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## **There is an opt – out on EU military procurement**

One outcome of Donald Trump's election victory is that the EU will increase military spending and indeed, the process has already begun. No matter how it is justified by the Commission, there will be complications from a material increase in military spending. This is especially the case for the wider economy.



The first and most obvious impact is fiscal. EU countries only spent, on average, 1.3% of their GDP on military in 2022. Although this number rose in 2023 to 1.7%, it is still off the original NATO 2% target. Another increase in defence spending as a percentage of GDP, to 3%, Trump's suggested target, would entail more than another percentage point of military spending. The US's own military spending as a percentage of GDP in 2023 was 3.4%.

[Read more here](#)

## **EU to redirect billions to military**



Brussels is adjusting its spending policies to potentially redirect tens of billions of euros from the EU's cohesion funds towards military use. The cohesion funds, which total around €392 billion for the period 2021–2027, are typically aimed at reducing economic disparities between EU member states. However, with only 5% of these funds spent so far, Brussels plans to allow more flexibility in their allocation, especially for military-related projects.

Currently, these funds cannot be used directly to purchase military equipment, but investment in dual-use products like drones is permitted. Under the new policy shift, member states will be allowed to direct cohesion funds towards enhancing military industries and military mobility, which includes funding weapons and ammunition production, although the ban on directly purchasing weapons currently remains in place. Poland and other nations have urged the EU to allocate more resources for defense.

The policy change will also be welcomed by net contributors to the EU budget, such as Germany and the Netherlands, who prefer using existing funds rather than creating new debt

or increasing contributions. This shift reflects a growing prioritisation of the military in EU spending, particularly as recovery funds from the COVID-19 pandemic expire in 2026.

## Lobbying in Brussels: is it a shadowy industry?



When we think of lobbying, it's easy to imagine shadowy figures in dark suits whispering in the hallways of political buildings, bribing policymakers behind closed doors. This image, though somewhat sensationalised, is not entirely without basis. Lobbying is [a pervasive force](#) in the EU. But what does lobbying in Brussels actually look like, and does it really operate in a clandestine, corrupt way?

As we've pointed out before, lobbying in the EU is an enormous industry, one that shapes the very political machinery of the Union and its legislative output. According to [LobbyControl](#), an NGO advocating for transparency in policy-making, over 12,000 organisations are actively trying to influence EU institutions, employing around 29,000 lobbyists. That's almost as many people as the entire European [Commission](#) staff! In 2023 alone, these organisations spent around €1.3 billion on lobbying activities aimed at swaying policies, regulations, and decisions in their favour.

**[Read more here](#)**

## Keep the Triple Lock – FF/FG are hell-bent on abandoning it!



The Fianna Fail General Election 2024 Manifesto states, we will *'continue to protect and promote Ireland's military neutrality including sensible reform of the 'Triple Lock' legislation.'* (*Investing in Defence* P. 128, while the Fine Gael Manifesto states, *'we will enhance cooperation between our Defence Forces and international partners, including the United Nations, European Union, and NATO'* (*Support active military cooperation*, P. 71)

It looks like that in the latter case 'military neutrality' has morphed into 'military cooperation!' while in the former, a craven FF are being 'sensible.' In reality, both are tripping over each other in their haste to abandon it and cast themselves as 'Good Europeans.' Now is the time to speak up because the negative impact of such a move will affect us all and endanger our future security as Irish troops could participate in the EU's neo-colonial ventures and NATO's forays, in some cases, no doubt, making Ireland a conventional target or even a target for non-state actors.

Sinn Féin priorities (p.161) include: Maintaining the triple-lock neutrality; Opposing the removal of the Irish veto on matters of Foreign Policy at the European Council through opposition to Qualified Majority Voting on such matters; Opposing further militarisation within the EU, including any prospects for the formation of an EU army and Establishing a Citizens Assembly to agree the wording of a constitutional amendment enshrining the principles of Military Neutrality and non-alignment in the Irish constitution.

The Labour Party (p.162) is clear in its Manifesto: Maintain and protect Ireland's longstanding position of military neutrality and support a referendum to enshrine it in

our Constitution; Retain the Triple Lock for approval of peacekeeping missions under the UN with changes to allow for larger, short-term deployments of personnel for emergency evacuations and protection missions, up from the current limit of 12.

The Social Democrats (p.138) are more ambivalent: Retain Ireland's long established policy of military neutrality as a key element in our Foreign Policy and Ensure that any major change to our current form of neutrality be tested first via a Citizens' Assembly and possibly by referendum.

So, there you have it!

