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Supreme Court rules CETA unconstitutional

74%
of people polled in Ireland
want a referendum on
TTIP & CETA

UPLIFT PEOPLE
POWERED
CHANGE



THE seven judge Supreme Court has ruled that the [Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement \(CETA\)](#) is unconstitutional and cannot be ratified by the Oireachtas unless legislation is changed. The court made the ruling in a challenge taken against the State by Green Party TD Patrick Costello.

However, the Court also ruled that certain amendments of the [Arbitration Act 2010](#) would, if affected, permit ratification without breaching the Constitution. If the legislation is amended, a referendum on the matter could be avoided. The Court said that is a matter for the Oireachtas. Mr Justice Charleton was the sole dissenter on the point related to amending the Arbitration Act.

Agreement was reached on CETA, a trade deal between the EU and Canada, in 2016. [It came into force provisionally in 2017](#), but all national parliaments in EU countries need to ratify the deal before it can take full effect.

[Read more here](#)

Here comes Mercosur!



Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Lula), who is in favour of a speedy implementation of the Mercosur trade deal, has won the Brazilian presidential elections and Irish beef farmers had better watch out!

Negotiations with the Mercosur bloc were concluded in mid-2019, after negotiations spanning more than two decades. The pact, the largest negotiated ever by the EU, would see the bloc gain access to a market of 265 million people and the gradual reduction of 90% of tariff barriers within 10 years.

[Read more here](#)

Our next protest



No to EU Militarisation and an EU Army!

Neutrality is our best defence.

The People's Movement will hold its monthly protest on

Wednesday November 23rd at 1:00pm.

Outside Dáil Eireann, Kildare St.

Energy Charter Treaty on the ropes



The fossil fuel industry's biggest weapon against state regulation is falling apart, as a succession of EU governments moved to dump the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) over the past days.

The 1990s treaty, which allows investors to sue governments via private and secretive arbitration (rather than national or international courts), was designed to protect Western investments in post-Soviet states' energy systems, many acquired during the Yeltsen smash and grab period. Nowadays, it is mostly used by companies to sue governments when green policies hit their profits. The treaty protects hundreds of billions of euros worth of fossil fuel investments in the EU alone.

[Read more here](#)

Scholz back on the offensive



Speaking recently at the Congress of the Party of European Socialists in Berlin, German Chancellor Scholz advocated for gradually abolishing the principle of unanimity for decisions in foreign policy, but also in other areas such as tax policy. "I know that we still have a lot of convincing to do there, but I also say clearly: if a geopolitical Europe is our aspiration, then majority decisions are a gain and not a loss of sovereignty."

Scholz also supports more military autonomy of the EU. He called for coordinated procurement of weapons and equipment, the establishment of an EU rapid reaction force by 2025, and an EU headquarters for EU armed forces. "In the future, Europe will need a coordinated increase in capabilities ... we must confidently and jointly advance European defense."

Neutral Austria will not join the EU Ukraine military training mission

Austria will not join the EU mission to train Ukrainian military personnel, but supports it, according to Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg.

“We support this mission... but participation is not currently planned,” the minister said.

According to Schallenberg, the question of the future participation of Austria in this mission is still open, “we have seen in recent months that a lot is changing, we will constantly monitor this.” The minister added that Austria would continue to supply Ukraine with protective equipment, but “not lethal, military weapons,” because “this is contrary to the position of neutrality.”

Gender equality low priority in EU budget



Gender equality is the EU priority which is least well covered across different programmes in the bloc's budget, the European Court of Auditors concluded in a new report just published.

The auditors checked how the EU Commission incorporated the bloc's overarching goals. While the commission reported that it had fully incorporated the key priorities into its budget programmes, the auditors found that there are, in fact, "significant differences" between climate and biodiversity, compared with gender equality.

EU Budget agreement – increases to military



The EU Parliament, Council and Commission have reached a deal on the EU budget for 2023, settling for €186.6 billion in planned payouts. This is a budget increase that is over €1 billion more than originally proposed by the European

Commission, €0.7 billion less than the European Parliament's request, but around €2.7 billion more than EU countries were seeking.

