



# PEOPLE'S NEWS

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## TTIP: Leaks confirm worst fears

Leaked documents from the negotiations on the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership confirm the dangers threatened to health, environment and safety standards. The documents are from the twelfth round of negotiations in February 2016 (the thirteenth round concluded in New York on 29 April).

The EU Commission had slapped a thirty-year ban on public access to the negotiating texts at the beginning of the talks in 2013, in the full knowledge that they would not be able to survive the outcry if people were given sight of the deal. In response, campaigners called for a “Dracula strategy” against the agreement: expose the vampire to sunlight and it will die.



The purpose of the two proposed “partnerships,” TTIP and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which were drafted by global corporations, is to make corporations immune to the laws of sovereign countries in which they do business. Any country’s sovereign law or regulations—whether social, environmental, food safety, or labour protection—that might adversely affect a corporation’s profits is labelled a “restraint on trade.” The “partnerships” would permit corporations to take legal action to overturn the law or regulation, and

would also award damages to the corporation—paid by the taxpayers of the country that tried to protect its environment or the safety of its food or its workers.



These “trade agreement” originate in the United States, because American global corporations and the American mega-banks are the largest players in the world economy. The agreements that the corporations push through this process give these companies economic hegemony over the countries that sign the agreements. The Trans-Atlantic and Trans-Pacific “partnerships” are tools of American financial imperialism.

The highly controversial investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanism—and its successor, the Investment Court system—has proved particularly thorny. The United States wants to keep the arbitration system that allows corporations to sue governments for perceived loss of profits. The case is not heard in the courts of the country, or in any court: it is heard in a corporate tribunal in which corporations act as prosecutor, judge, and jury.

There are some 51,000 American-owned subsidiaries operating in the EU. About 47,000 of them would be empowered to launch attacks on European policies in international tribunals, according to the anti-poverty charity War on Want.

German magistrates in February had also declared the new version of the investor court

system (ICS), proposed by the EU, to be unlawful.



Concerns about potential effects on food safety standards have plagued TTIP since its inception, notably in discussions on genetically modified organisms. The EU applies a precautionary approach to GM goods. Where the EU regulates to protect the public from potential harm, the United States seeks to manage rather than avoid risk.

The EU commissioner for trade, Cecilia Malmström, described the leaks in her blog as “a storm in a teacup.” She told the BBC: “I am simply not in the business of lowering standards.”

Some 1,600 cities, municipalities and regions in Europe have already declared themselves TTIP-free zones. Most of these are in Austria, Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain.

And earlier this month a survey by Yougov suggested that German public support for TTIP had fallen from 55 per cent two years ago to 17 per cent. This news came out before tens of thousands of people in the German city of Hannover marched against the deal during an international trade fair attended by Barack Obama.

Among the Greenpeace revelations:

### 1. Farewell, European farmers

Any export gains for EU car manufacturers would come at a massive cost to European agriculture, with the EU Commission sacrificing the small-scale farmers of Europe in order to force open American markets for big European

corporations. Here is the deal:

*The EU proposed a possible package on mechanical devices in Chapter 84 and electrical appliances in Chapter 85 for which both parties share offensive interests. While the US showed an interest, it hastened to point out that it would need to consult with its industry regarding some of the products and that progress on motor vehicle-related parts would only be possible if the EU showed progress in the discussion on agricultural tariffs.*



### 2. Approval of GM food

TTIP uses the euphemism “modern agricultural technology” in referring to genetically modified food. The United States is demanding that all producers of GM food have automatic access to the regulatory procedures of the EU. Not only that but the EU Commission would be required to provide GM producers with full details of what they need to do to get their products approved.

*Where a Party requires a product of modern agricultural technology to be approved or authorized prior to its importation, use or sale in its territory, the Party shall allow any person to submit an application for approval at any time.*

*Where a Party requires a product of modern agricultural technology to be approved or authorized prior to its importation or sale in its*

*territory, each Party shall make publicly available:*

*(a) a description of the processes it applies to accept, consider, and decide applications for approval or authorization;*

*(b) the competent authorities responsible for receiving and deciding applications for approval or authorization.*

### **3. Business chill on future regulation**

One of the central aims of TTIP is to prevent the introduction of any new social, public health or environmental regulations that might be considered a burden on business. The leaked documents confirm that TTIP threatens the “precautionary principle,” which stands at the centre of all EU regulation. Furthermore, the United States is now demanding that corporations receive prior warning of any new rules or standards to be introduced, and the EU would have to justify its decision to introduce any new rules in future.

