

CYM speech at youth rally against Lisbon

7 June 2008

We must use our votes and our voice to oppose the Lisbon Treaty. If passed, its implementation will affect not only us but our 500 million EU fellow-citizens. It is criminal that out of this vast number of people only a mere 4 million people will get to vote. This blatant disregard for our democracy and for public referenda really sets the tone for the Lisbon Treaty itself, which will further erode the already limited democratic processes of the EU.

If we vote yes we will be endorsing the EU's quest to become a world power through increased militarisation. We can already see aspects of this through the involvement of Irish troops in Chad which are being used to prop up a pro-western dictator, regardless of his terrible leadership. Even though Ireland's neutrality is already questionable, we should not support any treaty that will further erode it and possibly lead to Irish soldiers dying on foreign shores for the imperial ambitions of unelected politicians in Brussels.

We called this rally today because we knew that no matter how small it would be, it is still important to make a stand for a principled left-wing vote against the Lisbon Treaty. It is in the interests of all the people of Europe, especially the youth, that we reject this treaty and stand in solidarity with the French and the Dutch, who have already opposed it and have subsequently been silenced.

However, if we do defeat it we must remember that this is only a small victory in what will be a long struggle to oppose the agenda of the EU leaders in Brussels to privatise our public services, overrule our workers' rights and erode our neutrality. Regardless of the result in this referendum, the Connolly Youth Movement will continue to campaign against a Europe of capital and will strive to put forward the ideas of a Europe based around social solidarity, economic equality and anti-imperialism.

Thank you for attending the rally. Vote No!