

inclusion of NGOs in decision-making. Ireland has been one of the countries that has been able to use European assistance to develop into a better country to live in. The Union will continue measures. One of the aims of the EU has been to assist those members states which most need help so as to make the whole of Europe have better opportunities. The right to social and housing assistance is recognised in the Treaty.

One of the 'No' arguments is that the Treaty promotes a free market which will harm poorer countries and only benefit big business.

The Treaty clearly states that the primary aim of EU international relations with developing countries shall be eradicating poverty. The Treaty introduces for the first time a specific legal basis for humanitarian aid. Europe has to cope with a globalised world. Part of this is about balancing big business against trade with poorer countries. A joined-up approach means that Europe can continue to be economically competitive, and at the same time contribute to global development.

Is Europe going to be a 'super state' where Ireland does not count?

All member states retain their right to their own National laws, taxation and foreign policy decisions. Irish people will be able to decide for themselves. The Treaty re-asserts the principle of conferral which provides that the Union shall act "only within the limits of the competences conferred upon it by the member states".

If the Treaty is so good, why are some people against it?

Some Eurosceptics are against all Treaties and against every Referendum. Many oppose all European development and cooperation. The same arguments have appeared time after time. Do you think Europe was a better place before, or do you think Europe has been getting better and better?



The Lisbon Reform Treaty aims to make the European Union more democratic, effective, protective, and socially progressive.

The Treaty will reform European institutions, improve the voting system, bring Europe closer to National Parliaments and give greater clarity to European matters.

Significantly, the Treaty includes the Charter of Fundamental Rights – rights which rule that only States which respect human rights, democracy and the rule of law can join the EU. The Treaty will make the Charter legally binding. This means that our fundamental human rights will be protected along with civil, political and citizen's rights.

Be part of Europe. Vote Yes.

labour.ie/lisbonreformtreaty/

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What's it all about?

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Women ask the questions

In the Labour Party we believe the Treaty is a positive step for Europe. If you know our values, then you know that we trust and know the Treaty to advance those values: democracy, freedom, solidarity, community and equality.

Women understandably have concerns about Europe and the Lisbon Treaty. What will change? If I don't understand the Treaty, is it not better to vote 'No'? If some people think the Treaty is flawed then should I believe them?

Women care about many things. We care about our place in society and the economy, our families, our jobs, the environment, our safety, our future. Labour Women would like to assure you that we believe the Treaty to be of benefit to women, and we will vote Yes.

I value Irish neutrality. I don't want Ireland to become a small part of a European military machine.

Ireland's status as a neutral country is specifically protected in the Treaty. The Irish Army will only be able to take part in foreign military missions with the UN mandate approved by the Irish Government and voted by the Dail ('triple lock'). Ireland will stay neutral and will have full control of its army.

Ireland is a small country. Will we have any say in anything?

The Treaty brings Europe closer to National Parliaments. Our Dail can offer its own opinion and indeed can cause a legislative proposal to be reviewed, amended or withdrawn. We will have our Commissioner on the same basis as everyone else. Ireland will continue to punch above its size.

Everyone is worried about climate change and our environment. Is the Treaty going to do anything about this?

The Treaty makes provision for EU action to combat climate change. One country cannot fight climate change on its own, as we share the wind, the rain, the ocean currents. We need to grapple with this huge challenge together. Europe also has to deal with energy supply and energy security in a coordinated and cooperative way. The Treaty facilitates this cooperation.

The world seems to be more dangerous than ever. How can Europe combat crime?

The Treaty makes decision-making easier in relation to the fight against organised crime and trafficking of women and children and the trade in drugs. Again, Europe has to fight crime together. The Charter of Fundamental Rights prohibits trafficking in human beings and forced or compulsory labour.

Does the Treaty say anything about women?

The Charter of Fundamental Rights states that equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas including employment, work and pay and allows positive action where there is under-representation. The Treaty affirms the common EU value of equality between men and women, which must underpin the activities of all the EU institutions including policy-making and the drawing up of legislation. Work-life balance is enhanced as maternity reasons cannot be grounds for dismissal. The diversity of women of all backgrounds is recognised.

What is in the Treaty for our children?

Our children will be able to live in a Europe which guarantees their human rights. The Charter of Fundamental Rights, incorporated in the Treaty, includes the Rights of the Child where the child's best interests must be a primary consideration. The right to education is protected. Child labour is prohibited. Our children will benefit from the Treaty provisions protecting the provision of public services.

How about social security?

The Treaty provides a clear legal basis for European laws to protect public services. Everyone residing and moving legally in the EU is entitled to social security benefits and social advantages in accordance with Union and national laws. This includes access to preventative health care and the right to benefit from medical treatment. Social services providing protection in cases such as maternity, illness, industrial accidents, dependency or old age, and loss of employment are recognised.

How can Europe fight poverty?

In the Treaty the Union specifically aims to combat social exclusion and poverty. It includes the principle of participatory democracy, and has provisions for the