finglas all day Saturday 9th October. Meet at Superquinn for leafleting and postering on Thursday 7th October at 7:00 pm.
- **Ballyfermot** on 20th October - Leafleting and information stall at the shops in Ballyfermot all day Saturday 16th October. Meet at the shops for leafleting and postering on Thursday 14th October at 7:00 pm.
- **Crumlin** on 27th October - Leafleting and information stall at Crumlin Shopping Centre all day Saturday 9th October. Meet at Crumlin Shopping Centre for leafleting and postering on Thursday 7th October at 7:00 pm.

The venues and speakers for the meetings will be notified well in advance and transport will be available to the areas concerned. All our supporters are urged to assist us in this work by turning up in good time at the appointed place. The series of meetings will continue through November as we hope to expand membership. Swords on 3rd of November and Prussia St. on 10th of November are being planned. Following the Dublin launch in early December, we will proceed to provincial meetings in Cork, Galway, Limerick and Athlone. There will also be a special emphasis on the East coast during this period.

Fund raising. We organized a very successful pub quiz recently in The Pale pub on High St. This is an enjoyable way of supporting People's Movement – and you might win a prize! Beginning in September, we will host a pub Quiz in The Pale on the last Wednesday of the month. So, put September 29th - 9:00 pm in your diary now for a great night out.

Standing Orders. This is by far the most efficient way to help us. A standing order form is available on our website at www.people.ie Funds are urgently needed and any suggestions will be welcomed by the committee.

If we are to offer serious opposition to the proposed Constitution, the groundwork must be done now. We need funds and people and both have to come in the main, from outside presently organized structures, whether political parties or single – issue groups. People's Movement is not in competition with other groups or political parties who might take a principled position on this issue. Therefore we will be organizing people who are not presently in any organization. It will be hard work but it will be worth it because this referendum can be won and the rather limited political independence and freedom from immediate military entanglements that we presently enjoy can be preserved. Only by winning this referendum can we then begin the larger task of seeking to win back basic powers from Brussels – powers that are fundamental to the functioning of an independent nation.

And finally, an appeal. We urgently need someone with the necessary experience to make a 15 - 20 minute video on the proposed Constitution that we can distribute around the country. This video would outline the major arguments in graphic and video form and facilitate discussion groups of varying sizes. It would become an indispensable resource for activists. Please let us know if you are acquainted with or know of anybody who would undertake this project. Contact: 087-2308330.