

22 October 2014

Ireland's voting weight in EU law-making reduced from November 1st.

From 1st November, under the Lisbon Treaty provisions, a “qualified majority” will be at least 55 per cent of the members of the European Council, comprising at least 15 of 28 and representing member-states that comprise at least 65 per cent of the total population of the union. A blocking minority must include at least four Council members, constituting more than 35 per cent of the European Union's population, failing which the qualified majority will be deemed attained.

This “double majority” rule would make EU laws much easier to pass, provided the bigger states with large populations agree with them. Significantly, they would also find it easier to assemble a blocking minority.

France and Germany between them have nearly 33 per cent of the total members. So, Germany, Poland and any one of a range of countries, including France, Italy, and Britain, could easily assemble a blocking minority to prevent the enactment of measures they disagreed with.

At present, Ireland has 2 per cent of the weighted votes; under the Lisbon criterion it will have 0.8 per cent while – for example – Germany will have 16%. In effect, our relative power would be reduced to a third of its present level.

As the union enlarges, each individual state must have less influence in the whole. But what has happened with the Lisbon Treaty is a totally disproportionate increase in the weight of the big states and a diminution of influence for the small ones. Some 45 per cent of the power to make EU laws would be held by the four largest states: Germany, France, Britain, and Italy with the result that the influence of smaller states like Ireland will be negligible.

The Peoples Movement will hold a press conference on the issue at 11:00 in Buswell's Hotel at 11:00 tomorrow Thursday, October 23rd. Amongst the speakers will be Clare Daly TD, Thomas Pringle TD, Cllr Brendan Young and former MEP Patricia McKenna.

There will be a short demonstration outside the Dáil at 1:00 attended by T.D.s. The format of the demonstration will highlight Ireland's diminished relative voting weight .

Ends.

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