

# **NEW EUROPEAN**



**Biannual Views  
of International Affairs  
Autumn 2015**

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Biannual Views of International Affairs

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## NEW EUROPEAN

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skrodhoj@gmail.com.

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# Editorial

**T**he continent of Europe is seeing the largest wave of immigration since the breakdown of the Roman Empire. Syrians who have lost their homes and prospects for the future mingle with climate refugees from Africa and people from destabilised countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Bangladesh. Refugees or migrants, they are all heading to the nearest area of prosperity and stability, Europe.

The sheer number of newcomers has overwhelmed such European leaders as PM Löfven in Sweden and Chancellor Merkel in Germany who both only a few months ago issued signals of welcome. Now they find that they cannot cope and appeal to other EU member states to take their share. Not surprisingly this has caused anger in some of these other countries who feel that they have had nothing to do with issuing the invitation. The chasm between EU cooperation and national sovereignty has widened so much that it hardly seems bridgeable.

Europe, not only the EU, is faced with a dilemma: if we open our continent to ever increasing millions of displaced people from Asia and Africa, we'll have reason to fear the breakdown of the rule of law, of the welfare state, of our own culture as well as of human rights. If we do not, we'll have abandoned our Christian and humanitarian heritage.

This dilemma has diverted most of our attention from another development which is taking place under our eyes, the appropriation of our means of existence by forces that are accumulating almost inconceivable mountains of wealth and power.

While the bottom half of adults collectively own less than 1% of total wealth, the richest tenth holds 87.7% of assets, according to Oxfam.

One aspect of this development is the concentration of land ownership. Read about what is happening in Poland.

If the TTIP agreement is accepted by the EU there is no doubt that this tendency will be accelerated.

It seems that ordinary people in Europe are going to be ground between two millstones, the needs of the poor and the greed of the rich. The solution of the dilemma will require a mobilization of all that is best in our old continent. *LHP*

# *Land Ownership Concentration - Now in Europe*

*LUISE HEMMER PIHL*

**N**o longer a third world phenomenon, “land grab” in the shape of concentration of land ownership leading to problems for young people who want to go into farming is spreading in many European countries.

A report published in 2013 by the *Transnational Institute* highlights the development in 13 European countries. The report from Poland can be read in this issue of the *New European*.

The project was spearheaded by the *European Coordination Via Campesina* (ECVC) in close collaboration with the *Hands Off the Land* (HOtL) alliance and other organizations. The ECVC is an organization of 27 farmers’ and agriculture workers’ unions as well as rural movements working to achieve food sovereignty in Europe. The HOtL is an alliance of organizations engaged in public awareness within Europe on pressing land issues, including land grabbing, involving European policies and companies.

By bringing Europe’s land issues into focus, the report suggests that we change the way we think of contemporary land grabbing in fundamental ways.

## **Europe is experiencing tremendous and rapid land grabbing.**

This process affects small-scale farmers and agricultural workers as well as young people who want to go into farming. Every year tens of thousands of small farmers are being thrown out of farming to make room for agribusiness, just as it is happening in e.g. Brazil, and it is happening because of the same combination of crises around food, energy, climate and finance.

In Europe this development is enhanced by two European processes. One is the privatizations taking place in the former socialist East European countries. The other is the shift in the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to subsidizing per hectare of farmland,

creating an incentive for such farmers as can afford it, as well as food producing companies, to buy ever more land.

### **Europe is changing as much as Latin America, Africa and Asia.**

Land grab is taking place in several European states, particularly in the new EU member states, but also in Germany, Italy and Spain. And the deals often include thousands of hectares of land.

The buyers are domestic as well as foreign investors, and this means that what is happening in Europe has less media attention than the deals made by Chinese or Gulf State investors.

### **Green grabbing**

The environmental policies of the EU are also a factor in land grabbing. Large tracts of land is needed for bio fuel production,

### **“Artificialisation” of land**

Other factors, such as urban sprawl, real estate speculation, and tourist enclaves all claim their acres.

### **Market dynamics and institutional rules**

The tendency towards bigger units raises fundamental questions about the very future of farming in Europe – not only what form it will take and what purposes it will serve, but who will do it.

### **The report makes the following recommendations**

In light of the findings of this report, the ECVC, supported by various organizations directly and indirectly involved in this report, put forward a set of demands addressed to national and EU governmental bodies to address the triangular issues of land concentration, land grabbing and barriers to entry to farming. Our main demands are:

Land should regain importance as a public good. We must reduce the commodification of land and promote public management of territories. Priority should be given to the use of land for smallholder and peasant agriculture and food production against the simple private property commercial interests. Access to land should be given to those who work it or to those who want to work it in a socially and ecologically acceptable way. This opens the possibility for young people to enter the land, and simultaneously distances from those who currently control land but do not themselves work it. It also links with the statement that follows here below, i.e. that redistributive

land policies are needed.

*1. Stop and reverse the trend of extreme land concentration and commodification!*

- Carry out redistributive land policies (land reform, land restitution, affordable land rentals, and so on) in areas of concentrated ownership;
- Recognise historical use rights and communal land systems;
- Implement policies to support transformation of industrial farms into small family/ peasant farms/ food sovereignty projects, including urban agriculture.

*2. Stop land grabbing!*

- Ban all investors and speculators (companies, banks/ governments) that are operating, and/or grabbing land, in Europe and elsewhere in the world;
- Create a public databank/tracking system of the transactions of governments and companies engaged in land grabbing.

*3. Assure access to land for farming, especially for young people, as the basis to achieve food sovereignty; and abolish the patriarchal system of land possession or heritage and promote policies of positive discrimination to assure access to land for farming for women.*

- Strengthen or create the participation of local communities in decision-making on land use;
- Develop legal frameworks for cooperative-type farms and co-ownership arrangements that would improve the situation of women in land ownership and make it easier for young people to set up a farm;
- Change the installation and renting criteria and adopt policies to support sustainable small farm/ peasants' projects (e.g. leave minimal surface condition for subsidies);
- Push for the adoption and democratic application of the CFS Tenure Guidelines on responsible governance of land in Europe within a food sovereignty framework;
- Support concrete actions of recovering land (e.g. occupation of industrial zones);
- Create public management frameworks or reform existing ones (e.g. Safer, France) to facilitate the access of youth, landless people,

also for other resources such as water;

- Prioritise the use of land for food versus agrofuel production and other commercial energy uses, extractive industries and useless megaprojects – in Europe and elsewhere in the world.