*When developing a regulation, a regulatory authority of a Party shall evaluate any information provided in comments by the other Party or a person of the other Party regarding the potential trade effects of the regulation that it receives during the comment period and ... provide its views on substantive issues raised.*

As the *Independent* (London) declared, “for those of us in the thick of the EU referendum debate, the contempt shown by the TTIP negotiators to the people of Europe is the most potent reminder of the democratic deficit at the heart of the EU institutions.”

### **A fundamental rights turf war**

Historically, the member-states of the EU have evolved quite distinct positions on a wide range of human rights matters—for example in relation to the requirements of natural justice, the rule of law, due legal process, trial by jury, family law, the right to privacy, the rights of the underprivileged and the treatment of refugees, the sale and use of drugs, environmental

protection, neutrality, and nuclear weapons.



All states have codes setting out the human and civil rights of their citizens. The EU as a federation in the making has its Charter of Fundamental Rights. This contains more than fifty rights in all, which the Lisbon Treaty makes legally binding. This embodies the concept that EU citizens have rights and responsibilities defined by the EU itself that transcend those attaching to their national citizenship.

It implies that the EU determines, and is the guarantor of, European citizens’ rights across national boundaries. In the Melloni case in 2011 the EU Court of Justice ruled that the provisions of the charter prevail over the human rights provisions of national constitutions, even where the latter provide a higher standard of rights. The post-Lisbon EU offers wide scope for harmonising ECJ judgements and legislation over time in these nationally sensitive areas.



A basic objection to the conferring of a human rights competence on the EU, whatever one’s views on the content of human rights, is that such a development is quite unnecessary, as all the member-states are already bound by the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, which they acceded to well before the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

was thought of. Moreover, there are already human rights provisions in the national constitutions of each member-state.

The only reason for the EU arrogating to itself a human rights competence would seem to be the desire to build itself up further as a quasi-federal state. The historical experience of both national and multinational federations has been that common human rights standards, enforced by a central legislative body and a federal Supreme Court, can be a powerful weapon in subordinating national courts and constitutions to central rule. The constitutional history of the United States provides ample evidence of the radical “federalising” potential of the fundamental rights jurisdiction of that country’s Supreme Court.



In the post-Lisbon EU it is only realistic to expect that the Commission will in time come to propose European laws to ensure the uniform implementation and guarantee of the EU citizens’ rights provisions of the Charter throughout the member-states.

The supposition in the EU treaty that member-states already share a common value system is, moreover, a disingenuous fiction. The principles of “*liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law,*” which are stated in article 2 of the Treaty on European Union to be the foundation of the EU, are not unequivocal concepts. There is no Union-wide consensus on what constitutes a higher or lower standard of protection of rights; there is no consensus on the source of human rights, such as the theory of natural law, whether secularly or religiously

based, that would permit a rational analysis and evaluation of conflicting positions. In practice there tends to be a *de facto* reliance on the judgements of the European Court of Human Rights, which must invent its own standards in default of any other criterion.

The Lisbon Treaty provided that the EU itself, like all European states and like its own individual members, should accede to the European Convention on Human Rights, sponsored by the Council of Europe—a body that up to then had no connection with the EU—and its European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

Some forty-seven European states have voluntarily agreed to be bound by the Human Rights Convention. The EU’s accession to the Convention is further recognition of its increasingly state-like character. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights sets out a much wider range of human and civil rights than those in the European Convention on Human Rights. This points to the EU’s ambition to expand its powers into quite new human rights areas.

Protocol no. 14 of the ECHR entered into force on 1 June 2010. It allows the EU to accede to the European Convention on Human Rights.

