PEOPLE'S NEWS

News Digest of the People's Movement

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No. 285 **May 2026.**

EU Ukraine loan of €90bn agreed

Half of this €90bn will be disbursed to Ukraine this year, with the remainder coming in 2027. The bulk of the loan is earmarked for military spending. Each year, €28 billion will be used for spending on military needs and €17 billion on general budget needs such as health and education. EU leaders had decided last December to jointly borrow the money to lend to Ukraine. The EU will provide interest-free 'loans' for the years 2026-2027 based on EU borrowing on capital markets. Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic secured exemptions which means that they will not participate in the joint borrowing.

Sources in Zelensky's ruling party say that this is the first time that EU has allowed its aid to be used to pay Ukrainian soldiers and Zelensky has promised to increase wages by 50%. EU leaders have been clear over recent months that Ukraine must keep fighting for four more years until Re-arm Europe is complete and the EU is ready to take on Russia. And so, how much is Ireland borrowing to fund the Ukrainian army and does this mean that we are technically at war with a nuclear power? Serious questions!

Yet another good reason to keep the Triple Lock

The EU is considering extending its mutual defense clause to Ukraine even before the country becomes a full member. They see Ukraine as a strong partner due to its large, experienced army and its advanced capabilities in drones and artificial intelligence. According to The Economist, some EU countries are against fast-tracking Ukraine's full membership. However, there is general agreement on offering Ukraine alternative forms of cooperation, such as observer status in EU institutions and in the Council of the EU without voting rights and extending the mutual defence clause.

Meanwhile, EU countries are open to invoking the EU's mutual defense clause, Article 42.7 of the Treaty on European Union, in relation to Ukraine. This clause is similar to NATO's Article 5, which requires members to assist a country under attack. If similar guarantees were extended to Ukraine, it would mean that EU countries would be legally obliged to respond to any potential aggression against it – even without full EU membership. This could conceivably see Irish troops deployed to Ukrainian front lines in large numbers if the Triple Lock is abolished.

PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT
GLUAISEACHT AN PHOBAIL

No to EU Militarisation and an EU Army!

Neutrality is our best defence.

Keep the Triple Lock!

People's Movement will hold its monthly protest on

Wednesday 17th June at 1:00pm.

Outside Dáil Eireann, Kildare St.

Please try to get along – it is important!

Placards and banners will be provided.

EU eyes Iceland's fisheries – referendum in August

Brussels has signalled that NATO member Iceland could receive a special exemption on fishing policy to accelerate its potential bid to join the EU. Reykjavík is expected to hold a referendum in August on restarting membership talks. Iceland's earlier accession talks were frozen in 2013 over disputes on fishing rights, a cornerstone of the nation's economy. However, EU Fisheries Commissioner Costas Kadis has said that there was "definitely room for flexibility," with exemptions for Iceland now under review as part of a broader overhaul of the bloc's fisheries policy adding that shared-stock agreements could be renegotiated.

Public opinion remains divided: recent polls show 47 per cent oppose EU membership and 40 per cent support it. In 2024, marine products made up roughly 40 per cent of Iceland's exports, highlighting the importance of its seafood industry, exemplified by the Cod Wars of the 60's and 70's. Fisheries remain the decisive issue. Icelandic officials warn that membership will be impossible without flexibility in this area. They would be well advised to note the Irish experience of an EU fisheries deal!

The EU agrees terms of US trade deal

The EU Parliament and national governments have agreed on the terms for implementing the so-called "Turnberry deal" struck with Washington last summer, after Donald Trump threatened fresh tariffs if Brussels kept dragging its feet. Under the agreement, the EU will scrap tariffs on hundreds of US industrial and agricultural goods in exchange for a 15% tariff on most EU exports to the US. The EURACTIVE report is here.

Europe drives global military spending to record $2.9 trillion

The 29 European NATO members spent a combined total of $559 billion in 2025, and 22 of them had military spending of at least 2.0 per cent of GDP, according to SIPRI.
Germany was the largest military spender in the group, with its expenditure growing by 24 per cent year-on-year to $114 billion. Germany's military burden exceeded the 2.0 per cent threshold for the first time since 1990, reaching 2.3 per cent of GDP in 2025. Spanish military spending alone, increased by 50 per cent to $40.2 billion. This brought its military burden above 2.0 per cent of GDP for the first time since 1994. In 2025 military spending by European NATO members rose faster than at any time since 1953.

Data protection at risk

Since December 2025, the EU and the United States of America have been negotiating an agreement to exchange information for security screenings and identity verification related to border procedures and visa applications. The Commission's current proposal, published by Statewatch, manifestly violates EU law. It goes much further than their limited mandate for negotiation granted by the Council of the EU and against essential data protection safeguards set out by the European Data Protection Authorities. Anyone's data exchanged under this proposed agreement could be used for a wide range of purposes. This includes preventing or arresting people travelling to the USA who have voiced opposition to US policies in Europe.

The Statewatch report is here

Italy prioritises citizen's needs over military spending

The Italian government is giving up a chance to grab an extra €12 billion in military spending as it shifts its focus to keeping energy bills down. Meloni had been considering triggering an EU scheme to exempt a quantity of military spending from calculations of annual deficit spending to allow extra arms purchases without breaking EU deficit rules.