*This article is a digest of the introduction to the report “Land Concentration, land grabbing and people’s struggles in Europe. The New European thanks ECVC and HOtL for the permission to include the report on Poland in this issue. The entire report can be downloaded from <https://www.tni.org/en/publication/land-concentration-land-grabbing-and-peoples-struggles-in-europe-o>*

# *Land Issues and Land Struggles in Poland*

*JADWIGA ŁOPATA*

Poland is rich in arable land: more than half of the area of the country is used for agriculture. In 2012, farming occupied about 17.2 m ha whereas the total area of Poland is 31.3 m ha.<sup>1</sup> The smallest farms are in the South and South-East of Poland. The largest ones are in the North-West where large state-owned farm holdings (PGR) operated during Communist rule. Around 90% of the land under cultivation is occupied by family farms, which are the mainstay of Polish agriculture. Of the more than 1.6 million farms in Poland, over 60% are self-sufficient, small peasant farms averaging approximately 10 ha.<sup>2</sup> For the most part, these holdings fulfil all the criteria of genuine ecological sustainability, practicing a time honoured, traditional form of agriculture that shuns chemicals, rotates crops and returns all biodegradable matter to the soil. They are family run enterprises for whom farming is a way of life and whose first objective is to feed their families. Surplus production is marketing and sold locally.

This way of life is however changing as farmers face pressure to expand their farms and make them more competitive for it is only the larger farms that receive support and are considered to be profitable and hence 'viable' enterprises. These commercial pressures are also proving to be a barrier for young people who would like to acquire land and start farming. Recently, an increase in the price of land can be observed in Poland. Moreover, although officially foreigners cannot buy land in Poland until May 2016, Polish farmland is being sold-off to foreign multinational corporations. How is this possible?

## **“Substitute” buyers**

The body responsible for the management of public land is the Agricultural Property Agency (Agencja Nieruchomości Rolnych). It



plays an important role, as it makes decisions affecting the nature and structure of agriculture in Poland. Farmers, especially in the North-West, lease public land from the Agency. However, the Agency has recently started to dissolve land-lease contracts with farmers in the West Pomerania Province (Województwo Zachodniopomorskie) in order to sell off land on a large scale.

This land is being bought by foreign companies of mainly Dutch, Danish, German and English origin for the establishment of large industrial farms, for the cultivation and sale of GMO crops, and for purely speculative purposes as land prices are expected to rise in the build up to the liberalisation of the land market in 2016. The foreign companies make use of “substitute” or fake buyers to acquire farmland.

These substitute buyers are people hired by the foreign companies, usually farmers having a hectare or two who meet the criteria for a limited tender. They outbid other buyers and then immediately transfer the land to the foreign company. Such practices have been going on for a while in the West Pomerania Province and are a serious cause for concern among Polish farmers who cannot compete and are easily outbid.

According to the Director of the Agricultural Property Agency, only 22 000 ha in West Pomerania land is in the hands of foreigners but according to local farmers, it is closer to 0.5 million ha. Edward Kosmal, the leader of a series of farmers’ protests against land grabs in West Pomerania, explains that the official statistics of the Agency take into account only the land legally and fairly acquired by companies with foreign capital. The farmers take into account also the land that is leased by such companies and the land that has been bought by substitute buyers.

“They will not give this land back”, says Kosmal. “They will wait until 2016, and when the land market has been freed, they will buy this land”. The unofficial farmers’ statistics in the West Pomerania Province are as follows:

- 117 thousand ha – land bought by companies with foreign capital
- 200 thousand ha – land leased by these companies
- 100 thousand ha – land bought by fake buyers

To sum up, “We have over 400 thousand ha with 937 thousand ha of arable land in the province – it means almost half of the land

is in foreign hands”, says Kosmal.<sup>3</sup> The consequences of this sell-off of farmland in Poland to foreign corporations can already be seen in different areas of life:

- The increase in unemployment among farmers, which in turn will have an influence on the whole economy.
- Serious barriers to young people who would like to start farming: the price of land sold through public tenders is far too high for them.
- Threats to the environment: large-scale use of chemicals and planting of GMO crops.

### **A protest movement**

Farmers tried to talk to the Minister of Agriculture as well as the President of the Agricultural Property Agency. However, these talks did not bring about any results and the farmers decided to start a protest movement, beginning with demonstrations in the West Pomerania Province. On 5th December 2012 the Protest Committee of the West Pomerania Farmers filed a petition with 14 demands.

They called for a change in the regulations concerning land sale and lease by the Agricultural Property Agency and for the introduction of legal provisions supporting family farms. According to the farmers, steps should be taken to enable the expansion of family farms and to prevent the massive sell-off of land after 2016.

According to them land leases should become a fully legal form of land use. They also protested against the introduction of an income tax for farmers which, in time of crisis in the Polish countryside, will be an additional burden and make the already difficult situation of Polish farmers even worse. They also called for the upkeep of the current social security system for farmers (KRUS), which is significantly lower than the regular social security system (ZUS).

Another important issue raised in the petition was the demand for a change in the regulations that do not allow farmers to sell food processed on their farm without meeting prohibitively high standards. Finally, the farmers expressed their opposition to the government’s attempt to legalise GMO crops by the ‘Seeds Act’ and called for a ban, by law, on the planting and trading of GM seeds in Poland.

Protesting farmers drove tractors to the centre of Szczecin and demonstrated in front of the office of the Agricultural Property

Agency. The tractors were adorned with Polish and ‘Solidarity’ flags.

Many of them carried labels such as ‘property of the bank’. The farmers wanted to stress the fact that once the Agency dissolves a land lease contract, they are left with machines and equipment for which they had acquired bank loans and which they then cannot pay back.

The main protest in West Pomerania lasted for 77 days (5th December 2012 - 19th February 2013) and even harsh winter conditions did not scare off the farmers. Convoys of 20, 50 or 100 tractors blockaded town and city centres, main roads and roundabouts, and offices of the Agricultural Property Agency.

