

THE TREATY OF LISBON

A SPOOFERS GUIDE TO HOW TO NOT VOTE NO



WARNING: Reading this



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Foreword

Do I not have anything better to do with my time?

There are decent, informed people who take an interest in current affairs who would gnaw off their own arms before they'd read anything about an EU treaty. That's fair enough, that's a sign that you're a normal person. This is dry, dry stuff. Complicated? Yes it is. This is the phone book and the guide to programming your video (if anyone still has one) wrapped up together.

It is boring. But what did you expect? It's a treaty. Has any child ever ripped off the wrapping paper on Christmas morning and went "Oh! The Treaty of Versailles! You shouldn't have! I'm going to activate the stability destroying reparation mechanisms against Germany right now!"

It is turgid. What do you expect when 27 governments sit down and agree, in arse-numbing detail, how to run a continent and face the challenges of climate change and drugs and bio-technology and cloning and sex trafficking and what to do about Swedish soft rock duo Roxette (Who actually namecheck themselves in their early 1990s hit Joyride. Namecheck themselves? That's like Hitler chanting his own name during the Nuremburg Rallies. If only he had, then maybe the response would have been "This Hitler, he's a bit up himself, isn't he?" As opposed to "This Hitler and his plans to crush this International Jewish Financial Conspiracy he speaks of. How may I subscribe to his pamphlets?" If only.)

People think the EU is complicated. It is, because life is complicated. I don't know how an iPod works, or Air Traffic Control, or my microwave, but I do know how they make my life better. The EU is complicated because it comprises of 490 million people, with different languages and cultures and viewpoints, and that's what makes it complicated. It attempts to accommodate everything from Irish attitudes to abortion to Danish attitudes to holiday homes to Austrian attitudes to nuclear power. The negotiations at one stage included a discussion on whether (and I'm not joking here) the EU should protect the rights of animals in space. Ridiculous? Possibly. Democratic? Definitely.

We have a treaty as thick as a phone book because our views and opinions would fill a phone book. We talk and talk and talk in Europe, which, admittedly, can be a pain in the arse, but bear in mind: We usen't to talk much at all. In 1870, 1914, and 1939 we hardly spoke a word to each other. How did that work out?

I believe in the European way of solving problems. It is slow and boring but it works, and in this pamphlet, we're going to try and explain to you how it works without giving you a nosebleed, and why you should vote Yes to the treaty. Is it perfect? No, not by a long stretch. But it moves us along the road just that little bit further, and that's got to be worth something.

Jason O'Mahony

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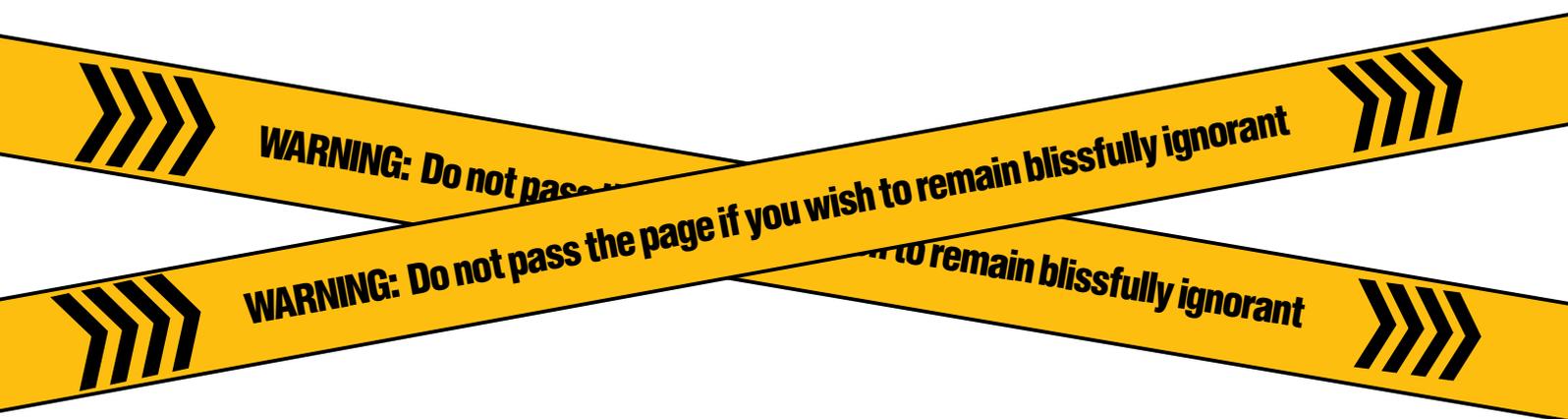
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Not another Treaty!

