The Lisbon con

This week marks the anniversary of the re-run referendum on the Lisbon Treaty.

The result was not an expression of the will of the people but rather of the fear of a majority of Irish voters.

Ireland's voters voted not on the content of the Lisbon Treaty but rather on a fear of political isolation if they did not say Yes to the same treaty they had so decisively rejected a year previously.

An even bigger reason for the turnabout was the promise of jobs and economic recovery that they were conned into believing would result from a Yes majority.

The same political parties that over the years have pursued policies that brought the country to economic bankruptcy managed to manipulate the fears brought about by the economic crisis to clamp an undemocratic EU constitution on Ireland and most of Europe.

Putting the country in hock

And this week marks a second anniversary: that of the decision by the same clique of politicians to put the country into hock indefinitely for the benefit of the banks that were the main instrument of the crisis, the builders and developers to whom the banks lent money, and the politicians themselves, who set the administrative framework for the borrowing binge from 2001 to 2007.

Each of the EU treaties, from the Single European Act to the Lisbon Treaty, has led to a progressive reduction in the ability of the peoples of the EU member-states to decide their own laws and to the transfer of that power to the EU Commission and Council.

Surrendering our independence

Once an EU member-state transfers legislative competence in a particular policy or government area to the EU Council of Ministers, its people lose the power to decide their own laws in that area and thereby reduce their democracy and independence.

For example, in the euro zone Ireland has lost the classic economic tools of all independent governments that seek to advance their people's welfare. It has no control over the rate of interest or the currency exchange rate.

Euro interest and exchange rates are not set at a level to suit the peculiarities of Irish economic development but are usually determined to suit the interests of the strongest member-states in the euro zone, namely Germany and France.

The Governing Council of the European Central Bank decides both the interest and the exchange rates. Small countries like Ireland have little clout.

The democratic fight back requires a collective international effort to re-establish national independence and democracy for several countries simultaneously, one such country being Ireland.

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