Placards attached to tractors conveyed the messages: ‘Stop selling off Polish land’, ‘ Polish land for Polish farmers’, ‘Polish land in Polish hands’, ‘West Pomerania is still Poland.’ Farmers from other parts of Poland also joined to show their support for the West Pomerania farmers and in January the protests spread to five other Polish provinces. The map below shows the scale of the protests:



As a result of the farmers’ protests, the regulations concerning the sale of land by the Agricultural Property Agency were changed. According

to the new regulations, the farmers who buy land from the Agency will have to cultivate it for the next 10 years. This should prevent the further transfer of land acquired through public tenders by fake buyers to foreign companies. The members of farmers' chambers were allowed to participate in tender committees so that they can make sure tenders are not pre-arranged. Yet, this also means that now the responsibility for the sale of public land is partly shifted to farmers. The farmers still did not see any initiative from the government which promised further support and cooperation. They apologised for the inconvenience their demonstrations caused but it was clear for them that only large-scale protests could force the government to take action. In March the protest was revived. This time it was an all-Poland protest led by the 'Solidarity' Independent Self-governing Trade Union of Individual farmers (NSZZRI 'Solidarność') On 14th March numerous demonstrations took place in many towns and cities throughout the whole country. Two days later, the workers' union 'Solidarity' organised a meeting in Gdansk during which the critical problems raised by the farmers were also addressed. Although farmers and NGOs from the whole country got involved in the struggle of West Pomerania farmers for Polish farmland, the demands of the protesting farmers have not all been met and their problems remain unsolved. Farmers are now working in the fields, but they say that in the autumn they will resume their protest.

### **Leaky anti-GMO regulations and limited access to traditional and regional seeds**

The land-sale process links to the passing of the Seeds Act and directives issued by the Polish government concerning GMO plants, which came into effect in January 2013.

Genetically modified food is firmly rejected by 75% of Polish citizens. The Seeds Act and two related regulations officially prohibit the planting of GM seeds but allow them in through the back door since it does not ban the trading of such seeds. The Act places Poland in conformity with EU regulations concerning the 'free trading' of GM seeds which require that countries establish special 'GMO Designated Zones' for the commercial planting of GM Seeds. It turns out that the land which is sold off by the Agricultural Property Agency and purchased by foreign companies can be used by them for the planting of GM crops in special designated areas. The government does not

plan to increase funds for controlling measures. In such a situation the contamination of traditional plants is unavoidable. The responsibility is shifted to the farmers, many of whom are unaware of the threats GM crops carry.

The Seeds Act also limits access to traditional and regional seeds. It says that the regional varieties of seeds cannot exceed 10% of all the seeds authorised for sale on the market. Farmers are also protesting against these unfair regulations. Regional varieties of plants have been developed by generations of farmers and traditional seeds are highly valued. Limiting access to traditional seeds means hindering the potential Polish farming can offer at a time when traditional and ecological food is ever more appreciated. Farmers are demanding that new regulations should be passed that will protect traditional seeds and guarantee unlimited access to them.

### **Extremely strict regulations preventing the sale of farm produce**

Farmers face yet another problem. The regulations concerning food processing on farms are too strict and discouraging for many of them. As it stands, farmers can not engage in direct selling but must set up a company and meet the same standards as big food processing companies. A change in the law is required:

“The sanitary regulations concerning such activities should be adjusted to their scale and seasonal character. Current regulations prevent farmers from processing their produce, which could improve the financial condition of their farm holdings, save the Polish countryside from poverty, and provide consumers with access to local products”.<sup>4</sup>

Consumers want to have access to local food and farmers want to produce and sell it. However, current regulations allow farmers to sell their primary products only. “In practice it means that the farmer can sell milk but not butter or cheese”, says Roman Włodarz, the Chairman of the Silesian Chamber of Agriculture.<sup>5</sup> The same applies to the processing of meat. The farmer can sell a pig, but it would be a lot more profitable for him to sell ham, sausages or other pork products. There are also limits concerning the amount of farm produce that

can be sold. According to Roman Włodarz, the greatest advantage of direct sale of farm produce is the fact that the margin that is normally earned by middlemen and salesmen stays with the farmer. However, only a change of regulation can revive the direct sale, through farms, market places and the internet.

### **ICPPC – solidarity protests in the UK**

ICPPC, the International Coalition to Protect the Polish Countryside, is an NGO set up in the 2000 with the following mission:

Poland has a unique countryside, with very rich wild nature, beautiful landscapes, cultural traditions and many generations of farmers who love their work. It's a national treasure.

However decisions made in Brussels over the past decade have dramatically degraded the life and quality of the Polish countryside and its food. The protection of the natural wealth and diversity of the countryside and the food security of the nation is a vital issue for Poland, as it is for all countries. In order to help realize the goal of protecting our countryside and food chain, we created in November 2000 the International Coalition to Protect the Polish Countryside (ICPPC). The coalition was initiated by 4 organizations from 18 countries.<sup>6</sup> In the last thirteen years ICPPC has participated in and completed many projects connected with environmental issues, food safety, and the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the Polish countryside. It has been actively engaged in the anti-GMO campaign in Poland and tried to block the Seeds Act. Recently, ICPPC has also become involved in the struggle of the Polish farmers against the government's sell-off of prime Polish farmland to foreign multi-national corporations. On 9th January 2013, together with two other NGOs (Koalicja Polska Wolna od GMO and Best Proeko), ICPPC organised two protests in Krakow (the capital of Malopolska Province) and in Zywiec (Slaskie Province). The demonstrators repeated the demands of the West Pomerania farmers.

In order to make the problem of land grabbing in Poland known abroad, ICPPC organised two symbolic actions in the UK. On 26th January, in a show of solidarity with Polish farmers, a group of British farmers and Polish supporters drove tractors in a convoy from the Hardwick Estate, Oxfordshire, to the local town of Pangbourne, 5 km away. The tractors were adorned with Polish flags. Placards tied to them conveyed the messages: 'Stop Land

Grabs', 'Local Food not Global Food' and 'No to GMO'.

The food chain is globalised and therefore it is very important to recognise that this issue affects us all. Europeans have rejected GM foods and the broad body of evidence indicates that they are not about to change their minds. "Selling off farmland to corporations makes all of us slaves to organisations that are unaccountable and have as their sole goal profit and power", said Sir Julian Rose, the owner of the Hardwick Estate and President of ICPPC.

Another solidarity demonstration took place on 7th January in front of the Polish Embassy in London. The protesters brought a copy of the letter which had been sent to the Polish Ambassador a week earlier and demanded that he should support the position being taken by the Polish farmers.

The British protests attracted the attention of the media. These and also other efforts of ICPPC gave the problems that Polish farmers face more publicity. Many organisations and individuals from the UK and other European countries wrote letters of support for Polish farmers addressed to the Polish government.