The majority of the increase — equivalent to €280 million — was aimed at boosting resources for aiding Ukraine and neighbouring countries. There's also a boost to the EU “military mobility” budget, to upgrade transport infrastructure so that military can be moved swiftly around the bloc. The deal must be ratified within two weeks by the Parliament and Council in order to go into effect the latter by qualified majority of countries, so it is expected to pass



Click above

Welcome to the Walled Garden



Echoing Gibbon's famous opening lines from the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Head of the EU foreign service, Borrell, in two speeches to the EU Diplomatic Academy said that, "Europe is a garden. We have built a garden. Everything works. It is the best combination of political freedom, economic prosperity and social cohesion that humankind has been able to build," but "the rest of the world is not like this."

[Read more here](#)

EU Industry Committee supports nuclear power green funding



MEPs from the industry committee of which Sean Kelly and Ciarán Cuffe are members have voted to add nuclear projects to the list eligible for finance under an EU green fund, with 32 in favour, 22 against, and three abstentions.

The amendment, supported by Kelly relaxes the concept of environmental harmlessness. As specified under the EU's "do no significant harm" principle, no projects financed with EU recovery money should negatively affect any of the EU's Green Deal environmental objectives, which include climate change mitigation and preventing pollution.

[Read more here](#)

The Covid vaccine contracts haven't gone away!



The European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) is investigating the EU's COVID-19 vaccine contracts. The agency quietly put out the news in a terse, three-sentence announcement. The notification will certainly draw more draw more attention to relations between Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla.

[Read more here](#)

Fossil fuel giants steer the EU's energy policy



As the war in Ukraine brought the EU's dependency on Russian oil and gas into the limelight, Corporate Europe Observatory showed how the EU's dependence not just on Russian supplies, but on all fossil gas, is a consequence of how the fossil fuel industry has successfully captured EU decision making.

[Read more here](#)

Ireland and the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC)



Ireland is to contribute up to 120 troops to the EU's new crisis response force when it comes into being in 2025. The development of an EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC) is at the core of the Strategic Compass initiative. The RDC will replace the EU Battlegroup system which was established in 2007.

The new system will see 5,000 troops from EU member states available for deployment at short notice at all times. The main task of the RDC will be to quickly stabilise a situation, in advance of any longer term deployment

Several rapid reaction forces are to be established across the EU based on geography with one being on standby at all times. Each force will remain on standby for a year before being replaced with another force. Details of the RDC were revealed by Defence Forces Brigadier General Gerald Buckley, who serves as the Irish representative to the EU Military Committee.

[Read more here](#)

More doubts about Frontex



The EU Parliament refused to endorse the EU's border police Frontex, following numerous reports of abuse under its previous leadership. The vote focussed on the Warsaw-based agency's budget in 2020 in a procedure known as a discharge.

MEPs voted against granting discharge, sending a political signal that they are unhappy about how the agency uses public money to patrol the EU's external borders and that it needs to implement further reforms. The year 2020 saw the agency's annual budget climb towards around €750m at a time when it was headed by Fabrice Leggeri.

[Read more here](#)

Relatively quiet on the Irish front as cost of living increases bite



France faces another series of strikes this week as an emerging protest movement gains ground after general strikes paralysed its northern neighbour Belgium and Greece in a sign of increasing strain on Europe's workers shouldering the continent's cost-of-living crisis. French workers are demanding higher wages and opposing pension reform. Disruptions are expected to affect public transport the most.

Inflation in France increased by 6.2% year-on-year in October the lowest increase in the EU. Here in Ireland it is closer to 10%. Isn't it time that protests are no longer confined to weekend events! Where are the fightin' Irish?

