

6 December 2012

Peace prize vigil

The People's Movement will hold a short candlelight vigil outside the European Parliament offices, Molesworth Street, Dublin on Sunday next, 9th December. The vigil will commence at 4.00 p.m.

On Monday, 10th December, the Nobel Peace Prize for 2012 will be formally jointly received at a Nobel Prize award ceremony in Oslo by the European Parliament President Martin Schulz, Commission President José Manuel Barroso, and the European Council President Herman Van Rompuy.

According to Norwegian Alfred Nobel's will, the Peace Prize should be awarded to 'the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses'. To give the Peace Prize to the EU goes against the intentions of Alfred Nobel's will.

The will uses the term 'champions of peace'. Several of the EU member states have a bloody colonial history. EU member states account for 32 per cent of the total global weapon exports. The Lisbon Treaty requires EU member states 'progressively to improve their military capabilities' (Article 42.3).

Mairead Corrigan Maguire, the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1976, has been critical of the choice this year. She said that the EU does not meet the criteria set out by Alfred Nobel who had said that the prize he instituted should go to those who work for 'fraternity among nations' and 'abolition and reduction of standing armies' and reminds us that the EU 'imposes severe austerity measures' upon many of its own member countries while simultaneously supporting the growing militarisation of Europe by its support for the US military and for NATO.

She has also underlined the double standards adopted by the EU on human rights issues. 'Instead of upholding human rights for countries such as Palestine, the EU has rewarded Israel with special trading status and huge grants for its military research and weapons, thus enabling it to continue its illegal policies of occupation and apartheid. The EU has also supported the inhumane blockade of the Gaza Strip by Israel' the Nobel Peace Laureate observed.

Norway itself is not a member of the EU. Norwegians voted against joining in two referendums in 1972 and again in 1994. The Chair of the Nobel Committee, Thorbjorn Jagland has long campaigned for Norwegian entry into the EU.

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