In an open letter to the Polish nation published on 16th March and written for the meeting in Gdansk organised by the workers' Union 'Solidarity', ICPPC again emphasised the three main issues:

- Stop the sell-off of farmland to foreign corporations.
- Introduction a total and effective ban on the growing and trading of GMO plants.
- Changing the prohibitively strict regulations that do not allow farmers to process food on their farms and sell it in local shops.

According to ICPPC, only these changes can guarantee the realisation of the fundamental issues at stake: food safety and food security for all.

*JADWIGA ŁOPATA is a leading Polish activist who has worked for rural preservation since the mid-1980s. She founded the European Centre for Ecological Agriculture and Tourism-Poland, which she ran for 10 years as President. In November 2000, she initiated and co-established the International Coalition to Protect the Polish Countryside (ICPPC, [www.icppc.pl](http://www.icppc.pl)) which aims to help to secure the survival of Poland's 1.5 million small family farms by promoting local marketing initiatives and building a strong*

*movement against the cultivation of genetically modified organisms. She is Director of the ECOCENTRE ICPPC ([www.eko-cel.pl](http://www.eko-cel.pl)), a demonstration and educational centre which shows that the model of ecological sustainability envisioned in “Small Is Beautiful” from Fritz Schumacher is possible in reality. She is also a founder of the Coalition for GMO Free Poland.*

**Notes**

1. Main Statistical Office (GUS)
2. [www.arimr.gov.pl](http://www.arimr.gov.pl)
3. <http://www.strefabiznesu.gp24.pl/artykul/edward-kosmal-minister-nie-dotrzymuje-slowa>
4. Demands of the Protest Committee of the West Pomerania Farmers, <http://protestrolnikow.pl/postulaty-2/>
5. <http://www.farmer.pl/prawo/przepisy-i-regulacje/rolnicy-za-ulatwieniem-sprzedazy-bezposredniej,42169.html>
6. <http://icppc.pl/index.php/en/about-icppc.html>



# *Occupy Agriculture!*

*SIR JULIAN ROSE*

**A**t the heart of Poland's capital, Warsaw, farmers have founded a flourishing encampment known as the 'Green City'. It is a focus of protest against the sell-off of their land to agribusiness, the arrival of GMO crops, and the imposition of a failed 'Western' model of farming that is creating huge corporate profits while debasing food and bankrupting small farmers.

The farmers who squat down beside a log fire are here because the land that they and their families wish to farm, in perpetuity, is being stolen from under their feet, and are no longer prepared to see their lives ruined by short-term profit hunters.

Something rather remarkable is happening in the middle of Poland's capital, Warsaw, and it is not exactly a capital city spectacle. In fact, rather the opposite.

Tucked-away under a line of trees, opposite the Prime Minister's Palace in Central Warsaw, is a small ramshackle camp, comprising two tents, a Second World War wood fired mobile cooking apparatus, some chairs and benches, a pile of logs and a number of banners, posters and logos.

This is 'Green City' a symbolic and actual site of occupation by farmers fighting to save their livelihood and way of life. At the time of writing, it is in its 28th day of existence - and it isn't planning on going anywhere.

That's in spite of the fact that it is illegal, and suffering under a daily fine imposed by the Polish government. A fine which is, in many ways, a small replication of what is happening on a much bigger scale to farming communities throughout the European Economic Community and beyond.

At Green City, a name affectionately bequeathed upon the camp site by local Warsaw well-wishers, the fourth shift is taking place. A group of 30 farmers is replacing another similar sized group which

has been 'in residence' for the last week.

### **Sustained by vegetable soup and gifts of food**

A huddle of farmers gather around as hot vegetable soup is served from the wood fired dispenser. Conversations break-out with supporters who arrive sporadically with gifts of food and other items.

In amongst the protesting farmers is Edward Kosmal, the owner of a mixed family farm in Zachodniopomorskie Province in North West Poland, and leader of the resistance to the 'land grabs' that are taking place there.

A strongly built, quiet and thoughtful man, Kosmal has resolutely refused to give-in to government intransigence and deafness to the farmer's calls for fair treatment. His emergence as farmer's leader is both welcome and necessary.

A steady and determined hand on the helm is critical to the staying power of this grass roots uprising which has already been hailed as the single largest farmers protest to have ever taken place in Poland. Cometh the hour, cometh the man.

In February, 6,000 farmers (see photo) marched through central Warsaw to the very spot where the 'Green City' now stands. Its inauguration took place on that day.

### **The Academy of Self-Sufficiency and Health**

On the other side of the road from the camp, a military police officer stands impassively in front of the main entrance to the Prime Minister's vast Palace. Other police patrol slowly up and down, keeping a wary eye on the activities that bubble up at the Green City camp site.

One such activity is the birth of the 'Academy of Self Sufficiency and Health', a series of workshops, slide shows and films, demonstrating the practical techniques of self-sufficiency. These are presented by enthusiastic farmers and their supporters - who strongly oppose the globalisation of food and farming under vast transnational agribusiness corporations.

The agri-corporations, they say, cream off any profits to be made in the agriculture sector so as to enlarge their empires at the expense of the small and medium sized family farmers who uphold the traditions of good land management practices and nourishing, wholesome foods.

And these foods are in consequence increasingly hard to find - and certainly never make it onto the shelves of the ubiquitous super and

hypermarkets that have come to dominate Polish retailing, in just the same way as they have in North America and Western Europe.

The farmers who squat down beside a log fire, a welcome source of warmth during the cold Polish nights, listen to the talks with a growing curiosity. They are here because the land that they and their families wish to farm, in perpetuity, is being stolen from under their feet.

Stolen by a government that is more interested in the profits to be made by selling-off its prime agricultural land to the highest foreign bidder, than retaining it for indigenous farmers to ply their trade and keep the nation fed with the 'real foods' that Poland is famous for. These farmers are no longer prepared to see their lives ruined by short-term profit hunters.

They have been steadily stepping-up their protests for three years now. Blocking the government land agencies responsible for doing the deals that undermine their futures.

### **Land grabs stealing farmers' land, and futures**

In the streets of Szczecin, a large market town in Zachodniopomorskie Province, farmers picket the main regional land agency, while on surrounding roads their tractors have kept-up a regular convoy, Polish flags fluttering from their cabs and poster messages stuck in the windows.

The public is broadly with them. Some 80% of the land area in some regions of Zachodniopomorskie have already been sold-off, according to Edward Kosmal. Another farmer added: "I woke up in the morning to find I had Danish and German neighbours."

An estimated 70% of citizens of Szczecin have come out in support. They see what's happening and fear a total take-over once the buying of Polish farmland by foreigners becomes legal in 2016.

