



PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT

FIGHTING FOR WORKERS & ECO-SOCIALISM

**EU
MANIFESTO
2024**

**“A Europe for People
Not for Profit”**



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EU MANIFESTO 2024

Ireland needs to send radical socialist voices to the European Parliament to challenge the hypocrisy and double standards. As socialists, we have no illusion that a few MEP's can change its undemocratic structures, but we can expose the power of corporate lobbyists and backroom dealings. We will help to expose the rigged economy, which sees billionaires get richer, while the workers who actually create the wealth get poorer.

We can be a socialist voice that presses for real solidarity with Palestine. We can call out the double standards when the EU gives €26 billion in military supplies to Ukraine but, behind its show of 'concern' for Palestine, backs Israel to the hilt.

We can expose the hypocrisy of EU claims to be a 'progressive' body that promotes inclusion and diversity. We will demand to know why 29,250 people had to drown in the Mediterranean so that 'fortress Europe' could be preserved.

We live in an era where our planet is threatened by an escalating climate catastrophe. Despite all the greenwashing from big business and the volumes of speeches by the establishment parties', global temperatures reached their highest ever recorded level in 2023. Green parties who were once prominent in highlighting environmental destruction are now part of the political establishment. They have embraced the very neoliberal measures that make it impossible to control runaway temperatures.

People Before Profit offer an alternative eco-socialist voice that will challenge the destructive logic of capitalism and fight to save our planet.



**A
RIGGED
SYSTEM**

A RIGGED SYSTEM

We Want Equality and Social Rights – Not a Billionaires Club

Europe is a grossly unequal continent. There are nearly 600 billionaires who hire lobbyists, meet with top politicians, and sometimes use economic blackmail to get their way.

By contrast there are 95 million people at risk of poverty or social exclusion. That is nearly a quarter of the population.

A Rigged Economy

The richest 10 percent have more wealth than the bottom 90 percent combined.

The top 20 percent have 60 times the wealth of the bottom 20 percent.

Europe's 600 billionaires own more than the poorest 80 million families combined.

Our MP's will fight to make Europe a more equal place for workers and those in need.

The same massive inequality is mirrored in Ireland. We are told that we live in one of the wealthiest countries in the world, but working people face greater insecurity than ever before. Most people work longer hours without feeling any benefit, and young people, in particular, face precariousness and being locked out of affordable home ownership.

We are supposed to be going forwards – but most people are going backwards.

How has all this happened and what role does the EU play in increasing inequality?

The truth is that the EU is a rigged system that protects the wealthy. Here is how it works:

- **The competition rules of the European Single Market (ESM) have created a race to the bottom for workers' wages and corporate taxes.** During the 1960's workers were paid 65 percent of the total income of the EU economy but today this is less than 55 percent. During the 1980's the average corporation tax rate in Europe was 50 percent, but today it is just 21 percent.
- **The EU issues directives which promote privatization.** Irish electricity is a classic example. In 1996, the EU issued a directive on electricity 'liberalisation'. Before this, the ESB provided some of the cheapest electricity for domestic users in Europe. But 'liberalisation' was a code word for privatisation. These directives led to the Electricity (Supply) (Amendment) Act, which was enacted in 2001. It radically changed the mandate of the ESB and turned it into a for-profit company. The result is dearer electricity for domestic users. We are charged €1,000 more for electricity every year than the European average and have the third most expensive electricity prices in the EU.

- **The EU elite have used economic crises to prop up the rich.** After the financial crash of 2008, the EU demanded that Irish taxpayers put billions into Irish banks. ECB President, Jean-Claude Trichet, threatened that a ‘bomb would go off in Dublin’ if the wealthy bondholders were not bailed out. Later the EU embarked on a policy of ‘quantitative easing.’ This meant printing cheap money **and** allowing bankers and developers to borrow cheaply. The rich used this easy money to invest heavily in property and jack up rents and house prices.

Did You Know?

In 2011 The President of the European Central Bank, Jean-Claude Trichet, threatened a financial bomb in Dublin if Irish taxpayers failed to pay back banks in Europe. Irish taxpayers were then forced to pay 42 percent of the entire cost of the European banking crisis even though Ireland only had 1 percent of the population.

People Before Profit has a proud record of opposing this financial austerity.

- **Under EU rules public spending is restricted.** EU bureaucrats look at statistics to determine if a country is spending more than 60 percent of its GDP or running a small deficit of more than 3 percent. Governments must submit their proposed budget to see if there are ‘imbalances’. A complex language that is virtually inaccessible to the general public is deployed to limit and curtail public spending. Yet the people who rely most on public spending are working people. They send their children to publicly funded schools. They use public hospitals. They need basic services to help them.