The EU’s Treaty of Lisbon requires the EU to accede to the convention in Article 6 of the consolidated Treaty on European Union: “*The Union shall accede to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Such accession shall not affect the Union’s competences as defined in the Treaties.*”

The EU would thus be subject to its human rights law and external monitoring, as its member-states now are. It is further proposed that the EU join as a member of the Council of Europe, now that it has attained a single legal personality in the Lisbon Treaty.

On 5 April 2013 negotiators from the European Union and the Council of Europe completed a draft agreement for the accession of the EU to the European Convention on

Human Rights.

As next steps, it is required that the ECJ provide an opinion, subsequently that the EU member-states provide unanimous support, that the EU Parliament provide two-thirds majority support, and that the agreement is ratified by the parliaments of the Council of Europe's member-states.

On 18 December 2014 the ECJ issued a negative opinion on the EU's accession to the ECHR, as it would give an external body the power to review the application of EU law, thus bringing the accession to a halt. The matter has been deadlocked ever since.

The treaties also provide that the EU Council of Ministers may, by qualified majority, suspend the rights of a member-state, including its voting rights, if it is judged to be in breach of the EU's "values." EU sanctions were applied against Austria in 2000 when a right-wing party was included in its government.

Reference to the "rule of law" as one of the foundational values of the EU (article 2, Treaty on European Union) has been cited as justifying all sorts of intervention by Brussels in the administrative practices of member-states.

### **British health service under threat**

Much of the debate in Britain about the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership has been about its potential impact on the National Health Service.

Including health services in the treaty would force the privatisation of the NHS, or at least make privatisation impossible to reverse. The EU has countered that it will include "tried and tested" provisions in TTIP that would ensure that governments have the freedom to organise their health service how they wish; but we cannot be sure that this is so until the final wording is put to the test.

One aim of TTIP is to reduce or remove tariffs (extra taxes on imports) between the EU and the United States. Another is to either align

standards and regulations or get rid of them altogether.

Countries sign these kinds of agreements to boost international trade. So foreign businesses may be granted "market access" to particular sectors, and given "national treatment"—putting them on a par with local companies.

Market access means that any remaining state monopolies must be abolished. These include public services that are provided by the state or by a limited number of suppliers, like Britain's National Health Service. If a country doesn't want to open its public services to wider competition it must leave those services out of any trade agreement.

It's surprisingly hard to be certain that any such exemption would stick. It would depend on how an international dispute settlement panel interprets what the agreement says.



The EU has said that its draft Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with Canada would be a model for TTIP. That agreement includes a general exemption for services provided "in the exercise of governmental authority." But what this concept covers is not certain, and many international lawyers think it doesn't exempt most public services. It also states that "public utilities," including health services, can be provided by a state monopoly or can be limited to a certain number of private providers.

The most specific way that CETA deals with public health services is that it contains a specific exemption from both market access and national treatment. It says that EU countries reserve the right to "adopt or maintain" measures that exclude foreign companies from "health services which receive public funding or State support in any form and

are therefore not considered to be privately funded.”

It might be tricky, though, to decide exactly what is covered. A company could claim that support services not directly related to the care of patients—such as the IT system—is not part of “health services.” And legal advice obtained by the trade union Unite argues that the clause contradicts itself, and would not have the required effect.

The BBC reported on 26 February that the EU’s opening gambit on exemptions contains the same wording as CETA on publicly financed health services, excluding them from “national treatment.” It also has a “public utilities” clause.

In March, EU and US negotiators issued a joint statement saying that “US and EU trade agreements do not prevent governments ... from providing or supporting services” in certain areas, including health, and do not force the privatisation of public services.



Whether or not the claims described above will matter in practice depends on how the agreement is enforced. Companies could use the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) to exploit uncertainties in the law. These typically allow companies that have invested in a foreign country to claim compensation for breach of the agreement in an arbitration tribunal, instead of taking action in national courts or relying on their government to step in.

Normally, trade agreements are enforced by countries taking action against one another. But TTIP is also an *investment* agreement. ISDS would come into operation when a country

wants to nationalise something owned by a foreign investor, and the foreign company claims that the policy might harm profits.

While an arbitration tribunal cannot force a government to change its laws or policies, it can award hefty compensation after the event. This would raise the costs of nationalisation and act as a chill factor for governments contemplating going down this road.

