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Open Europe

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Ryanair boss "less-than-convincing" on Lisbon Treaty answers

The Irish edition of the *Mail* reports that, at the launch of Ryanair's €500,000 campaign for a Yes vote in the second Irish Lisbon Treaty referendum, Ryanair Chief Executive Michael O'Leary gave a "less-than-convincing answer" to a direct question about how the Treaty would expand the single market, although he claimed to have read the Treaty. He said, "I'm not going to get into explaining the European treaty; go read it yourself".

He added that he thought, "Without Europe and the euro, the Irish economy would be run by our incompetent politicians, our inept civil service and the greedy public sector trade union bosses." However, when asked what the effects of a second No vote might be, he said "I don't think we'll get drummed out of the euro."

Meanwhile, the *Irish Independent* reports that the Irish Farmers' Association yesterday launched a campaign for a Yes vote. However, the group was criticised by The Farmers for No group, who said that the Treaty would see Ireland's voting weight in the EU Council of Ministers reduced and would transfer power from the Irish people to EU institutions.

[Irish Independent](#) [Irish Mail](#) [OE blog](#)

Doug Bandow: Democracy doesn't mean drowning out the voices of the people

An op-ed in the *Washington Examiner* by Doug Bandow argues that, "When it comes to the European Union, any vote to increase authority in Brussels is viewed as final. Any vote against consolidating power is treated as merely temporary." He cites an Open Europe poll which found that 75 percent of all Europeans, including a majority in every country, wanted a referendum on any new Treaty transferring powers to the EU from member states. Concerning the second Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, he quotes Open Europe Director Lorraine Mullally saying, "Despite lengthy negotiations and lots of superficial statements about 'respecting' the Irish 'no' vote, not a single comma has changed."

He concludes, "Oxford professor Timothy Garton Ash wrote in the *Guardian* of 'the essential grandeur of this project we call the European Union, where nations born in so much blood work together freely in a commonwealth of democracies.' He is right, but his argument actually works against the Lisbon Treaty, or at least the current ratification process. Democracy doesn't mean drowning out the voices of those who would be forced to live under the government."

[Washington Examiner](#) [Open Europe press release](#)

On her *Mail* blog, Mary Ellen Synon cites Open Europe's findings that EU Commissioners retiring this year can expect to walk away with over £1 million each in pension, transition and resettlement payments.

[Mail: Synon blog](#) [Open Europe press release](#) [OE blog](#)

French PM says France cannot be a net contributor to the EU budget "forever"

At the recent annual gathering of French Ambassadors, Prime Minister Francois Fillon spoke about the French economic situation, and emphasised the fact that, with a rising debt burden, France would not be able to remain one of the main contributors to the EU budget for much longer. He noted that every year, France contributes €19 billion to the EU budget and receives €14 billion back (including CAP subsidies), and said, "Our partners must understand that this position as a top net contributor, along with Germany, will not be able to resist the current tensions in public finances forever."

Meanwhile, in a recent speech, President Nicolas Sarkozy called on the EU to assist with moving out of the downturn, saying, "each time Europe wants to, Europe can, the problem is that Europe doesn't always want to". He also claimed that the second Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty is at the centre of the issue, saying that "10 years of institutional debates could turn into a success".

[Euro Investor](#)[Reuters](#) [America Latina](#)[Le Point](#)[EurActiv](#)[French Foreign Office](#)

Charlemagne: EU actions in the economic crisis have depended on "political will, not treaties"

The *Economist's* Charlemagne column looks at the end of the summer break and return to work of politicians in Brussels and suggests that "there is much chatter about the Lisbon treaty, a proposed set of changes to the EU's rule book that faces a second referendum in Ireland on October 2nd. Yet in this crisis, whether Europe has acted or not has depended on political will, not treaties."

[Economist: Charlemagne](#)

Oxford fellow: Increased German parliamentary involvement not sufficient to resolve EU's democratic deficit