Are we buying them in job lots?

European treaties are, it seems, like Pringles™, in that you haven't even finished the one you're on before you are reaching for the next one. What's with that?

It's a fair question. From 1987 to 2008, we will have voted on 5 different treaties¹ which seems like a lot. It is. The reasons are many. When you have 27 countries, someone is always facing an election and so is very nervous about dropping ambitious plans on their electorate, and so caution is the rule of the day. As a result, the treaties tend to do the very bare minimum to keep the EU running, and as a result put off the really hard decisions until they're absolutely necessary. Put it this way: If the EU had been in charge of going to the Moon, we'd still be building the ship as we arrived in lunar orbit.

The governments decided that this was no way to carry on, and so decided to write a constitution for Europe which would deal with all these issues once and for all, and so set up a convention which debated all the various ideas about running the EU. Ireland's delegation included John Bruton, John Gormley, Proinsias De Rossa and Ray MacSharry, amongst others, and eventually, with the last minute intervention of Bertie Ahern's legendary negotiating skills, the deal was done, and a constitution was agreed.

Lovely. Problems solved, right? We got a document which ironed out a load of problems, and put all the existing treaties into a single readable text. It also included a definitive list of all the rights that EU citizens were entitled to.

That was where the problems started. The Spanish and the Luxembourgers voted it through in referendums, and other countries used their parliamentary methods to ratify it. Incidentally, the argument that everybody should have a referendum is received differently in different countries. For us to tell the Germans to use a referendum, which they associate with a certain moustachioed Austrian corporal is like them telling us that our police have to wear uniforms of black and tan. They're a bit sensitive, like.

Then the French, who were, quelle surprise, in one snot with Jacques Chirac for managing to deftly combine general incompetence with sticky-fingered corruption decided to stick it to him, and voted No. The No side argued that the constitution was both too left wing and too right wing, too pro-foreigner and too anti-foreigner and was giving away too much and too little power to Brussels.

Glad they got that message clearly across.

The Dutch then voted No, this time seemingly over the feeling that they were paying their hard earned taxes to other parts of the EU, including the new bits, and it all seemed a bit fishy, and they needed the money anyway for new clogs/drugs/very long pairs of trousers.²

So, we had gone from shiny new constitution to crisis. In fairness, if there's one thing that the EU does well, it's a crisis. Europe's leaders initiated the crisis plan, where they rushed to the crisis meeting in Brussels, discussed the crisis, and then issued a declaration that there was, in fact, a crisis.

“When you have 27 countries, someone is always facing an election and so is very nervous about dropping ambitious plans on their electorate, and so caution is the rule of the day.”

After what was deemed a period of reflection, the leaders calmed down, noticed that the pubs and cafes of Europe were not descending into drunken fracas over the Qualified Majority system, and started to tip-toe very gently towards a possible solution.

Here was the problem. The word “Constitution” upset a lot of people, as did mentioning the fact that the EU had a flag (which it does, and which we all know) and an anthem (which it also does, you know that one...Ode to Joy...the one from the trailers for Die Hard) so they dropped them from the text, as was the idea of consolidating the texts of the two main treaties that make up the EU into a single readable version. So in order to placate those who think the EU is undemocratic, we have made it actually harder for EU citizens to work out how the EU actually works. Which is a novel approach, you have to give them that.

We now have something they initially wanted to call the “Reform” Treaty but is now called the Lisbon Treaty. It's basically the EU Constitution, although you can't say that in Britain, the same way you can't say “Doesn't Prince Harry look very like James...” Anyway, it is pretty much the same thing only messier and no longer called a constitution.

And that is why we're having another referendum.

¹ Including one twice. Ahem.

² Required due to them being a tall people, which you tend to be, living below sea level.

Why the EU is Batman, and the US is The Incredible Hulk.

And why Lisbon is useful in making us even more Batmanier.