### **Protest against EU Militarisation – keep the Triple Lock**



**Our next protest will be held on December 18<sup>th</sup> at 13:00 outside the Dáil Kildare St.**

**It's clear that FF/FG, who is most likely to form the next government, will proceed to abolish the Triple Lock. Hence; the importance of even a token protest. Please try to get along.**

### **The right – wing grows in influence in the EU**



Earlier this year, there was a moment of relief in Brussels when the pro-EU alliance of centre-left, centre-right, and liberal parties secured a majority in the EU Parliament elections. These parties, which have shaped EU policy for over four decades, have now endorsed Ursula von der Leyen's new EU Commission. The Commission's declared mission is to steer the EU economy towards a greener, more competitive, and more secure future.

However, beneath this routine narrative of EU political stability lies a more unsettling reality. Von der Leyen's Commission has yet to officially take office, (December 1<sup>st</sup>) but the influence of the right is already growing, and it will likely be bolstered by imminent the return of Donald Trump to the White House.

[Read more here](#)



Click above

## 2024 CARD Review - a big step towards an EU Military Industrial Complex and EU Army



The recent approval of the 2024 [Coordinated Annual Review on Defence \(CARD\)](#) by EU Defence Ministers – including Ireland’s - marks a pivotal moment for EU militarisation. This comprehensive report emphasises the need for collaborative initiatives aimed at closing military capability gaps and preparing for high-intensity warfare scenarios.

Significantly, the report’s adoption coincides with the [signing of letters of intent](#) by EU Member States, not including Ireland, in four key areas: integrated air and missile defence (IAMD), electronic warfare, loitering munitions, and combat surface vessels. This coordinated approach signifies a strong commitment to enhancing collective military capabilities across the EU. The conclusions of the concurrent Pesco Strategic Review are [here](#)

[Read more here](#)

### MILEX24 – Ireland provides ‘force protection’



- From 25 November to 10 December, the European Union will conduct its second Live Military Exercise (LIVEX) in Bergen, Germany. This [live exercise](#) is part of the wider [MILEX24](#) which also included a command post exercise part. It is an important step in the implementation of the full operational capability of the European Union Rapid Deployment Capacity. The aim of the EU RDC is to enable the deployment of modular force of up to 5,000 troops to respond to a crisis outside the EU’s borders anywhere in the world. The Force Headquarters at the operational level under the responsibility of EuroCorps will be reinforced by an Irish Defence Forces company as force protection.

### Borrell's last hurrah



Last week, Josep Borrell, in his final effort as the EU’s foreign policy chief, sought to unite member states behind a proposal to suspend political dialogue with Israel due to its alleged violations of human rights and international law in Gaza. However, the proposal was met with resistance, with several countries—Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Denmark, the Netherlands, Italy, and Greece—opposing it. The proposal was based on the EU-Israel Association Agreement, which includes legally binding provisions on human rights, raising serious questions about the EU's commitment to enforcing these standards if it fails to act against violations.

[Read more here](#)

## Our new leaflet on the Triple lock

**If politicians seeking your vote cannot undertake to honour solemn undertakings already made by all parties to maintain the Triple Lock how can you trust their word on housing, health, the cost of living, climate etc.?**



### Keep the Triple Lock

The Peoples Movement expresses alarm regarding the government's proposed legislation to abolish the 'Triple Lock', which requires UN authorisation along with Cabinet and Dáil approval if more than twelve troops are to be deployed overseas. The concern is that the government would follow a successful abolition of the Triple Lock by intensifying our involvement in EU militarisation or ultimately, applying for NATO membership.



Abolishing the Triple Lock would fundamentally alter Ireland's stance on military involvement in international conflicts, particularly in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine. Historically, the Triple Lock mechanism has been a cornerstone of Irish neutrality, requiring government approval, Dáil support, and UN authorisation for military deployments. Removing this requirement would not only allow Ireland to engage in NATO or EU operations without limitations but would also signify a significant shift away from our longstanding policy of neutrality.

This shift would carry considerable implications for Ireland's relationship with the United Nations, an institution that the country has consistently championed. At a time when global authority is being increasingly contested, particularly in light of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, undermining the Triple Lock could be seen as a rejection of multilateralism and an endorsement of unilateral military actions. This would raise serious questions about Ireland's commitment to international law and the principles of collective security.

Moreover, the potential repeal of the Triple Lock would constitute a breach of the solemn "National Declarations" made by the Irish government during the Nice and Lisbon Treaty referendums. These declarations, issued in 2002 and 2009, explicitly committed Ireland to maintaining its neutrality, addressing voter concerns that arose when the treaties were initially rejected. The fact that these declarations were formally recognised by the European Council further emphasizes their significance in Irish political and legal history.