With the support of The International Coalition to Protect the Polish Countryside, the farmers added two further demands to the Polish government: to establish a proper, legally enforced ban of GM crops and seeds; and to end the exceptionally harsh regulations that demand registration, licensing and separate processing premises before any farmhouse foods can be legally sold to the Polish public.

Then there are further demands, made by hard-pressed farmers from East Poland, that they be compensated for deeply unfair historical milk quota allocations that have left many dairy farmers with no internal demand for their dairy products, as cheap imports

pour in from Western European Countries with two or three times higher quota allocations.

There are also demands for proper land inheritance regulations and compensation for being victims of the Russian embargo of Polish and EU foods. An embargo established as a counter to the EU penalising Russia for illicit actions that it accused Putin of carrying out in Ukraine.

Uncontrolled wild pig damage to large areas of crops is yet another problem that has negatively impacted upon farmers' incomes. In Poland, farmers cannot carry guns and all hunting and vermin control is carried out by government employed registered gamekeepers.

Edward Kosmal explained how nearly all farmers in his area (and it's broadly true across Poland) are heavily in debt to the banks they took out loans with, so as to purchase modern tractors and other farm equipment suitable for the commercial farming enterprises they were encouraged to undertake when Poland joined the EU in 2004.

### **Locked into western corporate agribusiness**

The advice to go for debt-fuelled growth came from Government Advice Offices for farmers, which espouse the 'restructuring' of farms so as to fit the typical Western European agribusiness model.

Hence the drive for increased export-led production with its attendant knock-on effect of more monocultural farming practices, higher synthetic fertilizer applications, more pesticides and ever bigger and more expensive farm machinery.

The financial pressures that this aggressive push for higher export revenue puts on farmers who have borrowed heavily in order to fulfil these recommendations - are ubiquitous throughout farming communities from one end of the world to another. They hardly ever lead to sustained higher incomes to the farmer, as costs regularly outweigh returns and (in Europe) only EU subsidies keep the farms from bankruptcy.

In the UK, this situation has led to one farmer taking his life every two weeks, rather than witness his life's work taken away by the bank to whom his farm is indebted. In Poland, the subsidies are smaller, in accordance with the size of the farms, but also due to the fact that they are only paid at 50% percent of the rate received in Western Europe.

### **Manacled by debt, how to escape the treadmill?**

Back at Green City's Academy of Self-Sufficiency and Health, the

discussion comes around to this global debacle that Polish farmers now find themselves swept-up in.

Poland's EU membership and pro EU government mean that officialdom fully espouses the capitalist neo-liberal free-trade model that leads to globalised factory farms supplying the dominant supermarket chains - while decimating the health and diversity of the natural environment with vast sterile monocultures.

One can appreciate why there are some intensely serious expressions on the faces of the participating farmers. After all, Poland remains one of the last bastions in Europe of large numbers of small scale, semi self-sufficient farmsteads. They still number around one million with an average size of just seven hectares.

These small farms are synonymous with the non-commercialised, low input and biodiverse characteristics of pre-EU agriculture. These typical self-sufficient family farms have now been trampled on by the European Union's utterly insensitive common agricultural policy (CAP).

Those who followed the government's advice to expand and commercialize - the hallmark of 'restructured' EU farming incentives - are faced by the unpalatable probability that their bank loan-supported expansion efforts have simply driven them onto a treadmill - one which makes them slaves to the corporate / government / Brussels 'Troika', and ensures that the independence and freedom they once enjoyed has become a rapidly fading dream.

### **A future freed from slavery?**

But maybe this is not, after all, the end of the story. The spontaneous arrival at Green City of the clandestine Academy of Self-Sufficiency and Health, has brought into focus a vision both new and old that just could be exactly what the doctor ordered; not just for Poland, but for struggling farmers everywhere.

At its heart is a renewed commitment to supplying the nation, the region and the local community with home grown 'real foods', produced by time honoured methods that bring genuine health back to the soils, plants, animals and humans that are the true beneficiaries of a caring and benign approach - and a determination to free the nation from the chemical, GMO and synthetic food killer fixes that threaten to achieve a complete corporate dominance of the globalization food chain.

Have we arrived at a turning point? One which exposes the failed model of the profit driven, tax payer subsidised, monocultural madness that has brought mankind to the edge of a cliff - beyond which lies complete ruination?

In early March, ICPPC leaders Jadwiga Lopata and I delivered two loaves of 'legal' chemically enriched 'USA style' style plastic wrapped white bread to Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz. A week earlier, accompanied by the Solidarity Farmer's Union chief, we had offered her a basket of 'illegal' real farm food' with a letter demanding a change to the regulation that criminalises such foods and the farmers that produce them.

The USA style white loaves were a reward for her failure to respond. They were accompanied by a letter explaining this, signed by ICPPC's President.

We aren't giving-up. Spring sunshine is replacing the cold grey days of winter. Soon the farmers will have to return to the fields to plant their crops. But the resistance will not come to an end. We're all in it for the long-term.

The Academy of Self-Sufficiency and Health, planted as it is at the heart of this resistance camp, will bring into all our minds the possibility of a life in which we are no longer slaves to the insentient and power obsessed Brussels, corporate, government cabal.

We can, and will, once again become independent farmers, supporting and supported by the communities in which we grow and share our real farm foods.

*JULIAN ROSE is an early pioneer of UK organic farming, writer, broadcaster and activist. He is currently the President of the International Coalition to Protect the Polish Countryside. His most recent book 'In Defence of Life - A Radical Reworking of Green wisdom' is published by Earth Books. Julian's website is [www.julianrose.info](http://www.julianrose.info).*

# *European Referendum - Yes to Europe*

*AMELIA WOMACK*

**E**arlier this year, something happened in the south-eastern corner of the European Union that shook the faith of progressives across the continent. The neoliberal leaders of Eurozone states ruthlessly imposed further austerity on a country that had democratically voted against it, twice.

The brutal terms of the bailout showed the single currency at its worst, and many on the Left began to argue that we should leave the Union – in spite of the protection the UK has against similar attacks due to its decision, campaigned for by the Greens, to keep its own currency. But even Greece’s governing anti-austerity party, Syriza, maintained a desire to stay, and so does the Green Party. Governments like our own are pushing for an EU that protects profits, not people. Only the EU’s safeguards for our rights and our environment, as well as Europe’s more progressive politicians, stand in their way. The Right know that Brexit (Britain’s exit) would make it easier to remove these safeguards at home.