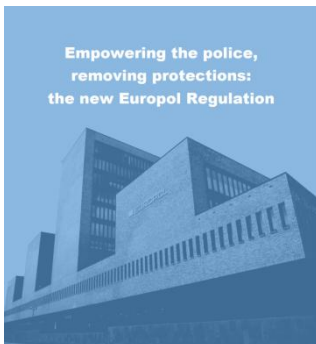
Fight ahead on fiscal rules



[The latest Commission proposal](#) does not change the infamous 60 percent maximum debt-to-GDP ratio and 3 percent maximum deficit per year enshrined in the Maastricht Treaty — but it does scrap the current debt reduction speed of 1/20th per year, as it's widely seen as unrealistic for countries with debts of over 150 percent of GDP. [The new plan replaces the one-speed-fits-all](#) with a country-specific debt-reduction approach, which would be agreed by EU countries with Brussels and linked to sanctions in case of non-compliance. It's really a case of austerity dressed up.

But Germany's Finance Minister bluntly reacted: "A unified currency union also needs unified fiscal rules," he said. Spain and the Netherlands had proposed a country specific process. Spain takes over of the Council in the second half of next year, and may well end up trying to achieve EU consensus on the plan.

Europol; a conduit for harassing political opponents and dissidents



Rule-of-law questions are mounting about the EU's police agency Europol, following a recent expansion of its powers amid data abuse scandals. Those powers include the processing and analysis of data of innocent citizens with no links to any crime. The agency had its powers expanded this year, raising alarms among civil society groups over the lack of accountability.

It has already been [embroiled in scandals](#), including sharing the personal details of Frank van der Linde, a Dutch peace activist, with the German police. When he asked for a copy of those details, the agency wiped it clean, in breach of EU data-protection rules.

Europol has also been caught up over another data scandal involving the EU's border police, Frontex. Frontex border guards [were feeding the Europol criminal database with details of irregular migrants](#), ignoring warnings of "function creep" by its own data protection officer. [You can read the Statewatch report here](#)

How biotech giants use patents to control the future of food



Big global biotech corporations like Bayer and Corteva, which together already control 40% of the global seed market, are dangerously trying to reinforce their monopoly and threatening food security. Corporate Europe Observatory and others reveal how these companies seek to increase control over food and farming by extensively patenting plants and developing a new generation of GMOs.

[Read more here](#)

EU 'Military Partnership Mission' for Niger – back to the Sahel!



The EU plans to set up a "military partnership mission" in the coming months to help bolster Niger's forces in a revision of its footprint in the Sahel region, after cutting back its training mission in Mali.

It will include "specialised training" in areas such as tackling improvised explosive devices – something the Irish Defence Forces are reputed to excel in and which seems to be included in the package of "assistance" to Ukraine - and could provide communication and command support for Niamey's military. There has been no Irish involvement in Niger to date but it remains to be seen whether this will change given the Government's propensity to become involved in military ventures.

[Read more here](#)

How the fossil fuel industry turned the Ukraine war into an opportunity for extra profits and further lock-in of gas.



How are oil and gas firms able to make record-breaking profits while millions struggle to pay their bills? A new investigation reveals that from the onset of the Ukraine war, European fossil fuel majors have enjoyed unprecedented access to EU leaders. Thanks to their oversized influence they have been able to delay and minimise decisive political action on energy markets, which allowed them to rake in billions in profits. They also gained an even stronger role than before in EU decision-making on energy issues, pushing for ever more gas

infrastructure and gas-based projects.

[Read more here](#)