### What’s right for Germany is right for the EU

Angela Merkel’s immigration policy offers an object lesson in what other countries can expect from Germany acting European.

Just as the United States sees the world as an extended playing-field for its domestic political economy, Germany has come to consider the European Union as an extension of itself, where what is right for Germany is automatically right for all others.



Very much like the United States, the German elite project what they collectively regard as self-evident, natural and reasonable onto their outside world—and are puzzled that anyone could fail to see things the way they do.

One problem with hegemonic self-righteousness is that it prevents the self-righteous from seeing that what they consider morally self-evident is informed by self-interest. The self-interest of German export industries, for example, underlies Germany’s identification of the “European idea” with the single European currency.

The problem is exacerbated by the fact that

the “national interest” that is mistakenly seen as identical to the interest of all reasonable human beings, in Europe and beyond, is necessarily shaped by the political interest of the government and its dominant social bloc in preserving their power.

This puts peripheral countries at the mercy of the national power games and the moral and semantic ethnocentrism of countries at the centre, which are hard to decipher for outsiders—especially with a leader like Merkel, who, free from substantive commitments and constitutional constraints, has perfected the art of staying in power by means of unpredictable changes of course.



As the refugee crisis unfolded, Europe was dragged into the complicated twists and turns of German politics. Merkel early on informed an astonished German public that controlling national borders had become “impossible in the twenty-first century,” and backed this up by aggressively criticising the Hungarian government for preparing to close its borders.

In the summer of 2015, having humiliated the Greek people by forcing another “reform” diktat down their throats, Merkel started a new game, aimed at diverting attention from the economic and political disaster that is monetary union.

A master politician like Merkel will never let a good crisis go to waste. It wasn’t just media stories about suffering migrants that led her to invite the refugees to come to Germany, no papers required and no questions asked. Abrupt changes of policy are nothing new to Merkel, who has been described as a “post-

modern politician with a pre-modern, Machiavellian contempt for both causes and people.”

What Merkel called “showing a friendly face in an emergency” was meant to shame those who, during the euro crisis, had enjoyed the cartoons of Merkel and her minister of finance, Wolfgang Schäuble, in Nazi uniform. By opening the German border she could hope to recapture the moral high ground occupied for so long by those accusing the German government of sado-monetarism, or worse.



Another factor was the tight labour market that German employers—still Merkel’s main constituency—were facing, especially after a statutory minimum wage was forced on Merkel by her coalition partner, the Social-Democratic Party.

Rumours spread in the German press that Syrian refugees in particular, many of them allegedly with degrees in engineering or medicine, had all manner of expertise. German economic research institutes predicted a new “*Wirtschaftswunder*” (economic miracle), while employers promised to invest heavily in training the presumably tiny number of less skilled immigrants.

Everybody assumed that most if not all the refugees and asylum-seekers (a distinction soon lost in the general excitement) would stay in Germany for a long time, if not for good. For Merkel this was no longer a problem. In fact it had become a solution: in the first half of 2015 several studies suggested that the expensive measures taken over a decade of Merkel rule to induce German families to have more children

had had next to no effect.

Early that summer, to avert what was perceived as a looming demographic crisis, Merkel got her closest colleagues to test the mood in the party and among the public on immigration legislation, but was met with firm resistance.



Merkel acted quickly on her own. She counted on the opposition parties in the Bundestag—the *Linkspartei* (Left Party) and Green Party—not to ask awkward questions, and they obliged. The members of her own party couldn't complain: they had been backed into a corner by the Social Democrats' approval of Merkel's stance, and by their desire not to damage their leader.

A decision "that will change our country," as Merkel herself put it, was made without regard for democratic process, or, for that matter, constitutional formalities. When she declared the German borders open there had been no government decision to this effect, and no official statement in the Bundestag.

Since the opposition didn't ask, as Merkel knew they wouldn't, nobody knows to this day what sort of order, legal or otherwise, by whom and when, was given to the police. The Ministry of the Interior is still refusing requests from leading figures—including the former president of the Constitutional Court, who was preparing a legal opinion on the matter for the Bavarian government—for access to the ministerial decree that should have been issued to the border authorities.