The so-called National Escape Clause of the Stability and Growth Pact (NEC) would have boosted Italian military spending by about €12 billion over three years. Meloni said, "Today we have other priorities. I have the priority of energy costs and the priority of responding to the needs of citizens."The decision followed years in which Meloni's government urged the EU to set up a scheme like the NEC, arguing it was the only way to boost military spending.

The EU normally requires member states to keep their budget deficit below 3% of GDP or face infraction procedures. But if they use the NEC scheme they can now add on extra defense spending worth 1.5% of GDP, every year, for four years starting from 2025 without punishment. So far 17 member states have participated in the scheme including Germany, though Ireland has not indicated its intention to participate.

The EU is sanctioning a few more Israeli settlers

All 27 EU foreign ministers agreed on sanctions against a few violent Israeli settlers in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and on representatives of Hamas. They will have their financial assets frozen and be banned from travelling to the EU. As public, political, and diplomatic pressure continues to mount, EU foreign ministers have a choice: continue Israel's red-carpet treatment, or start enforcing the bloc's so – called red lines, which Israel has made a mockery of, particularly since October 2023.

"One million people in Europe, more than 75 NGOs, almost 400 former diplomats, UN experts as well as Belgium, Ireland, Slovenia and Spain have all called for the suspension of the Association Agreement. Once again, these calls have been disregarded. It's beyond time for Ireland to give a lead and pass the Occupied Territories Bill and unlike the EU, not be a lapdog to the US -Israeli axis.

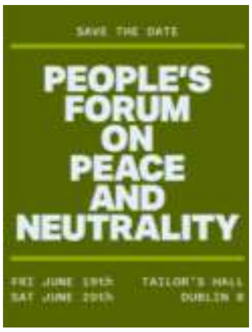
War profiteers: Airbus

Military production revenues of Airbus's Defence and Space Division rose 7% year-on-year to €2.8 billion, helping to offset headwinds for the rest of the company", and order intake nearly doubled to €5.0 billion compared to €2.6 billion a year earlier. According to the AIRBUS CEO Guillaume Faury, "in defence, the focus remains on serving global demand by ramping up production across our portfolio of products and services.

One of the biggest polluters in the world

President Catherine Connolly has warned that the "military-industrial complex", and the wars around the world it facilitates, are major contributors to climate change; "the elephant in the room is the normalisation of war, which could not happen without the vast military-industrial complex" (a term coined by US President Dwight Eisenhower). She said there was a "deafening silence around this issue", which "speaks volumes and must be called out".

People's Forum



A People's Forum on Peace and Neutrality will take place in Tailor's Hall in Dublin on 19th and 20th June. Over two days speakers from Ireland and overseas will come together in Dublin to discuss Irish neutrality

Legal experts will talk about how neutrality is a legal construct anchored in international law. We will also hear how Ireland's neutrality has allowed it to play an important role in peace-keeping globally. Meanwhile arms trade experts will detail how the global arms industry is highly profitable and is often instrumental in shaping government policy away from peace keeping and towards war making. Save the date!!!

Will the EU implement the 'passarelle clause'?

Now that Victor Orban has exited, the EU has discussed activation of the 'passerelle clause' that allows the EU to unanimously switch to majority voting in foreign policy decisions under Art. 31.3 TEU. By doing so, the EU could avoid the veto strategies that Orban mastered. This would leave some other areas under unanimity rule such as military policy and the budget), Art. 31.3 could be triggered quickly by a unanimous vote in the European Council, having an immediate effect and not requiring Treaty revision. Activation could only be achieved however while there is still unanimity around the table, so you can expect to hear more about this as the possibility of a member state electing a government wielding a veto looms large!

Ireland redirects EU Cohesion funds

The EU's Cohesion Policy "is proving its ability to adapt" to a changing world according to the Commission. Member States have amended 186 national and regional programmes, redirecting €34.6 billion towards new priorities including €11.9 billion for military industries. The housing crisis only merits €3.3 billion and energy security (€1.2 billion).

The Commission proposed in April 2025 to encourage Member States and regions to redirect investments towards its new strategic priorities, simplifying policy rules, and extending the implementation period of the amended programmes by one year.

Almost all of them took advantage of this, resulting in the reallocation of almost 10 per cent of the total Cohesion Policy budget, amounting to €367 billion. Only two Member States, Austria and Luxembourg, have not redirected financial resources towards the new priorities like Ireland did, amending its 2021–2027 Cohesion Policy programmes to redirect a portion of its €1.4 billion budget. Details are lacking but the money for new military hardware came from somewhere. Perhaps the Regional Development Fund?

Beware -The Deregulation Wave Reaches 'Social Europe!'

BusinessEurope of which IBEC is a member, wants a "labour market omnibus." The script is identical to those that came before it and the proposal offers little hard evidence that EU labour law is excessively burdensome. No data show that compliance costs are stifling productivity or innovation, nor is there a clear causal argument that cutting reporting or transparency rules would lift competitiveness. Simplification is treated as inherently good. Yet labour law structures a fundamental power relationship between employers and workers. Social law provides counterweights — transparency, limits, collective voice — so that people do not cease to be citizens when they enter the workplace.

