

Ireland

You represent the Irish government at the negotiations on the Treaty of Lisbon. On the agenda for today are the discussions on the implementation of the Qualified Majority Voting and the extension of a combined foreign and security policy.

Qualified Majority Voting

A system of voting based on the qualified majority, which is the number of votes required in the Council. The Lisbon Treaty introduced a new system known as “double majority”. This abolishes the weighting of votes. Qualified majority is now achieved if it covers at least 55% of the member states representing at least 65% of the population. Blocking minority: At least four member states representing at least 35% of the population.

Your position

You agree, that this policy will make decision-making processes easier, yet you are worried about how to explain the new policy to your voters. Keep in mind the referendum, that will have to take place before the Lisbon Treaty can be signed. The system is criticised because it reduces the Republic’s relative voting weight. With the QMV European Commission figures put Ireland’s voting weight at 0.85 per compared to Germany’s 16.75 per cent.

CFSP – Common Defense and Security Policy

The Lisbon Treaty outlines many opportunities that allow for closer cooperation in Foreign and Security Policy. These measures reach from mechanisms for easier decision-making processes, over rapid access to appropriations in the budget to the possibility of a European Army.

Your position

The Irish state has always been adamant about its military neutrality. You will not accept the implementation of a joint Foreign and Security Policy, that doesn’t accept the ‘triple-lock’, that shapes Irish Foreign Policy. No Irish troops can be deployed in a conflict region without UN authorisation, Government approval, and Dáil approval. For you, this part of the treaty is wholly unacceptable, and you want to find a different solution.

You are very concerned about the implications of this plan of a European Army and you are sure, that the Treaty would fail in a referendum.

Background

Public Opinion – The Eurobarometer

QA16.7 Trust in the European Union.

“I tend to trust it.”

Ireland: 54% vs. EU27: 57%

QA15.2 Trust in the European Commission.

"I tend to trust it."

Ireland: 58% vs. EU27: 52%

QA22a Information level in the own Country.

"The people in my country are well informed about European political affairs."

Ireland: 57% vs. EU27: 22%

QA19 To which extent do you agree with the statement: "Every European decision is the subject of negotiations in which the opinions of the national government of all member states are taken into account."?

"I agree."

Ireland: 61% vs. EU27: 63%

QA27.3: Opinion on a common defence policy among the EU Member States.

"I am for it."

Ireland: 61% vs. EU27: 77%

The Irish Parliament

Ireland will have a necessary referendum to pass the Treaty.

The Government: Taoiseach Bertie Ahern

Fianna Fáil: 41.6%

Green Party: 4.69%

Progressive Democrats: 2.73%

The Opposition:

Fine Gael: 27.3%

Labour Party: 10.13%

Sinn Féin: 6.94%