John Lennon got castigated in the 1960s for suggesting that The Beatles were bigger than Jesus. Christian protestors went loopy over it, and thousands of copies of Beatles records were torched on bonfires in southern states of the United States, much, incidentally, to the delight of The Beatles record company who had sold the records to the protestors in the first place. What Lennon had meant, of course, was that The Beatles were better known in their own time than Jesus was in his, and that scenario is even more apparent now. Our planet is massively interconnected, from people in the darkest jungles of South America knowing who James Bond is, to the vast majority of Manchester United fans having never been to the UK, let alone visit Old Trafford.

In an age like this, problems are interconnected too. Drug barons, paedophile image traders and terrorists have all grasped the opportunities of the interconnected age. Governments and indeed often their people, have remained wedded to outdated concepts of national sovereignty.

“ In 1957, they created the European Economic Community to integrate Europe, on the idea that if Europeans found it easy to sell each other bratwurst, chips with mayonnaise, and Volkswagen Beetles and drool inducing ladies boots, they would be too busy to invade each other. ”

The EU was founded on the very concept that countries should be reliant upon each other for their own prosperity and security. In the wreckage of World War Two, politicians such as France's Jean Monnet and Belgium's Paul Henri Spaak (Winner of the Name A Famous Belgian Competition 1945-1985, where he was finally ousted by Jean Claude Van Damme.) realised that the best way of stopping France and Germany beating the crap out of each other every 20 odd years was to put coal and steel under international control, the vital ingredients of war at the time. The theory was that the European Coal and Steel Community³ would control coal and steel



Having failed the audition for Mr. Humphries in *Are You Being Served?*, Hitler decided to conquer Europe instead.

production in the interests of the six founder members, and ensure that they would be put to peaceful uses⁴ and not bad things.⁵

It worked so well, in fact, that the founder countries started thinking about extending the idea to other things, such as atomic power and trade. In 1957, they created the European Economic Community to integrate Europe, on the idea that if Europeans found it easy to sell each other bratwurst, chips with mayonnaise, and Volkswagen Beetles and drool inducing ladies boots, they would be too busy to invade each other. That worked to such an extent that today we regard it as the norm for all these things, from goods and services to people, to be able to travel easily across the single market of Europe.

Now, we need to make the next leap. We already, through the EU, dominate world trade. It is the US and EU who decide the shape of world trade at the WTO. The next step is for us to utilise that power in other fields. Ireland cannot, as I said in the foreword, stop climate change on our own. But with the support of 485 million other Europeans, we are the second great economic power on the world stage, and as a result, we can shape the world closer to our values. A world, that, in case we forget, will very shortly be shaped by the emerging powers of India and China.

There are some who say we shouldn't do that, that it is not our business, and that we should not be attempting to duplicate the US.

³ Their imagination didn't extend, it had to be said, to the creative naming of things.

⁴ Fiat Puntos.

⁵ Tanks, shells, guns and pointy hats.

Duplicate the US? No, we shouldn't. In recent times, the US has resembled The Incredible Hulk - a decent man who occasionally gives in to his baser urges, goes ballistic, and with his great strength trashes the gaff, much to his regret later. You can tell the US is similar to The Incredible Hulk by the fact that despite the gamma ray induced rage causing his body to expand to enormous portions, destroying his clothing, his genitals remain covered at all times. Psychotic maniac he may be, but a family values psychotic maniac he be too. He'll destroy property and people, but there's to be no giant green penis.



If the Lisbon treaty passes, the people of Lisbon will be able to afford gaps for streets between their buildings. Bless.

The EU is more of a Batman type superpower. Tortured by our dark history and self-loathing, unlike The Incredible Hulk we had to build all our incredible gadgets from scratch, and we wrack our consciences in endless debate before we ever act. But when we do, it's quite impressive. The Treaties and the European Court are our batmobile, getting us where we want to go, and our single market is our batarang. As President Bush discovered when he imposed steel sanctions on the EU, the dull thud of an EU trade blockade on the back of the head will slow even the hardest of miscreants. Sometimes, 490 million people refusing to buy Microsoft's products is as powerful as an aircraft carrier.

The reality about climate change will only be resolved if the US and EU agree together, and then get India and China to the table. It means that we, a continent built on the rule of international law, will have to lead in terms of stressing the need both to resolve the problem but also recognising the legitimate economic aspiration of the two Asian countries, and the US's concerns too as the World's leading high energy need state.