Read more here

The EU rips up planning rules

The EU is ripping up planning rules and funding dirty infrastructure. Corporate Europe Observatory's latest report 'Permission to pollute', lifts the lid on how the EU Commission is systematically dismantling environmental planning rules at the direct request of fossil fuel companies, mining lobbies, and Big Tech. The Commission ran special 'Reality Checks' solely with industry, and co-hosted planning workshops with Big Oil.

Under cosy labels like "strategic" and "overriding public interest," projects like CO_2 pipelines through areas at risk of earthquakes and flooding, data centres consuming staggering amounts of (dirty) energy are getting the fast-track VIP treatment – while communities and ecosystems get the bill. The Commission didn't just listen to industry; it actively invited them to shape the agenda. That's corporate capture EU - style and here in Ireland, our public money and increased energy bills will be paying for it.

Some of the TDs who joined us at our last protest

Brian Stanley TD centre left: Shónagh Ní Raghallaigh TD above and Réada Cronin TD top left.

Ryan’s Brussels committee ignores EU funded housing research

Last year, the EU Commission set up the Housing Advisory Board, an ‘expert’ group which was tasked with providing concrete, independent policy recommendations for the Commission to consider in preparing the European Affordable Housing Plan. Eamon Ryan was appointed chairperson of the Board, which was tasked with providing policy recommendations for the Plan.

The Plan has already drawn criticism for falling well short of expectations. By framing the housing crisis as a temporary imbalance that can be corrected simply by building more “affordable” homes, the plan overlooks the deep structural forces that produced this crisis in the first place.

Read more here

Barry Ward TD FG, in reply to a request to vote for Sanctions on Israel.

While I agree with the spirit of Deputy Richard Boyd-Barrett's Bill, the difficulty I have is that *sanctions are not something that Ireland can implement unilaterally*. For example, when Russia launched an invasion of Ukraine in 2022, heavy sanctions were swiftly implemented by the EU, of which Ireland is of course a member state. *They were not implemented by the Irish Government, and practically this is not something we can do alone.* That’s what happens when you hand over foreign and trade policy to the EU.

McEntee ‘Ambitious’ to spend our money on weaponry

Ireland is now seeking to join the next phase of the EU’s flagship military programme. “I think we need to,” Irish Foreign Minister Helen McEntee told reporters. “We should have when it opened the last time,” she added, referring to the first phase of Security Action for Europe (SAFE), the EU’s €150 billion loan programme. The EU created the SAFE loan program last year to encourage joint military procurement across the bloc. The EU Commission is considering a second program after the first was over-subscribed.

Speaking after a meeting of EU trade ministers in Brussels, McEntee said that Ireland was prepared for the security implications of hosting EU meetings during the second-half of this year, noting the country’s increased spending on defense and security.“I am really ambitious for our country that we spend more, and that’s happening — 55% increase in our capital budget this year, 44% increase in our current spending. We’re expanding our defense forces, our air corps, our naval services,” she said.

Food and wine from Israeli settlers

Food and wine from Israeli settlers is still flowing into the EU's shops directly from the West Bank front lines. Consumers in the EU are eating Carmel oranges, Hadiklaim dates, and Jordan River Herbs from Israeli settler firms in Palestine's occupied West Bank.
They are also drinking Psagot, Shilo, and Zion wines from the West Bank, as well as Golan Heights and Tishri wines from Israeli-annexed Syrian territory.

The EUObserver shows that these were among some 45 settler firms who exported agricultural produce and construction equipment to the EU, according to the (CIDSE) group in Brussels and the Israeli WhoProfits research centre. Total EU trade in goods with Israel grew to €43.3bn in 2025, up from €42.6bn in 2024, despite the Gaza war. The Commission was contacted to ask how much of this trade was from illegal Israeli settlements, but did not reply. And so it is vitally important that services are included in the Occupied Territories Bill if its' enactment is to have political significance and an economic effect. Ireland imports over €3 Billion in goods from Israel annually. This creates a large trade deficit for Ireland, (€1.4 Billion) placing it among Israel's top global export markets, much of it to facilitate transfer pricing, mainly processors for Intel.
Read more here

Poorer Member States organise – we're not one of them


MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Click the image. There are four pages – to read, click the arrow on the right – hand side of page 1 etc.

Wealthy EU countries, including Ireland as a net contributor, are organising a campaign to shrink the size of a proposed €1.8 trillion long-term EU budget (MFF), ahead of talks on the numbers. But a group "Friends of Cohesion," including more than a dozen Member States, backed a statement that calls for the EU to consider new "own resources" as well as joint borrowing to finance investments.

Ministers representing nine EU net contributors (countries that pay more into the budget than they receive) will try to convince the bloc that they won't sign off on the deal unless their bills are reduced. The battle lines are now drawn between the "Friends of Cohesion" and the frugals! The current MFF is set to expire at the end of next year.