While the EU is secretly negotiating the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, which would hand powers once held by governments to corporations, one of the main arguments from the Right is that leaving would allow us to sign our own free trade agreements with countries around the world. Brexit would not save us from TTIP, or any future international trade deal.

By staying in Europe we can embrace the opportunity that comes with the growing strength of progressive movements across the EU. Our own Green Surge is so much more powerful on the European stage with the support of Green parties across the EU, as well as the likes of Syriza and other progressive forces, all joining our calls for reforms that put Europe’s people first.

The UK’s decrepit voting system provided the 1.1 million people who voted Green at the last general election just a single MP to

represent their views. The proportional voting system of the European Parliament gives us a louder voice, with 50 MEPs forming the Green bloc, all demanding effective Europe-wide action on climate change.

By pressuring our leaders, and in some cases being elected to government, progressives can achieve a fairer, more democratic and sustainable Europe for every citizen – not just those in certain countries.

Only by working together can we end the corporate influences that seek to dismantle the environmental protections and fundamental rights the EU stands for. Only collectively can we ensure the EU formulates strong targets and collaborative plans to combat climate change – because the actions of individual countries will never be enough to prevent catastrophic warming on their own.

So the Green Party is preparing a positive campaign for Britain to remain a member of the EU, and for an overhaul of its systems very different to the reforms David Cameron is pushing for. We want to be part of a genuinely democratic EU that enshrines crucial rights for all citizens, and that leads the world with its efforts to tackle climate change.

We'll be working with political allies and grassroots campaigners from across Europe to set out how we can achieve those changes together. And we'll be reaching out to local parties to help them explain how the EU can and does have a positive impact on local communities, from protecting cherished wildlife habitats to upholding human rights.

The EU referendum presents us with an opportunity to offer a vision of a better Europe, and to strengthen the alliances that will make positive change happen.

*AMELIA WOMACK is a former deputy leader of the Green party of England and Wales.*

***Further reading:***

*Caroline Lucas MP*

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jul/16/greeceprogressive-reform-europe-david-cameron>

*Molly Scot Cato MEP*

<http://www.westernmorningnews.co.uk/StayEU-protect-vital-South-West-industries/story27672828-detail/story.html>

*GREEN ACTIVIST | SEPTEMBER 2015*



# Trade Unionists Took Message to TUC

JOHN BOYD

**T**rade unionists Against the European Union ([tuaeu.co.uk](http://tuaeu.co.uk)) took the fight to get out of the EU prison house to delegates at a packed fringe meeting during the Trade Union Congress meeting in Brighton.

Labour MP *Kelvin Hopkins*, promoting his new pamphlet *The EU: a view from the left*, pointed out that the EU is anti-democratic, anti-socialist and, as long predicted, is in a process of economic decline. He writes that the Tories largely support the EU because it precisely a force for neoliberalism and privatisation.

TUAEU spokesman *Brian Denny* said that those in the labour movement that currently support EU membership will not be claiming that 'social Europe' will be protect workers from Tory attacks including its vicious Trade Union Bill.

"That is largely because 'Social Europe' has died a very quiet and strange death.

"The EU is now imposing zero-hours contracts, casualisation and poverty pay as well as smashing up collective bargaining across Europe as part of its structural adjustment programme known as austerity.

"Even the European TUC, which interestingly recently campaigned for a 'Yes' vote in the Greek referendum for more austerity, openly admits that "cuts in salaries, cuts in public services and weakening collective bargaining rights are all on the agenda", he said.

*Helle Hagenau* of No to the EU in Norway, warned that the EU was currently negotiating secret trade deals which institutionalise irreversible mass privatisation of public services, lower safety standards and abolish tariffs for the world's largest corporations.

"These treaties, currently known as Transatlantic Trade and

Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the US and CETA with Canada, create secret courts that allow transnational corporations to sue nation states for huge sums of money,” she said.

Trade union lawyer *John Hendy* said that the EU’s neoliberal employment model openly calls for wages to reflect productivity, which means cutting wages even further allegedly to compete with the ‘core’ high-investment economies of France and Germany.

”This has sparked unprecedented levels of unemployment particularly in so-called ‘peripheral’ countries.

”The European Commission, IMF and the European Central Bank now directly intervene in national wage negotiations in Ireland, Greece and Romania in order to weaken collective bargaining.

”And it’s working, for instance previously in Romania 98 per cent of workers were covered by collective agreements today that figure is around 20 per cent,” he said.

*Brian Denny* warned that a new form of EU colonialism was developing whereby wealth was being directly transferred from the periphery to the core particularly in Greece and now Ukraine.

”This colonial transfer of capital takes the form of interest payments on ever rising debt, creating permanent austerity which enforces mass privatisation and allows the takeover of the colony’s banking system and bank assets in order to transfer wealth to shareholders of the colonizing country’s private bankers and investors.

”That is the structural adjustment model we are being asked to accept by the Europhiles yet working people don’t want it, the labour movement is at a crossroads, embrace this imperialist nightmare or resist and say no more,” he said.

JOHN BOYD is coordinator of TEAM (*The Alliance of EU-Critical Movements*).

# *What Europe Can Learn from India*

*IMD PROFESSOR AMIT S. MUKHERJEE*

**T**he EU is wrestling with seemingly insoluble human and financial crises. Pundits routinely draw unfavorable parallels to the US to illustrate needed changes. They say Europe needs a stronger central bank and greater political integration. Pointing to Puerto Rico's \$72 billion debt crisis, they note that financial markets have assumed that unlike Greece, this US Territory will make a soft landing.

This technocratic prescription, though valid, doesn't address a key fact: Europe's diverse population will impede the creation of the "US of Europe". India, which has comparable diversity, can teach much. But will Europeans be willing to learn from an emerging economy where corruption is rife? They should. Indians have got a lot wrong, but they got this right.

## **Parallels**

- The EU must unify very diverse peoples. In a few years starting in 1947, India integrated 600 independent and semi-independent kingdoms and the erstwhile British India, and consolidated them into language-based states. There are 29 today.
- Both the EU and India have 24 official languages. The peoples in India who speak these languages live in a country which is three-fourths the size of the EU's. Many languages are as different as English and Greek. Because half of India can't even recognize the other half's alphabets, educated Indians of different linguistic backgrounds talk to each other in English, an official language.
- India has greater religious diversity than Europe. It has more Christians than all but five EU countries, and more Muslims than all but two countries worldwide. The Hindus, too, are diverse; rituals can differ considerably across states.
- Like Europeans, Indians swear by their states' cultures and foods. More Westerners eat "chicken tikka masala" daily than Indians do.