We have the tools. All across the world, other groupings of nations, such as ASEAN, Mercosur and the African Union, look enviously upon what the EU has achieved. They recognise that our gut reaction is always to reach for the pen rather than the club, and that is a strength we can play to.

But let us not dismiss the US. Europe would not be free today were it not for the sacrifices of young Americans who died in Normandy and elsewhere, and then the US commitment that kept Stalin's Red Army out of western Europe. We share so many values, from the rule of law to democratic government to free markets with them, it seems obvious that the technological solutions to our energy needs, for example, will come from an US-EU alliance. The US is our biggest market, and us theirs, and we should be each other's closest friend too.

This Treaty of Lisbon will provide us with many of the vital tools we need to secure our place in the world. It'll give us a proper foreign service, a full time 'foreign minister'⁶ and also a full time President of the Council of Ministers who can speak on our behalf. This will be particularly handy given that our propensity to rotate presidents every six months can sometimes lead to the other G8 leaders thinking our EU president is the butler, and ordering a very dry martini off him. In fact, sometimes the G8's butler isn't sure who he is. After all, who exactly is the Prime Minister of Belgium, or Latvia, anyway?

“ We have the tools. All across the world, other groupings of nations, such as ASEAN, Mercosur and the African Union, look enviously upon what the EU has achieved. They recognise that our gut reaction is always to reach for the pen rather than the club, and that is a strength we can play to. ”

⁶ Please note that we can't call the Foreign Minister that title as the British break out in hives at the prospect, hence the really catchy name of High Representative for Foreign Affairs.

So what is in the actual treaty in Chicken Nugget sized portions?

With pub friendly translations

Okay, breathe. Breathe. This is may not be pleasant but read on if you really want to know what is in this legal sucker. You'll get through it.

A new, full-time, President of the European Council elected by Presidents and Prime Ministers for up to five years

The guy who has to come up with the big plan, and answers to the prime ministers. Finally, a European leader whose name your ordinary homme-dans-le-rue might actually know (good) and might be worth assassinating (not so good).

As mentioned before, a face that we in Europe might actually recognise, never mind the leaders of other countries. A longer term will also give him/her a chance to actually shape a longer term agenda, as opposed to: a) having to run their own country at the same time, and b) not having to leave office just after figuring out where the loo is and where they store the extra paper for the photocopier.

A new, single, High Representative for Foreign Affairs

The bloke who rings around all the EU countries to see can we all agree on a common position on dealing with stuff outside the EU. Or at least, what pizza toppings we're all happy with at the next meeting of Europe's foreign ministers.

This seems to be blindingly obvious, so blindingly obvious that we didn't do it for years, and instead had foreign leaders wondering, as Henry Kissinger said, "Who do I ring to speak to Europe?"



Sadly, just one rogue pair of blue underpants in the wash and all the flags were ruined.

A new External Action Service

The back up to the guy above. Basically the civil servants who know where Condoleeza's phone number is kept. And the pizza menus.

The EU's diplomatic service. Finally, the EU has someone who can decide, amongst other things, when exactly the EU's ambassadors can spoil their guests with large pyramids of Ferraro Rocher. In fairness, this could be quite useful for us lot who are now travelling around the world rather than going to Trobolgan on our holidays. Fancy getting stuck in Mongolia without consular assistance? Well, these punters will be able to help you if you happen to be in a country where there is no Irish Embassy which is basically any country that did not occupy us, give us hard cash, or buy cows off us.

Legal personality for the EU, so that it can sign more international agreements

Basically, a giant ID card to prove that the EU is who it says it is, and can sign treaties, speak with authority, buy beer, etc.

Now the EU exists. This one surprised me too. Finally, that giant elephant that used to hide behind plants at diplomatic soirees has a name. Which is nice.

A new rule that the Commission President must come from the winning party in European Parliament elections

The Commission President is the guy in charge of the day to day running of the EU, and so, should, you know, maybe get the nod from the punters who actually pay for everything?

Nearly. The idea behind this is that EU Parliament elections will have an effect, of sorts, on who gets to head Europe's government. The next step will be for parties to nominate their candidates before the election. Not that we'll have ever heard of them, that is, until one party realises that nominating a well known leader may actually have an effect on the result. I look forward to Lech "there's no such thing as a good gay" Kaczynski campaigning in Ireland on the Fianna Fail ticket.