Key chemical legislation in doubt

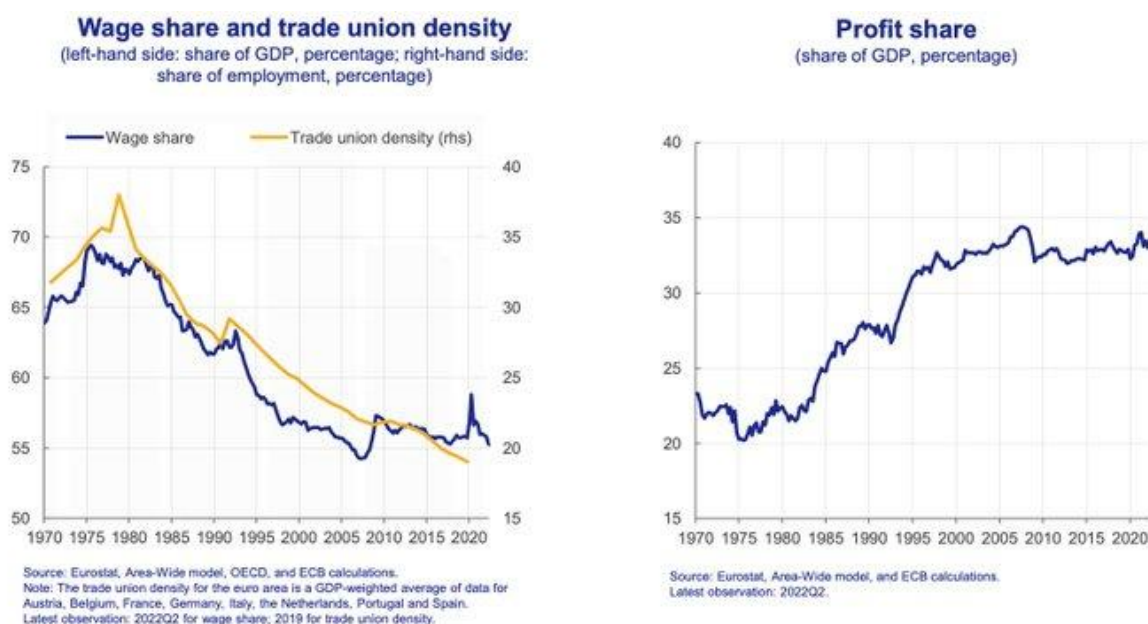
It would appear that a key piece of EU legislation aimed at protecting citizens from toxic chemicals is about to be kicked into the long grass. Two years ago, the Commission announced an overhaul of EU chemicals regulation as part of the Green Deal. It demanded speedy implementation of its ambitious goals to deliver a toxic-free environment and zero pollution.

The overhaul includes various components and some are moving ahead, including the ban on 'forever chemicals'. But a crucial element — revision of the 2006 REACH regulation which registers, evaluates, and restricts chemicals — is looking increasingly in doubt.

[Read more here](#)

The graphic reality

The bargaining power of workers has declined strongly in the €zone since the 1980s: the wage share and trade union density have fallen, and the profit share has increased.



A moral void

Voting Started			11/4/2022	11:26:52 AM
Item 66 (a) draft resolution A/C.3/77/L.5 as orally revised and as amended				
Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of				
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BRUNEI DARUSSALAM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EQUATORIAL GUINEA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> JORDAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MONACO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUSSIAN FED...
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BURKINA FASO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ETHIOPIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> KENYA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MONTENEGRO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAINT KITT'S-NEVIS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BURUNDI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FIJI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> KIRIBATI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOROCCO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAINT LUCIA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CABO VERDE			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOZAMBIQUE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAINT VINCENT-GRE...
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CAMBODIA			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MYANMAR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAMOA
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NAMIBIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAN MARINO
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NAURU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAO TOME-PRINCIPE
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SAUDI ARABIA
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SENEGAL
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SERBIA
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SEYCHELLES
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SIERRA LEONE
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SLOVAKIA
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SLOVENIA
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOMALIA
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IN FAVOUR: 105				
AGAINST: 52				
ABSTENTION: 15				

This is the result of a UN vote is on a resolution to combat the glorification of Nazis and Neo-Nazis. Ireland votes against along with NATO and EU member states. Can you make any sense out of [the EU Commission explanation](#)? It seems to be justified by stated Russian objectives to de-Nazify Ukraine - which has nothing to do with the resolution.

The EU coordinates Member States votes at the UN [under Art. 34 of the Lisbon Treaty](#). Ireland [abstained on a previous resolution in 2020](#) and [also abstained in 2014](#) when there was no contrived issue regarding Ukraine. Surely we deserve an explanation?

It is a very clear indication of the extent to which we gave away any semblance of an independent foreign policy through the Lisbon Treaty.