## **Managing diversity**

The EU's efforts at managing diversity have been woeful. Its politicians haven't made a cogent case why diverse peoples should come together. Politicians -like Jean-Claude Juncker - who ardently champion the EU, offer technocratic rationales, not ones that ordinary people can feel in their guts. The absence of an emotion-laden rationale for unity has produced today's "What's in it for me?" ruptures along national and linguistic lines, as well as the alienation of European Muslims.

EU politicians don't seem to understand a basic truth taught in Leadership and Change Management courses: when people rally around a shared vision, driving change becomes easier. Why does the EU exist? Surely not to prevent a German initiated World War III? That rationale became irrelevant decades ago.

In contrast, India's efforts at forging a common identity - "India" did not exist for millennia - have been a substantial success. It adopted a national anthem that lauded, by name, every part of the country, and a flag with colors associated with the three major religions. Politicians made decisions that made no logical or economic sense, but helped manage diversity. Every child learned the message of "Unity in Diversity" from primary school onward.

And despite its periodic, ugly, politics-driven religious killings, India championed religious diversity. Four of its twelve presidents were Muslims, as were four of forty-two Chief Justices, many senior ministers and bureaucrats, and many top leaders of its armed forces. Forbes lists Indian Muslim billionaires, and India worships the many Muslims in its movies and the arts, and its beloved national cricket team. Europeans should ponder why so many British Muslims have joined ISIS while few Indians have, even though Britain's Muslim population is 1.6% of India's.

## **The language example**

The EU policy requiring children to study two non-native languages was a solid step towards instilling appreciation of diversity. However, countries support it irregularly. The UK lacks a country-wide time commitment, while Spain devotes only 5% time at primary levels and 10% in secondary levels. So, as a London resident, I heard British children speak only English, and during a two-week visit, I could get only one young Spaniard to admit to knowing English.

People can drive change themselves, but they must want to - and it takes much longer. In 1970s India, my fellow students and I

ridiculed the efforts of an Academic Francaise-like language institute that coined longwinded Hindi equivalents of simple English: "railway signal" became "lahu-puth-gameni -awat -j awat -soochak -danda".

Though today's BJP government is pursuing similar silly ideas, DJs and program hosts on Indian TV and radio speak smooth amalgamations of native Indian languages with English. For example, "Hinglish", which combines Hindi and English, teaches even illiterate Hindi-speakers English words. Unity in diversity, writ small.

### **Crisis to crisis**

Instead of celebrating Europe's cultural richness and unifying people, European leaders are perversely pushing them apart. Wolfgang Schauble mused that indolent Greece should temporarily leave the Euro zone. David Cameron promised a referendum on EU membership unless the EU acceded to British demands. Greece is flirting with Russia. Viktor Orban wants the EU refugee/migrant policy to ensure that Europe remains Christian. This depressing list is unending. Disunity in diversity, writ large.

And so, the very rich EU cannot deal effectively deal with the present refugee crisis. In contrast, during the 1971 bloodbath that birthed Bangladesh, dirt-poor India, plagued with regular famines, hosted roughly 10 million Muslim refugees.

The EU will stop lurching from crisis to crisis only if its leaders ensure it stands for something that makes Europeans proud. Its leaders must set an extraordinary, but human, vision that no country can fulfill on its own. They must learn to give something up first, in order to get something in return. They have to champion policies and ideas that their compatriots oppose, if these are essential for the EU's long-term success. David Cameron, Angela Merkel, and Françoise Holland have not shown they are up to such challenges.

However, I am convinced the EU can embrace diversity and overcome these challenges. After all, ordinary Europeans created *Médecins Sans Frontières*, and instead of staying in the comfort of their rich homelands, at great risk to themselves, regularly take light and hope to the darkest corners of the world.

*AMIT S. MUKHERJEE is Professor of Leadership and Strategy at IMD (IMD Business School, Lausanne). He will be based at IMD's Executive Learning Center in Singapore.*

# *TTIP is not for Small Companies*

*CORPORATE EUROPE OBSERVATORY*

**P**ublicly, business lobby groups are heavily pushing the idea that TTIP will benefit small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). But behind closed doors they admit the reality: that small companies will “face increased competition” and that “benefits remain hypothetical”.

Since 2013 Brussels and Washington have been negotiating a trade deal commonly known as TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership). Due to the far reaching consequences of the treaty (in the way that it benefits the few and poses a threat to the great many), TTIP debates are now raging far beyond the corridors of Brussels, in the streets of cities and towns across Europe.

In this debate, big business has engaged in a campaign to win the hearts and minds of European people, for example promoting the idea that small businesses will make big gains under TTIP. Evidence though, reveals that big business itself does not believe what it sells to the European public.

Publicly, corporate trade associations such as Business Europe, representing big business in Brussels and their counterpart in London the CBI (Confederation of British Industry), claim that TTIP will bring “significant benefits” to SMEs and “opportunities to export”.

However, reports of the meetings of DG Trade – the department of the European Commission in charge of TTIP negotiations – with the CBI and MEDEF, representing big business in the United Kingdom and in France, and members of BusinessEurope, reveal that in reality big business does not believe that TTIP will benefit SMEs.

This is evidenced in the way that MEDEF asked DG Trade how it can “reassure the 19 million European SMEs which do not export and which will face increased competition” and CBI admitted that “the case for the benefits of TTIP [on SMEs] remains hypothetical”.

***What they say in public***

***Business Europe*** is the representative of big business in Brussels. ***MEDEF*** and ***CBI*** are members of ***Business Europe***.

*“A brochure from Business Europe released on January 2015 highlights why small and medium enterprises are poised to receive significant benefits from the TTIP negotiations.”*

***The Confederation of British Industry, CBI***, represents big business in the United Kingdom. For them, TTIP will bring “new opportunities for small and mid-sized companies to export”.

***What they say in private (behind-closed-doors meetings)***

*In March 2015, MEDEF, representing big business in France, had a meeting with the EU Commissioner on Trade.*

*MEDEF “asked how the communication services [of DG Trade] can reassure the 19 million European SMEs which do not export and which will face increased competition”.*

*On 1st July 2015, the CBI, representing big business in the United Kingdom, met with Maria Asenius, the Head of Cabinet of the EU Commissioner on Trade. The CBI admitted that “the case for the benefits of TTIP [on SMEs] remains*

The Alliance for TTIP is an alliance of pro-TTIP trade associations. One of its members is BusinessEurope.