All of this means that working people have lost out badly. The numbers in trade unions are falling constantly (today it is just under 25 percent) and, as a result, low pay, insecure jobs, and poor pension provision has increased. Workers must now work until the age of 66 before they receive a state pension, and it could go higher. In every country there is a wage-productivity gap – workers are producing far more but their wages are falling behind as a share of national wealth. At the same time costs are increasing. This is most obvious in housing and the recent cost of living crisis.



**HOW A
NEOLIBERAL EU
IS BLOWING UP THE
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- **EU laws guarantee freedom of movement for capital, which has enabled vulture funds to buy up vast swathes of property across Europe and drive up housing costs in the name of profit.** Governments are forbidden by EU rules from “discriminating” against foreign capital no matter how much damage the vultures do.
- **The European Central Bank has repeatedly hiked up mortgage interest rates,** driving mortgage holders and their families into poverty and making it impossible for young workers to buy a home. If you have a mortgage, the EU is costing you thousands of euros a year in higher interest rates.
- **The EU’s public procurement and state aid rules make it extremely difficult for states to directly build social and affordable housing.** Local authorities are forced to put housing projects out to tender so companies can compete to provide the housing for the lowest price. The state aid rules prevent states from favouring direct build by councils or a state construction company and the public procurement rules force state agencies to compete with private companies paying lower wages. This drives down pay and conditions for construction workers. The tender process causes long delays to new housing and delays can be even longer if companies use EU competition laws to challenge tender decisions in the courts.
- **The EU is refusing to regulate short term lets** even though there are thousands more homes on AirBnB than are available for workers to rent.

Did You Know?

Ireland has the highest cost of living in Europe. According to Eurostat, Irish costs are currently 46 percent higher than the EU average. Ireland also has the highest cost for housing in the EU. According to Eurostat, Irish people pay 92 percent more housing when electricity and other fuels are factored in. This is driven by vulture funds who buy up land and houses and by a government that won’t build enough social and affordable housing.

Our MEP’s will fight for better wages and cheaper houses. This means reducing the profits of big business.

People Before Profit MEPs will:

- **Support** workers across the continent for greater rights. Whenever workers are in struggle, we will promote solidarity action across borders.
- **Demand** an end to the austerity agenda. We want to increase public spending to create better public services for working people. We reject the straitjacket of EU fiscal rules.
- **Fight** for a national construction company to build enough social and affordable homes.
- **Promote** the nationalisation of the energy sector to produce cheap energy and allow for a green transition.
- **Advocate** for a billionaires' tax and a 'Robin Hood Tax' on finance to fund our public services.
- Instead of directives that lead to privatisation, **we want directives that give people social rights**. EU countries should be required to make provision for social housing, to provide adequate standards of care, to increase spending on the public health system.
- **Demand** an EU-wide ban on vulture funds and an end to total freedom of movement for capital, which is driving up housing costs and making people homeless.

It is time to share the wealth - and end inequality.



**END
EU HYPOCRISY
ON THE CLIMATE**

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We are hurtling towards a 2-degree increase in global warming, yet despite all the talk, the EU is not taking decisive action and refuses to set a date to phase out fossil fuels. The EU is not on track to achieve its existing target to reduce emissions by “at least 55%” by 2030.

This parliament will be the key forum for holding elites to their promise to move to zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The EU presents itself as a moral leader on climate change. But behind the PR wrapping there is a darker side that involves concessions being made to business interests.

The EU Commissioner, Wopke Hoekstra, has openly stated that the EU’s climate ambitions must not interfere with “making sure our businesses stay competitive’. Hoekstra began his career at Shell and worked for 11 years at the McKinsey consultancy company that has represented fossil fuel interests.

It is no surprise that the EU’s plan places a major emphasis on carbon capture and storage with recent proposals from the Commission calling for a “rapid scale-up” of carbon removal techniques. This has become the main greenwashing tactic of the fossil fuel industry despite being a completely unproven technology. In its current capacity, it is only responsible for a 0.1 percent reduction in global annual emissions. 81 percent of carbon captured to date has been used to extract more oil via the process of Enhanced Oil Recovery.

Did You Know?

Despite overwhelming scientific evidence there have been more Co2 emissions since 1990 than in the entire period before that date. One reason is the power of the oil and gas companies. The war in Ukraine has been a disaster for ordinary people but an enormous help to corporate profits.

In the two years from February 2022-2024, the worlds five biggest fossil fuel companies - BP, Shell, Chevron, ExxonMobil and TotalEnergies - made combined profits of \$281 billion. This creates enormous power for companies that have no interest in clean energies.