Renouncing these commitments could also lead to serious legal implications under international law, in particular, with the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. The repercussions of such a move could erode public trust in the Irish political system, given that many voters changed their stance on crucial treaties based on assurances regarding the preservation of neutrality.

Abolishing the Triple Lock would simply allow Ireland to engage more freely in conflicts like the current war in Ukraine, as well as previous interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya without UN authorisation. This shift would effectively dismantle Ireland's longstanding neutrality policy, significantly altering its international military engagement stance.

The commitment to uphold the Triple Lock has traditionally enjoyed cross-party support in the Dáil and Seanad, reflecting a broad consensus on the importance of maintaining Irish neutrality – though currently, only the opposition express opposition to its abolition.

If the current or a successor government were to abolish this mechanism, it would likely provoke widespread public backlash and cynicism toward politicians and their pledges. Such a development would be detrimental to the health of public discourse and civic trust.



Article 27 of the Irish Constitution allows the President to refer significant national issues to the electorate for a referendum. Given the historical importance of the Triple Lock and its implications for national integrity and identity, any attempt to repeal it should warrant such a referendum. This would not only respect the will of the people but also reinforce the notion that significant constitutional changes ought to reflect public consensus.

It is essential for members of the Oireachtas to engage in serious discussions regarding the implications of abolishing the Triple Lock and to foster public debate on the issue. A concerted effort to gather support for an Article 27 petition would ensure that any attempts to modify Ireland's neutrality are subject to democratic scrutiny.

Upholding the commitments made during the Nice and Lisbon Treaty referendums is vital for political integrity and the future of Ireland's role on the international stage. Those who value the principles of neutrality and international law must stand firm in their support for maintaining the Triple Lock as a vital component of Ireland's national identity.

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## Away with public interest rules



In December a new Commission will take office. Under the slogan of 'competitiveness', they will see it as their main task to reduce the 'regulatory burden', 'cut red tape', and remove 'obsolete' rules and laws. This deregulatory quest will hack away at public interest rules – from social rights to the environmental protections – that corporations decide are too 'inhibiting'. The goal to reduce corporate reporting obligations by 25% will not be possible without touching the "essence" of regulation, Corporate Europe Observatory has warned. CEO has identified 16 initiatives that could lead to "deregulation", in an analysis of von der Leyen's guidelines and the "mission letters" to her Commissioners.

**[Download the CEO guide here.](#)**

### A pointed silence

Did any Irish media report on how or why Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael MEPs all voted AGAINST a specific call in the EU Parliament on September 19th for Russia to withdraw from Ukraine? Answers on a postage stamp! The top panel are those who voted for the amendment.

### Whats going on?

The UN General Assembly has adopted a resolution against the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of the menace. Ireland voted against!

Voting Ended			11/11/2024	12:15:26 PM	
<b>Item 69 (a) draft resolution A/C.3/79/L.2, as amended</b>					
<b>Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of the menace</b>					
AFGHANISTAN ALBANIA ALGERIA ANDORRA ANGOLA ANTIGUA-BARBUDA ARGENTINA ARMENIA AUSTRALIA AUSTRIA AZERBAIJAN BAHAMAS BAHRAIN BANGLADESH BARBADOS BELARUS BELGIUM BELIZE BHUTAN BOLIVIA BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA BOTSWANA BRAZIL BRUNEI DARUSSALAM BULGARIA BURKINA FASO BURUNDI CABO VERDE CAMBODIA	CAMEROON CANADA CENTRAL AFR REP... CHAD CHILE CHINA COLOMBIA COMOROS CONGO COSTA RICA COTE D'IVOIRE CROATIA CUBA GUYANA CYPRUS CZECHIA DEM PR OF KOREA DEM REP OF THE C... DENMARK DJIBOUTI DOMINICA DOMINICAN REPUB... ECUADOR EGYPT EL SALVADOR EQUATORIAL GUINEA ERITREA ESTONIA ESWATINI ETHIOPIA FIJI	FINLAND FRANCE GABON GAMBIA GEORGIA GERMANY GHANA GRENADA GUATEMALA GUINEA GUINEA-BISSAU HUNGARY HAITI HONDURAS IRLAND ICELAND INDIA INDONESIA IRAN (ISLAMIC REP... IRAQ ISRAEL ITALY JAMAICA JAPAN JORDAN KAZAKHSTAN KENYA KIRIBATI	KUWAIT KYRGYZSTAN LAO PDR LATVIA LEBANON LESOTHO LIBERIA LIBYA LIECHTENSTEIN LITHUANIA LUXEMBOURG MADAGASCAR MALAWI MALAYSIA MALDIVES MALI MALTA MARSHALL ISLANDS MAURITANIA MAURITIUS MEXICO MICRONESIA (FS) MONACO MONGOLIA MONTENEGRO MOROCCO MOZAMBIQUE MYANMAR NAMBIA NAURU	NEPAL NETHERLANDS (KIN... NEW ZEALAND NICARAGUA NIGER NIGERIA NORTH MACEDONIA NORWAY OMAN PAKISTAN PALAU PANAMA PAPUA NEW GUINEA PARAGUAY PERU PHILIPPINES POLAND PORTUGAL QATAR REP OF KOREA REP OF MOLDOVA ROMANIA RUSSIAN FEDERATI... RWANDA SAINT KITTS-NEVIS SAINT LUCIA SAINT VINCENT-GR... SAMOA SAO TOME-PRINCIPE	UKRAINE UNITED ARAB EMIR... UNITED KINGDOM UNITED REP TANZA... UNITED STATES UZBEKISTAN VANUATU VENEZUELA VIET NAM YEMEN ZAMBIA ZIMBABWE
IN FAVOUR: 116		AGAINST: 54	ABSTENTION: 11		

