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EU Competence creep or power grab!

This is a good time to recall that between 2011 and 2018 the EU Commission made 63 demands that governments cut spending on healthcare and/or outsource or privatise health services.

The content of Country-Specific Recommendations from the Commission under the Stability and Growth Pact and the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure 2011-2018

NUMBER OF EU28 MEMBER STATES RECEIVING INSTRUCTION FROM COMMISSION

YEAR	Increasing pension age/ cuts to pension funding	Spending cuts on healthcare/ privatisation of healthcare	Suppression of wage growth	Reducing job security/ workers' bargaining rights	Reducing support for unemployed, vulnerable or people with disabilities
2011	14	2	7	5	8
2012	13	3	6	7	10
2013	15	10	6	9	6
2014	17	16	13	10	9
2015	13	9	8	3	3
2016	10	8	4	2	3
2017	10	5	4	2	3
2018	13	10	2	0	3
TOTAL:	105	63	50	38	45

Notwithstanding the domestically inspired cuts from Charlie McCreevy's 1992 Dirty Dozen, when welfare cuts were accompanied by ward closures in hospitals to the more recent moratorium on recruitment in critical areas. The latter resulted in our hospital services being severely under – resourced and understaffed and we may never know how much of this resulted from our government's 'good European' reaction to instructions from Brussels.

[Read more here.](#)

The waiting game



As the world sinks into the deepest crisis in more than 100 years, we have had a succession of demonstrations of what is wrong with the European Union.

The EU leaders know they cannot agree on important things that deliver prosperity to their citizens. So they play a charade – late night urgent talk fests, grand statements about solidarity, the on-line talks break up –

a report is commissioned; they agree to come back in a few weeks or months – problem deferred. Everyone saves face. No-one admits the whole scam is a massive failure.

[Read more here.](#)

Are we heading for austerity again?



While the IMF is predicting that the Lockdown will lead to a global recession more severe than at any time since The Great Depression, Ireland has so far avoided the worse of the tragic scenes that the pandemic has brought elsewhere. However it is clear that this country will not escape the economic fallout.

Government revenues have fallen precipitously. But to prevent unmitigated economic disaster, the state must counteract the fall in economic activity in the private sector by continuing to increase expenditure. The result is a likely “€22 billion hole in the public finances”.

[Read more here.](#)

A message to the new Dáil - out of PESCO now!

The People’s Movement has written to all one hundred and sixty members of the 33rd Dáil calling on them to undo the folly of the 32nd Dáil which dragged the country into PESCO just to show that we are “good Europeans”.

The People’s Movement believes that there is a potential majority in the new Dáil for a withdrawal. The letter to the TD’s coincided with the group’s last picket of the Dáil, part of its campaign of monthly anti-PESCO demonstrations now in its third year.

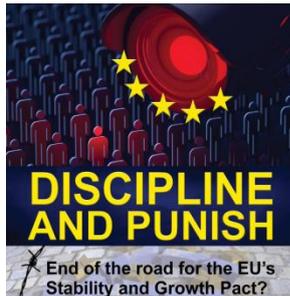
The letter reminded the TD’s of the history of PESCO and pointed to its role in the EU militarisation process.

[Read more here.](#)

Discipline and Punish!

Below is an excerpt from the new study, *Discipline and Punish: End of the road for the EU's Stability and Growth Pact?* by researcher Emma Clancy and commissioned by Martin Schirdewan MEP, co-president of the European United Left group in the EU Parliament.

Against a backdrop of prolonged stagnation and low growth, ultra-low interest rates, rising income and wealth inequality, and a desperate need for massive public investment in the climate transition, placing arbitrary restrictions on the borrowing and spending abilities of EU governments cannot be economically or socially justified.



It is almost universally acknowledged that the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) has failed to ensure either economic stability or growth in the EU since its introduction in 1997. It has in fact demonstrably acted to stifle growth, and it has deepened and prolonged the double-dip recession in the EU. The strict fiscal rules have acted as a direct barrier to the recovery of economic growth to pre-crisis levels, and they contribute to the ongoing sluggish growth in the EU. [Read the full study here.](#)

[Read more here.](#)

The EU a strong ... global player

Below is an extract from a letter signed by Helen Mc Entee, Minister for EU Affairs along with four other Ministers calling the urgent convening of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

The Parliament was the first EU institution to set out its ideas for the conference, backing a resolution which "commits itself to a genuine follow-up of the Conference without delay, with legislative proposals, initiating treaty change or other wise," a move that would pose big problems for the government here, especially if, as anticipated, the changes include measures pushing the EU towards a defence union.