Our MEP’s will fight to reduce the lobbying power of big oil companies.

The EU claims that it is also encouraging farmers to protect the environment. But it has failed to provide a just transition that would allow them to move away from harmful practices such as massively increasing the size of the dairy herd or act as custodians of the environment.

The EU bureaucracy use the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) as its main instrument. But for decades, around 80 percent of CAP subsidies have gone go to just 20 percent of EU farms, encouraging large-scale industrial production and land concentration. Most of

the €400 billion will continue to be spent on Agri-industrial business-as-usual farming.

Small and medium farmers are forced to make the largest adjustments while the big Agri businesses continue to squeeze their livelihoods and demand a productivist model. Our MEP's will advocate for farmers who need extensive financial support to improve their emissions. They also need higher margins so that they can reduce their production and their emissions.

Despite green rhetoric, globalised food chains will lead to further industrialisation of European agriculture, destroying the most sustainable models.

The Green Parties have totally failed. They join governments that advocate neoliberal policies and increasingly support more military spending.

People Before Profit MEPs will demand:

- **More food sovereignty and an end to monocultural farming.**
- **A reduction in dairy herds and a just transition** for small and medium farmers.
- **Public ownership of major agribusinesses** to organise a just transition.
- **Free public transport** throughout the EU, including proper public transport for smaller towns.
- **Restoration of the rail infrastructure**, including the carrying of freight.
- **An EU ruling that no country should devote more than 5 percent of its energy supplies to data centres.**
- **A replacement for CAP** so that farmers' funding is a public good for custodians of the land, including a fully funded Nature Restoration Fund and Afforestation & Rewilding programmes offering farmers €3,000 per annum per hectare.
- **European-wide 'right to repair'.**
- **A Europe Wide Retrofitting programme** that pays for the initial costs upfront and receives money back from the energy savings overtime.
- **European-wide ban on private jets and fossil fuel advertising.**
- **EU support for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.**
- **A four day week** to reduce transport emissions and improve quality of lie.
- **A just transition** so that the rich pay for the emissions they have created and made money from – not the poor.

People Before Profit want every small and medium farmer to regain control from the major supermarket and food processors. One way to do this is pay them for environmental action. In Europe we would argue for a fund that would pay farmers €3000 every year if they agree to use the land to reduce emissions.



**AN EU
THAT SUPPORTS
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AN EU THAT SUPPORTS PALESTINE AND STOPS MILITARISATION

The EU has stood on the wrong side of history on Palestine. Ursula von der Leyen has publicly stated that 'Israel has the right to self-defence ...the EU stands by Israel today and in the next weeks.'

Israel's so called 'right to self-defence' has led to over 30,000 Palestinian deaths. At no point has the EU President ever spoken of a Palestinian right to self-defence against the illegal occupation of their land.

The EU talks a lot about human rights - but when it comes to Palestine it does not promote them. Instead, EU research funding supports Israeli armaments companies.

EU leaders are also preparing for a new war. Admiral Rob Bauer, a NATO military committee chief, has openly declared that the West should prepare for all-out war with Russia within the next 20 years.

EU leaders constantly talk about the Russian threat and the need to build up defence spending. Arms spending in Europe is now at the highest point since the Cold War, as each government commits to spending at least 2 percent of its GDP on defence. The EU is so eager to promote an arms race that it has included a special exception for military spending in new EU fiscal rule proposals.

This also helps to explain why Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael want to push us to join NATO or an EU army. They want to end our neutrality. They have taken the first step by agreeing to join PESCO, a programme that insists that Irish military spending must grow fivefold.

Did You Know?

European countries have rapidly increased spending on the military. In 2022 they spent €240 billion on military equipment - the eight year of increases. Eradicating child poverty for the 25 million children affected would cost considerably less (€150 billion) but EU policy makers increasingly prefer to fund warfare not welfare. Our MEP's would fight to reverse these policies and these priorities.

People Before Profit MEPs will demand:

- **Irish neutrality** as a core plank of our foreign policy.
- **Exiting PESCO** and resisting all attempts to build an EU Army.
- **Welfare not warfare.** Stop the subsidies to the arms industry and the massive waste of money on the war in Ukraine. Invest in public services and promote peace not war.
- **End** the drive towards militarisation and increased arms spending. No to an EU army, and to funding proxy wars and NATO expansion.

- **Support** the people of Ukraine by cancelling debts held by European banks.
- **Expel Israel** from all trade agreements with the EU - support the right of Palestinians to resist illegal occupation.