There were good reasons for asking

questions. The refugees who arrived in Germany in 2015, more than a million of them, all arrived from safe third countries. Under German and EU law they had to register in the country where they entered the European Union, and then wait to be assigned a legal residence in a member-state.

Merkel seems to have decided that she could ignore all this. When anyone complained that this was both a huge stress test on German society and a giant social engineering project, she regally announced that if she had to apologise for "showing a friendly face," then "this is not my country"—an extraordinary statement for an elected political leader to make.

In fact she has been governing for some time not like a parliamentary leader but like a president with emergency powers. For some time, inquiries into the wisdom of her immigration policy were answered by her entourage—which in this case included all the Bundestag parties—by claiming that the mere expression of dissent "played into the hands of the right"—a potent rhetorical device in Germany. Until the events in Cologne, concern over the government's handling of the refugee crisis was virtually suppressed.

Between September and January, Merkel's minister of the interior was left out of the loop as she governed directly, using staged public appearances—press conferences, talk shows, and party conventions—to cultivate the support of those in German society who saw the influx of refugees as an opportunity to demonstrate to the world their country's new friendliness.

For six months she evaded all constitutional checks, enjoying the praise showered on her by, among others, the American news magazine *Time*, which made her "Person of the Year" for 2015. She was even talked about as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize.





After Cologne, of course, the closing of borders suddenly became possible again, and Hungary re-emerged as a model for the rest of Europe, in particular for Greece, which was threatened by Germany with exclusion from the Schengen area if it didn't seal its borders.

German law forbids—or is said by the German government to forbid—sending would-be immigrants away once they have expressed a desire to apply for asylum. So Merkel had to get the Greeks, and the EU as a whole, to observe this principle, lest her German pro-immigration constituency smell a rat.

The burden of keeping the migrants out of Europe fell on Turkey, which was supposed to put an end to the illegal trafficking of people to Greece—on a country, that is, whose human rights record suggests it may not be particularly careful when dealing with Syrian or any other refugees.

Of course co-operation with Turkey had a price; and though Merkel had in the past steadfastly opposed the country's application for membership of the EU, now, having changed tack again, and speaking on behalf of Europe as a whole, she promised Erdoğan expedited negotiations on membership as a reward for preventing the Syrian refugees she had invited to enter Germany from entering Greece.

When Turkey demanded money too, Merkel chose to see this as a matter for “European

solidarity”—just like the funding of the new EU border protection agency, Frontex, which patrols the Greek and Italian coasts.

European borders become German borders, and by implication Europe becomes Germany.



By mid-February, German warships under NATO command were patrolling the Mediterranean in order to intercept migrants and return them to Turkey. As NATO warships are neither European nor German (even if they are German warships), the rescued can be sent back without the German courts, or the German Green Party, interfering.

So immigration once again became “Europeanised,” while Europe became more “Germanised” than ever. Merkel's highest priority is to avoid having to close the country's borders, as Denmark and Sweden have done: closed borders make for ugly pictures, and they also make German voters wonder whether it's worth paying for Europe if they have to stop at the border when they go on holiday.

The German public had to be given a reason to believe that the number of immigrants coming to Germany is going to drop. EU member-states must therefore agree to take a share of the immigrants invited by Germany, even though they were not consulted before Merkel made her offer.

It's difficult, however, for member-countries to commit themselves to letting in a defined proportion of an undefined total number of migrants. So Visegrád-bashing (Visegrád representing the alliance of the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary) followed

Hungary-bashing, and German politicians began threatening Poland with financial punishment unless it fell into line with German-style “European solidarity.”

Merkel’s next change of direction was to announce that “protection under the Geneva Convention is for the moment limited to three years”; refugees had to understand that their status was a temporary one, she said. “We expect that, when peace has returned to Syria and the IS in Iraq has been defeated, you will, with the skills that you have received here, return to your homeland.”



The result of all the equivocation, this difficult-to-disentangle mixture of self-interest and sentimentality, is an immense political mess caused by the imposing on Europe of German policies disguised as European policies, to which, supposedly, there is no alternative.

This includes a restructuring of the citizenry through immigration, not only in Germany, where it might seem economically or demographically expedient, but also in other European countries where it definitely isn’t.