A new, simpler, more democratic voting system in the Council of Ministers

Ironically, the title is rather self-explanatory but the explanation is not.

This is where your eyes glaze over, so I'll try and be very clear. The council is where national ministers vote on policies, and the plan is to try and ensure two things. One, that every country gets a say, and two, that the size of a country matters.

To get something passed, it has to have a majority of countries and a majority of the populations on board. That was to stop all the small countries, who make up 21 of the 27 countries, ganging up on the big 6. It was also to stop the big 6, with 340 million of the 500 million people of the EU, ganging up on us. Just to confuse things, there is something called a blocking minority, whereby a certain number of countries get together and stop a proposal.

Incidentally, some Irish people complain that all countries should have the same vote. Apparently when this was suggested to the Germans, they agreed, provided that Ireland pay the same amount to the EU that Germany does, or that Germany pay the same amount Ireland does.

The suggestion was quietly dropped.

New European Parliament role in matters of crime and security to ensure better public scrutiny and democratic input

This is the novel idea that it might be a good idea to let people elected by Europeans have a bit of a say as to how people get banged up. (in the broadest sense. Let's not take the piss...)

Contrary to common belief, the European Parliament does actually matter. Sure, it is full of weirdos, from Dutch MEPs demanding voting rights for swans to Hungarian Nazis, uncrowned Emperors and a Mussolini, but that's the European tradition of representing everybody. This isn't the House of Commons, or the US Congress. Everybody gets a voice here.

In Ireland's case, we get to send the occasional competent individual (Pat Cox, Proinsias De Rossa), the more than occasional loon (take your pick) and the odd fella doing a lap of honour who suddenly realises he can now afford to



There is only one place one's eyes are drawn to in this photo, and it begs the question – just what sort of bread is that girl eating?

spend five years stinking of either stale Guinness or piss, or a mixture of both. It's anybody's guess which of these three combination represents the Irish people the most.

The Parliament, nevertheless, is one of the few things in the world that scares the European Commission, primarily because it once sacked the bastards. Whilst the rest of us are going about our daily lives, parliament is thinking full time about everything from how Europe should be run to where all our money goes to standardised rules for adult pleasure devices. Some eurosceptics think parliament has no power. Curiously, the biggest companies in the world spend millions lobbying parliament every year. I wonder who is right?

A new role for national parliaments in the European legislative process

Letting the local lads have an early goo at proposals, or at least, the right to, so they can't go on bitching later that no one let them have a look.

When our TDs aren't busy voting themselves pay rises and fiddling social welfare for constituents who don't deserve it, the idea is that occasionally they might look at EU legislation before it is passed, and flag concerns about it. Obviously, we're talking about proper parliaments here,

like the Danish Folketing or the Bundestag. Our guys will be far too busy conning their constituents by telling them every boreen can have a cancer treatment centre to have any time to actually legislate or God forbid read anything. And in case any TD on the European Affairs Committee is reading this, I'm terribly sorry, I know some of you are doing fine work, but for the love of Christ try to tell someone!

Legislation to be decided on in public

Voting in public. Yes, it is that simple.

Amazingly, the council of ministers meets in private at the moment. Under the treaty, they will have to vote in public. It means that they will agree things in secret side meetings, but at least they will have to vote in public. Or not vote. Either way, they will have to explain their position, that is, if any national media can tear its eyes off Jordan's new boobs or the latest episode of I'm A Celebrity, What Do You Mean You Have Never Heard Of Me?

“ We have too many commissioners, and too few real jobs, so the number will be cut, and not every country will automatically have a commissioner. Having said that, it will be rotated equally so that every country, even Germany, will have a period of time without a commissioner. Will save a few quid too.”

A smaller Commission rotating strictly on equality

Every country getting the same go at having a commissioner.

There is a European Commissioner who has the job of Multilingualism, whatever that is. We have too many commissioners, and too few real jobs, so the number will be cut, and not every country will automatically have a commissioner. Having said that, it will be rotated equally so that every country, even Germany, will have a period of time without a commissioner. Will save a few quid too.

Qualified Majority voting in matters of crime and security to enable quicker decision-making

Using the EU's Dungeons and Dragons style internal voting system rather than having every country agree.