MEDEF and CBI are both important players in the TTIP debate. When they spearhead a campaign on the supposed benefits for SMEs – one that resonates in the discourse of governments and other business groups – it is fair to conclude that this part of the pro-TTIP effort is based on deception.

And this assumption is backed up by the words of small and medium enterprises themselves:

The German association of medium-sized enterprises (Bundesverband mittelständische Wirtschaft) considers ISDS (Investor-state Dispute Settlement, which allows corporations to sue

governments), one of the many threats of TTIP, to be “unnecessary” and “strictly rejects” it because the proposed provisions “discriminate against medium-sized businesses”.

Similarly, the association of SMEs of the French-speaking part of Belgium thinks that small and medium-sized enterprises “have nothing to win from this deal. On the contrary, in its present form, it brings dangers”. Dangers for small and medium enterprises that big business portrays as opportunities.

*CORPORATE EUROPE OBSERVATORY (CEO) is a research and campaign group working to expose and challenge the privileged access and influence enjoyed by corporations and their lobby groups in EU policy making. This article is found at <http://corporateeurope.org/international-trade/2015/08/dont-believe-hype-ttip-not-small-companies>*



# *The New European*

## **261,159 Signatures**

### **for Referendum on Austria's EU-membership**

If 100.000 persons in Austria sign a petition over the course of one week they are entitled to have this petition, a so-called Volksbegehren taken up in parliament.

In the week from June 24 to July 1 a petition, "Volksbegehren für den Austritt Österreichs aus der Europäischen Union" (Petition for Austria's exit from the EU) gathered no less than 261,159 signatures, the second highest ever result for a Volksbegehren.

This result is the much more remarkable as the initiative was not taken by parties or other power centres and did not get any assistance from the media.

According to Inge Rauscher who took the initiative this petition has brought the issue of a binding referendum on Austria's EU membership nearer. Source: [teameurope.co](http://teameurope.co)

## **Estonia introduces new TV channel in Russian**

A controversial TV channel has been opened in Estonia. The channel will offer the large Russian speaking minority a free and independent alternative to Russian TV. Source: <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=6267596>

## **Protesting Polish Farmers Released on Bail**

The Farmers who blocked the sale of farmland in North West Poland have been released on bail. However, charges are still pending and the Polish government has washed its hands of the incident by claiming that the Prosecutor is independent and must arrive at his own conclusions. If convicted they face a potential five-TEN years imprisonment.

Eleven farmers were arrested in early October. They were actively involved in trying to prevent the Polish government selling off prime farmland to foreign speculators. Source: [icppc.pl](http://icppc.pl)

### **GM Crop Bans Confirmed in 19 EU Countries**

Denmark, Luxembourg and Malta have joined the growing list of EU countries which have turned their backs on GM crops.

Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have also all announced GM crop bans over the past few weeks.

A total of 19 EU countries have now stated that they will not let their agricultural systems be damaged by unnecessary and harmful GM crops that were designed by the Biotech industry, led by Monsanto, to sell more herbicides.

Belgium, for its part, has decided to keep its French-speaking Wallonia region GM crop free.

Source: <http://sustainablepulse.com/2015/10/04/gm-crop-bansconfirmed-in-19-eu-countries/#.VjD89G6oN94>

### **Dutch Money Buying up Danish Farms**

Dutch farmers are queuing to buy Danish farms, especially the large ones. The Danish farmers' associations are worried because young Danish farmers are unable to match the prices offered by their Dutch colleagues. More than 600 Dutch farmers have bought Danish farms.

Source: <http://finans.dk/artikel/ECCE4242009/Hollandskelandm%C3%A6nd-fortr%C3%A6nger-danskere/?ctxref=ext>

### **How the EU starves Africa into submission**

It is estimated that Africa imports nearly 83 per cent of its food. African leaders are seeking ways to feed their peoples and become players in the global economy.

In the second edition of his book, *The New Harvest: Agricultural Innovation in Africa*, by Calestous Juma, the author argues that Africa can feed itself in a generation. However, efforts to achieve such an ambitious goal continue to be frustrated by policies adopted by Africa's historical trading partners, especially the European Union.

Source: <http://www.capx.co/how-the-eu-starves-africa-into-submission/>

### **Portugal has crossed the Rubicon**

“Portugal has entered dangerous political waters. For the first time since the creation of Europe's monetary union, a member state has taken the explicit step of forbidding eurosceptic parties from taking

office on the grounds of national interest.

Anibal Cavaco Silva, Portugal's constitutional president, has refused to appoint a Left-wing coalition government even though it secured an absolute majority in the Portuguese parliament and won a mandate to smash the austerity regime bequeathed by the EU-IMF Troika", according to Ambrose Evans-Prichard in the Daily Telegraph. Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/economics/11949701/AEP-Eurozone-crosses-Rubicon-as-Portugals-anti-euro-Leftbanned-from-power.html>

### **Danish Opt-in proposal is Gibberish**

"The Danish Government has introduced a bill, 'Proposal on a law about transforming the opt-out on justice and home affairs to an opt-in arrangement'. But excuse me, this is pure gibberish", says Søren Søndergaard, former MEP for the Danish People's Movement Against the EU, and he continues: "If the government has its way (in the December 3rd referendum on the bill. ed.), the opt-out will not have been transformed, it will have vanished. In 1992 the voters defeated the parliamentary majority. We did not want an EU state with a common currency, a common military, a common justice policy and a common citizenship.

As a result, Denmark has its four opt-outs from the Maastricht Treaty. The opt-out belong to the voters, not to the politicians. The opt-outs ensured us that power would not be transferred to the EU without this being approved in a referendum."

Source: <http://www.altinget.dk/artikel/soendergaard-tilvalgsordningen-er-volapyk>

### **Danish Referendum.**

Denmark's referendum result is a victory for democracy as the electorate opposed handing over Justice and Home national affairs to the EU. This will boost the leave EU camp in Britain despite the near complete blackout by the media.

We congratulate those organisations and parties in Denmark, especially the Danish Peoples Movement, who brought about this result despite interference by the European Commission and other vested interests. We in Britain will use this example to extricate Britain from the undemocratic EU in the forthcoming Referendum.

*John Boyd,*

*Secretary – (Labour movement) Campaign against Euro-federalism*

# NEW EUROPEAN



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