The result is rapidly rising anti-German sentiment, not only among the political elite but also, most powerfully, among the electorate.

### The future doesn’t seem to be working!

*“The Labour Government of 1945 ... and the Conservative Governments after them refused to join the European Community because they were still thinking in terms of Britain’s history during the period of the development of the*

*nation state ... whilst the European countries concerned were moving on from the nation state because in their view it was inadequate to meet modern requirements ...”*

—Edward Heath, *Old World, New Horizons* (1967)

*“I imagine that by about the turn of the century something like a United States of Socialist Europe will exist. A timid and conservative prefiguration of these United States is naturally the Common Market, for even conservative, bourgeois politicians are beginning to sense that the nation state, at least in Europe ... has become an anachronism.”*

—Isaac Deutscher, *New Left Review*, January–February 1968

It should be a salutary experience for EU ideologues of the left and right to read the quotations above—one from an ardent Europhile former British prime minister, the other from an ultra-leftist historian and political guru. It is now obvious how wide of the mark both were.



The European Union has its own government, with a legislative, executive and judicial arm, its own political president, its own citizens and citizenship, its own human and civil rights code, its own currency, economic policy and revenue, its own international treaty-making powers, foreign policy, foreign minister, diplomatic corps and United Nations voice, its own crime and justice code and public prosecutor’s office. It already possesses such state symbols as its own flag, anthem, motto, and annual official holiday, “Europe Day.” The EU treaties shift power away from citizen-

voters in all EU countries and from small and middle-sized member-states to the larger ones.



As regards the “state authority” of the EU, this is embodied in the Union’s own executive, legislative and judicial institutions: the European Council, Council of Ministers, Commission, Parliament, and Court of Justice. It is embodied also in the member-states and their authorities as they implement and apply EU law and interpret and apply national law in conformity with Union law. This they are constitutionally required to do under the Lisbon Treaty, just as in any federal state.

Thus EU “state authorities” as represented by EU soldiers and policemen patrolling Europe’s streets in EU uniforms are not needed as such. Their absence makes it all the easier to hide from ordinary citizens the reality of Europe’s hollowed-out nation-states and the failure of their own mainstream politicians to defend their national democracies.

Although the EU has most of the formal features of a state, and Euro-federalists aspire to it becoming a United States of Europe, comparable to the United States of America, outsiders hesitate to regard it as a state in its own right. They think that if it were such it must surely have its own people, who would identify with it and insist on endowing it with some meaningful democratic life. But such a people does not exist.

The EU is most accurately seen as a supra-national anti-democratic system that deprives Europe’s diverse living peoples of their democracy while serving the interests of its big-state members, as mediated through their

ruling politico-economic elite, interacting with the Brussels bureaucracy.

The project of EU and euro-zone integration is at bottom an attempt to overturn throughout much of Europe the democratic heritage of the French Revolution: the right of nations to self-determination, national independence, and national democracy.

The international community now numbers nearly two hundred states, some national, some multinational, and between them they manage some 180 national currencies. The number of states in the world has more than trebled since 1945, and many more new states are likely to come into being during this century.

The collective right to the self-determination of nations and peoples, so that they can decide their relations with one another independently, is now a basic principle of international law. As a principle it has its philosophical roots in the eighteenth-century American Revolution and France’s Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789. This right to national self-determination is the foundational value of all modern democracies and of democratic politics within them. But it is anathema to the EU elite.

As the financial crisis continues, the rhetoric of solidarity and “partnership” that the EU-integrationists used for so long to justify their course is being replaced by panic-stricken pleas for stronger German leadership. The core illusion of the EU elite is that the peoples of the euro zone will consent to abandon their national independence and democracy, reversing centuries of European history in so doing, in order to save the ill-starred euro currency. They will thereby “unite Europe” at last—a project that others tried and failed to do in their day.

The German and French peoples are themselves increasingly unhappy with the EU “project.” The euro currency lowers German living standards by raising the price of

consumer imports. It makes Germany unpopular throughout Europe by reviving fears of German domination. It inhibits France from restoring its economic competitiveness while it turns that country into the junior partner in the Franco-German duo.