This will allow our leaders to pass laws more easily on fighting terrorism, sex trafficking, etc, by stopping countries from blocking on their own. On the other hand, it might make it easier to be extradited to Bulgaria, so make of that what you will.

A new, legally binding, Charter of Fundamental Rights

What you can and can't do under EU law, and what they can and can't do to you.

Someone has had the novel idea of putting all the rights we have under the EU into a single text, which is a good idea. However, these rights only apply to those areas of life covered by EU law, which means that you can't, for example, be executed by the European Commission. We can all rest easy in our beds, so.

New ability to accede to the European Convention on Human Rights

We wrote them down. Now judges have to read them as opposed to say they've heard mention of them "down our way".

The European Court of Justice today recognises the ECHR as a source document of rights, rather like how Catholics view the Bible. The Lisbon Treaty shows the Court some good Belfast efficiency, by making them take the ECHR literally.

Judicial oversight in matters of crime and security to ensure rights protection

EU Judges, having read the rules, actually doing something with them.

At the moment, the ECJ gets told to butt out when it comes to criminal and police co-operation. Now it can get its revenge, and stick some rights to the states.



The reality of Europe is this: Sweden and Finland do in fact look like a set of distressed genitalia.

Firmer rules for future EU member states

Who we're letting in at the door.

The idea here is that we are going to be a bit fussier about who we let into the EU from now on. For example, if the applicant state's foreign minister is using baling twine to keep his trousers from falling down, we send them on their way.

Good job that rule didn't apply when we joined, way back when we regarded the concept of trousers as "fancy" and regarded Pee Flynn as sophisticated.

New provisions permitting enhanced co-operation

Letting gangs of EU countries set up their own treehouses, as long as everyone is allowed to play eventually, if they want to.

Also called "The Brits can go and swing" clause. This is where a group of member states can agree amongst

themselves to implement a policy, as long as it doesn't contradict EU law and that all member states can join if they wish. The Euro is one example, as is the Schengen agreement on border controls.

To protect our legal system, an effective veto on crime and security and an Irish opt-out/opt-in

There is no simple answer to this, sorry. Even Jesus would have difficulty turning this into a parable. And He was Jesus!

The former Taoiseach decided to play the hokey-cokey on Justice and Home Affairs. Suddenly the Drumcondra boy got all suspicious about the frisky intentions of European justice ministers on our judicial system. When the other Member States wanted to abolish the veto during the Constitutional Treaty negotiations, Michael McDowell negotiated an "emergency brake" – a very clever type of a veto which could be used by the Taoiseach. During the dark hours of the Reform Treaty talks last June, Bertie decided he didn't want to get dirty himself, so – even though we've never complained before – he decided to suck up to the Brits and sign the British opt-out. Always a master of fudge, he then signs a declaration saying that he didn't really mean that, he loooooooves European justice. Confused? Still, at least there'll be work for lawyers.

Completely renumbered Treaties, because we know EU citizens were worried that Article 167a was blank

Apparently there were some bits of flotsam and jetsam in the previous treaties. Badly numbered articles, protocols, and the owners manual to the 1979 Ford Capri. The one Bodie used to drive.

Very technical stuff, although apparently this is exciting to lawyers, who are at this moment loosening their clothing in excitement. Takes all sorts.

“ Good job that rule didn't apply when we joined, way back when we regarded the concept of trousers as "fancy" and regarded Pee Flynn as sophisticated. ”

Who is against the Treaty. A lovely bunch of people, and they've been right about so much before!

Wanna be in their gang?

The treaty was negotiated by centrist leaders coming together, and hammering out a compromise. Nobody was completely happy, but will live with the rules agreed. Those against the treaty have an easier job, in that they have never managed to suggest an alternative that they could a) agree upon, and b) get the majority of Europeans to agree upon.

They hate the treaty. They hate each other more.

Gerry Adams

Sinn Fein used to be against the EU, but have now changed to wanting to reform it, so that every decision is made by unanimity, that is, never. Am I the only person who finds it ironic that they pretty much want to model the EU on the Commonwealth?

Sinn Fein also want (Pay attention, this is tricky) to bring Northern Ireland into the Euro, and once in, bring the whole island out of the Euro together. Huh? Apparently it is something to do with 19th century concepts of national identity. Maybe they'll give us all an acre of land, a bucket and a donkey each too.