Ms Mc Entee's letter while paying lip service to the fight against Covid 19, concludes by stressing the ultimate objective of the conference, originally scheduled to commence on May 9th; "an open and ambitious discussion on how we can make the EU a strong and credible global player." The chair of the Conference, Guy Verhofstadt is a well known advocate of EU military expansion and if this letter is anything to go by, a Fine Gael – led government would be in full support.

A roadmap to an EU Army

This is a very useful summary of developments so far in the creation of an EU Army and proposes the [integration of PESCO with EI2 as a way forward.](#)

European Intervention Initiative (EI2) is "a forum of European participating states which are able and willing to engage their military capabilities and forces when and where necessary to protect European security interests".

[Read more here.](#)

The 1 per cent increases its share of Irish national income.

The annual equality report from the think-tank Tasc (Think tank for Action on Social Change), says that while the richest 1 per cent continues to increase their share of national income, just under a quarter (23 per cent) of workers are in low-pay jobs – particularly in wholesale, retail and hospitality. [Read the Report here](#)

[Read more here.](#)

Never waste a good crisis

The Commission's latest non-paper on the bloc's next seven-year budget has revealed the progress towards an EU Army, more than previous proposals. Some MEP's are not impressed and have written a letter to EU's chief diplomat Josep Borrell, arguing that the current COVID19 crisis has demonstrated the added value of military mobility in response to civilian crises.

“The military mobility in Europe would provide for increased flexibility for prompt action in preventing and responding to crises, demonstrate the resolve of EU and NATO to potential geopolitical adversaries and also would be instrumental for delivering aid in civilian crises.”



Over a quarter of arms exports originate in the EU

Germany, the EU and the western powers combined have increased their already dominant share of the booming global arms export, according to a report on international arms transfers published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Germany is the fourth largest arms export nation in the world. The value of Irish exports of military equipment rose by 29 per cent in 2018 to €37.3 million but that does not include dual use electronics such as might be used in guidance systems.

[The SIPRI Top 100 Arms-Producing and Military Services Companies, 2018.](#)

See also [The Western Armament Community](#)

[Read more here](#)

EU 'Peace Fund' will weaponise Africa even further.



The EU Commission's Vice President and High Representative, Joseph Borrell, has recently revealed the intention to weaponise Africa. Speaking in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Mr Borrell made a series of statements about the intentions of the EU's military wing, including using the funds from a new €10.5bn "off budget," "Peace Fund" to buy and provide weapons which will bolster existing wars in Africa.

[Read more here.](#)

Arming Africa; lethal equipment funded by Member States.

Effectively, having armed and trained soldiers from countries in the Sahel region they would then be 'supervised' on the ground by EU personnel – if this resolution is acted upon by the Council and the Commission. These will be proxy EU armies and will bring poverty war and destruction to the region. Of course, 'supervision' could quickly morph into leadership and the question regarding which army to support will depend on the security priorities of the EU decided in secret by the Military Committee.

[You can read the draft report here](#)

The question to be considered is; does Ireland want to be involved in the neo-colonial push into North Africa?

[Read more here.](#)

No TTIP through the back door!



During the recent talks between the EU Commission and the US authorities on a new trade agreement it has become clear that the Commission is prepared to accommodate Trump's demands for a reduction of EU food safety levels, to the detriment of public health, animal welfare and the environment, and also undermining current EU commitments on climate change.

[Read more here.](#)

ISDS and its variants haven't gone away you know!



Economic crises invariably lead to investors who feel aggrieved by the States filing cases through private courts under the provisions of investment protection treaties. Argentina after the 2001 crisis, Greece and Spain after the

2008 crisis had already borne the brunt of multiple attacks, sometimes by purely speculative investors, advised by business lawyers in search of lucrative litigation.

The Covid-19 pandemic is no exception. Business law firms are already active. "Although the future remains uncertain, the response to the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to violate various protections provided for in bilateral investment treaties (BITs) and could give rise to claims in the future by foreign investors " according to the international arbitration firm Aceris Law.

[Read more here](#)

How corporate lobbyists steer EU law-making.

Lobbyists have operated in Brussels for almost as long as the European institutions settled down there. In 1965, several Dutch newspapers reported with a sense of amazement how "pressure groups" had descended in the unofficial European capital to influence officials working for the European Economic Community (EEC) - the then seven years-old predecessor to the European Union.



The journalists highlighted the smorgasbord of corporate interests represented by such groups: the faucet industry, the dry-cleaning sector, manufacturers of sewing machines and sparkling beverages producers. They also reported that corporate interests and agriculture lobby groups had easier access to EEC officials than unions and consumer organisations.

[Read more here.](#)