**RACISM -
FIGHT FASCISM**

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Fascist forces have re-emerged in Europe to spread a message of hate against asylum seekers and migrants. They seek to turn working people on each other rather than fight an upper class that exploits us all.

Their methods are lies and fear mongering. But in their pursuit of votes, mainstream centre-right political parties bend and appease them.

Having slashed public services, and allowed rampant profiteering, right-wing governments across Europe are now trying to put the blame on migrants and refugees for the housing, health, and cost of living crises. They want working people to fight each other for the measly crumbs from the table that we get, rather than fighting for better services for all. This has helped to fan the flames of a small, violent fascist movement who are terrorising working class and migrant communities and must be stopped.

People Before Profit rejects this 'dog eat dog' competition. Instead, we fight for jobs, homes, and health care for all - and let's tax the billionaires and corporate elite to fund it. Rather than a bitter fight over who gets a medical card, and who doesn't - we stand for an Irish NHS for all.

Did You Know?

Ireland has always benefitted from people moving across borders. Irish people are among the top 10 globally who emigrate to find work and Ireland has the second highest portion of its population living in other EU countries.

Going the other way, migrants make a vital contribution to Irish society and the Irish economy. They keep our hospitals running and contribute more to the economy in taxes and PRSI than they receive in public services or social welfare.

Rather than attacking people who desperately need housing and public services we stand for genuine solidarity and enough investment to meet the needs of all who live here.

Irish people have shown again and again just how welcoming we are. We know what it is like to be driven from your home by poverty, famine, and imperialism. We know that every new person that comes here can be a source of new wealth, new workers for our health and education services, new life, and vibrancy for our country - just like Irish emigrants added hugely to the countries we travelled to. But to make that a reality, we need investment in jobs, housing, and integration.

The EU needs more migrants not less. There are not enough workers to carry out basic tasks or fund the pensions of older generations. That's one reason why we reject the EU's racist 'Fortress Europe' policy, which sees thousands left to drown in the

Mediterranean and EU funding for brutal regimes in Turkey, Libya and elsewhere to lock up people in inhumane camps for the 'crime' of seeking a better life. Europe needs more, not less, search and rescue missions to save people from drowning.

Did You Know?

Nearly 30,000 people have been allowed to drown in the Mediterranean. In 2019, all four Fine Gael MEP's - Mairead McGuinness, Maria Walsh, Frances Fitzgerald, and Sean Kelly voted against a resolution that would have increased search and rescue missions for people in danger of drowning. The resolution lost by two votes.

Our MEP's will fight for a fairer Europe that cares for those in need inside and outside the EU.

People Before Profit stand for:

- ***Giving all asylum seekers*** that come to Europe an immediate right to work, with full legal, social and trade union rights.
- ***Fighting trade unions to organise workers of all nationalities*** against the race to the bottom and for decent wages and conditions.
- ***An end to EU bribes for countries to detain migrants.***
- ***Tax the rich*** to fund mass investment to provide jobs, homes, and quality public services for all.



**FOR A DEMOCRATIC
& ECO-SOCIALIST
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FOR A DEMOCRATIC & ECO-SOCIALIST EUROPE - END THE RULE OF BUREAUCRACY.

The EU is organised in ways that prevent democratic pressure. No member of the EU Parliament can propose legislation. Very few people are aware of EU discussions which lead to directives which affect their lives. The EU's legislative process involves countless meetings in shadowy 'trilogues' which hammer out deals.

This undemocratic form of decision-making suits corporate interests. There are over 25,000 lobbyists in Brussels, and many have privileged access to EU Commissioners. More than 75 percent of all lobby meetings with these Commissioners are with lobbyists of big business.

On top of this form of influence peddling, there is a revolving door pattern. One third of Commissioners leaving in 2014 went into industry lobbying jobs.

This lack of democracy explains why People Before Profit is an EU critical party. We reject the Tory Brexit option as it implies a withdrawal from the EU to further strengthen business interests and to stir up racist fears of immigration.

We are internationalists who want a genuinely democratic Europe that can only arise from the struggles of working people across the continent.

In the meantime, we openly assert that the democratic wishes of the Irish people, must take precedence over any bureaucratic directives from Brussels. Specifically, if the Irish electorate vote to re-nationalise energy or the banks, or launch a serious programme of building public housing, then no EU directive can prevent this occurring.

If elected to the EU Parliament, People Before Profit MEPs will.

- **Call for a ban on corporate lobbyists** - we want to clear the money people from the temple of decision making.
- **Expose all the back room manoeuvring** that gives support to the arms industry or big business.
- **Fight for power to the people.** Reject neoliberal authoritarianism and the EU fiscal rules.
- **Assert the primacy of Irish law over EU directives.**



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