Sinn Fein say the EU is too pro-business, too capitalist, and does not give enough rights to EU workers, whilst at the same time condemning the EU's interference in the rights of Irish workers.



Finally, and this is my favourite, Sinn Fein believe that the EU is too militaristic and are concerned about the EU using weapons to achieve its political ends. I'll let that sentence just sit quietly there, as I leaf through the November 2007 edition of Black Pots and Kettles Monthly.

Margaret Thatcher & The Tories

Despite trying to blow them up, Sinn Fein and the British Tories are practically swapping bodily fluids when it comes to Europe. The Tories believe the EU is giving too many rights to workers, interfering in letting employers fondle pregnant women, etc.

The Tories are bizarre about national sovereignty. They object to the Commission asking about prawn cocktail crisps, yet practically waft of Vaseline in their attitudes to the US. And here's the thing: They have far more power in the EU than they have ever gotten with the US.

Personally, I think it is a public school thing. The EU treats the British with respect, whilst the US gives them a damn good trashing. No prizes for guessing what works for your average Tory MP.



Joe Higgins

Joe wants a workers collective to run everything, and the EU is not a workers collective, so he is agin' it. Basically, he wants the world run to the same ethos and efficiency as Dublin Bus. Good luck with that one, Joe.



Under Joe's brand of Socialism, workers won't even have to break wind themselves, instead being lifted into a relaxed farting position by specially trained fart officers, with fart shields. Nothing is too good for the workers.

Patricia McKenna

Patricia McKenna's position is odd. She wants to save the world, yet doesn't want to support any of the institutions, like the EU, that are needed to actually move the planet collectively on. I'm not sure what her solution is, other than maybe by mass osmosis we will all stop our nonsense, give each other a hug and start growing rhubarb. The Maeve Binchy approach, I believe it is called.

Jean Marie Le Pen

There are too many darkies about the place. Vote No.

The French Communists

These guys are absolutely indignant at the concept of having to get out of bed and do a day's work, and the fact that the EU is encouraging that makes it the greatest capitalist conspiracy since Margaret Thatcher said it wasn't.

The state should own everything, pay for everything, and some twirly moustached fictional plutocrat should have the shit taxed out of him to pay for it, when he's not defiling the sexually alluring daughters of mineworkers or tying them to train tracks.

The Abortion Crowd

I call them the abortion crowd, because that's what they centre around. I'm not talking about genuinely committed Christians, but the gang of right wing nutjobs who aren't just concerned about abortion. They're not really too enthused about modern Ireland, with your homosexuals sauntering about, and your Muslims, and women working and not knowing their place, and Protestants strutting about as if they were actually Irish.

They hate the EU, with its foreign ideas about stopping husbands beating their wives, etc. Interfering in the traditional Irish ways, like.

Nice mates to have eh?

So there you have it.

Europe isn't easy. It permeates day-to-day life, and like the Galway water system, is ignored unless it vanishes. It is boring. But it works. Imagine if one were to step through a tear in time, and appear in front of some prisoners in Auschwitz or Belsen. Imagine telling them of a Europe at peace, and democratic from Talinn to Galway, with a single currency and an elected parliament and a guarantee that a Pole in Germany or a German in Malta or a Maltese in Sweden can stand up and say "I am an EU citizen, and I will be treated as an equal."

A Europe in which French and German troops share weapons, and their ministers sit in joint cabinet session, elected in free elections.

They would call it a fantasy. Yet everyday, 490 million people call it home.

And now for the science bit....

Lisbon Treaty Referendum Commission
<http://www.lisbontreaty2008.ie>

Irish Government Lisbon Treaty website
<http://www.reformtreaty.ie>

RTÉ analysis on the Lisbon Treaty
<http://www.rte.ie/news/features/lisbontreaty/index.html>

Alliance for Europe, the official Yes Campaign
<http://www.yestolisbon.ie>

Legal eagle who can actually explain the Treaty in English if you're into that sort of thing
<http://www.toland.ie>

About me.

When I'm not writing this nonsense I work in the construction industry. I was once on the ballot paper as a Progressive Democrat, until 94% of the electorate decided that I was obviously taking the piss.

If you can't contact me by carrier pigeon, why not use my email address omahony.jason@gmail.com

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