It is foolish of countries to identify their future with the EU. By 2050 there will be some 9 billion people in the world. The EU will then account for only 6 per cent of the world's population, as against 20 per cent before 1950. Its share of the world's gross product will have shrunk to some 10 per cent by 2050, as against 30 per cent in 1950.

In the coming decades most growth in GDP, market size and investment returns will tend to occur outside continental Europe. Most EU countries will have a shrinking and ageing population. The EU in general is likely to decline economically, politically and culturally relative to the rest of the world, and in particular Asia, where the bulk of humanity lives.

### **Belgian French-speaking region votes to put brakes on CETA**

The Walloon Parliament—the regional assembly that represents the inhabitants of Belgium's French-speaking southern region—has voted to reject the signing of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, the trade treaty recently concluded between the European Union and Canada. As a result, Belgium will be obliged to abstain whenever the subject is raised in the European Council, the body that directly represents the heads of EU member-state governments.



*The Walloon parliament votes on CETA*

With their vote in the regional parliament, which enjoys extensive powers under Belgium's federal system of government, the Walloons have dealt the treaty a hefty blow.

Just like the TTIP, CETA is a treaty that serves only the interests of the transnational corporations, at the expense of consumers, workers, farm animals, and the environment. It forms, furthermore, a back door for American corporations that want to sue European states through a special court of arbitration for foreign investors.

In addition to voting to block CETA, the Walloons have insisted on applying to the EU Court of Justice for an opinion on the arbitration system. A range of European organisations have expressed concerns about a parallel system of law being erected alongside the existing EU judicial order.

The region is also urging the Belgian federal government to say No to the treaty coming into force before national parliaments have had an opportunity to give their views.

### **The UK referendum on 23 June: Why you should vote to leave the EU**

The European Union now represents the biggest threat to workers' rights, public services, and the right of nations, including the Irish nation, to have control over their own affairs.

It is no longer an area of economic cooperation but an emerging superstate, where people's interests and welfare are subord-

inated, by law, to those of the market and big business.

A British withdrawal would force a re-evaluation of all existing EU treaties and would encourage the growing Europe-wide popular opposition to the denial of national democracy and independence that is at the heart of the EU.

### **EU in disarray**

The EU is an inward-looking shrinking market, mired in recession, with a dysfunctional currency and high unemployment. The Greek and refugee crises have exposed the “solidarity” on which the EU is supposedly based.

But EU rules, laid down by various treaties, mean that the EU cannot be reformed from within, because just one state, such as Germany, can veto reform.

### **How does membership of the EU threaten the NHS?**

Continuing EU membership means that two transatlantic treaties, TTIP and CETA, being negotiated in secret by the EU, would allow the privatisation of the NHS. Privatisation would then be impossible to reverse.

TTIP and CETA would also enable companies to sue governments where policy measures might harm profits.

A British withdrawal from the EU would create a major obstacle to the adoption of TTIP and CETA.

### **But will a British withdrawal re-establish a border between North and South?**

No. Both right and left in Britain recognise the importance of trade between Ireland and Britain, and no-one wants to obstruct that.

Equally, the existing Common Travel Area predates either country joining the EU, and will

survive British withdrawal, just as Norway, a non-EU country, has kept its common travel area with Sweden and Denmark, which are in the EU.

### **Will we lose EU funding?**

Inside or outside the EU, the North’s funding has been under threat by the Tory government; but Britain itself gives more money to Europe than Europe sends back, so the money the North gets from the EU will still be available in the event of withdrawal.

Regional Grants, Structural Funds, Farm Payments and “Peace Process” funding are in fact taxpayers’ money that is just recycled through Brussels.

### **Human rights**

The European Convention on Human Rights and its human rights court at Strasbourg—not the EU—guarantee our human rights. Voting “Leave” will not affect existing human rights protections.

### **Trade**

Only a tenth of the of the British economy is involved in trade with the EU. A country does not have to be a member of the EU to trade with it; so trade with the EU and with the world outside it will continue in the event of a “Leave” vote.

### **The choice**

- **Remain tied to a failing experiment in building a European superstate** run by non-elected Brussels bureaucrats; or
- **Have confidence in your own democratic achievements** and assert the right of peoples to decide their own laws and international policies as the only basis on which to build a truly progressive society in Ireland.