## A couple of familiar faces!



## Clog award to Peoples Movement



The Danish Peoples Movement has presented their Clog Award this year to the Peoples Movement at a ceremony held at their Annual Conference in Copenhagen. The Danish handmade clogs are awarded in recognition of consistent and constructive EU – criticism and campaigning. The award was greeted with a standing ovation by the 150 delegates and parliamentarians from throughout the Nordic countries.

## A European Defense Union – a chorus



The idea of creating a common EU army has recently been noted by the outgoing head of EU diplomacy Josep Borrell. Borrell said that military issues should become the main topic of policy in the EU. According to him, military initiatives should become the “heart” of European policy. Previously, Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani also backed the creation of the EU's own armed forces: “If we want to be bearers of world peace, we need an EU army. This is a fundamental prerequisite for an effective EU foreign policy.”

Now, on November 4<sup>th</sup>, The President of the EU Parliament Roberta Metsola has proposed the creation of the European Union of Defense. Metsola believes that the security and defense union created by the EU would complement NATO. And for good measure, Fine Gael’s EPP Group [joined the chorus!](#)

## Heresy!!



Angela Merkel has suggested that Germany’s controversial debt brake — which limits the structural budget deficit to 0.35 percent of gross domestic product — should be overhauled. “I believe that in the current situation, in the face of many new challenges, it should be reformed — not to sustain social expenditure, but investments,” Merkel said.

## Competitiveness deal could mean more austerity



EU leaders have agreed on a [significantly diluted version](#) of the EU's "Competitiveness Deal," The Budapest Declaration, with key proposals removed from Council President Charles Michel's original text. The final statement omits plans to complete the Capital Markets Union, Banking Union, and a "genuine Energy Union" by 2026 and 2027, respectively. It also excludes calls for

eliminating cross-border telecommunications barriers, harmonizing insolvency laws, and achieving greater convergence in financial supervision and taxation across member states. Here is a [Public Service Union critique](#).

## A reply to our request for FOI on how the decision regarding when a person should be regarded as a potential terrorist



We did receive a reply to our query in the above regard but it did not provide any information beyond that included in the article in our last News. We had sought the minutes of the meeting where it was decided in order to establish the rationale underpinning the 'understanding.' No explanation was given regarding why they are not available.

## The night before Christmas



Marine Le Pen, leader of France's National Rally, may hold the fate of the EU's economy in her hands as her party decides whether to vote against French Prime Minister Michel Barnier's budget. A rejection could collapse Barnier's fragile coalition government, triggering market turmoil and causing widespread fear across the Eurozone. France's deficit has exceeded 6 percent of its GDP; double the EU's limit, due to years of excessive spending. Barnier's budget aims to reduce this by

raising energy taxes and delaying public benefits, measures that have sparked resistance. Le Pen has threatened a no-confidence vote if the budget remains unchanged.

The scenario mirrors the 2010 Greek debt crisis, which nearly broke the eurozone and exposed vulnerabilities across multiple countries. Now, France faces its own debt challenges, and with Germany, once the EU's economic anchor, now struggling politically and economically, the situation is precarious. [The ECB has warned](#) of the risk of a new debt crisis in the eurozone, exacerbated by low growth and policy uncertainty. With the added possibility of a US-EU trade war, the outlook for the EU in 2025 looks uncertain and volatile.