

DEMOCRACY WATCH EUROPEAN COUNCIL VETO: DEFEND THE RIGHT TO VOTE NO

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National sovereignty and independence remain the

only foundations for democratic government.

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The EU elites are determined to abolish member states' power of veto in the European Council—the top body that brings together heads of government. They want to replace it with more qualified majority voting, so that member states would be bound by decisions they did not support. They claim this change is vital to allow the EU to expand further and, in the words of a recent European Parliament resolution, to 'upgrade our democracy.'

Apply the Democracy Watch rule on EU doublespeak, turn their rhetoric on its head, and we get closer to the truth. The campaign to abolish the veto would seriously downgrade democracy in Europe. National sovereignty is the only proven foundation for democratic government. Abolishing the veto would mean EU member states were no longer truly sovereign. They would be subject to the rule of a federal, supra-national Euro-state in key areas, from foreign policy to family law and migration.

This is a transparent attempt by Brussels and the big EU powers to bring conservative and populist governments in Hungary, Poland, and elsewhere to heel. What would be the point of any European nation electing a government, if that government did not have the power to control its own borders and rule its own nation based on the policies for which they voted? National parliaments would be reduced to a puppet show.

The right to vote 'No' in the Council must be fundamental in any free association of nations. Otherwise we really would be dealing with a pseudo-empire, governed by central decree. As one authoritative report [puts it](#), "the veto power still held on 'existential' questions by national governments in the European Council amounts to an essential protection for sovereign national democracies. The demonisation of the veto is in effect a demonisation of the very idea of national interests and of national sovereignty."

That demonisation campaign is now being promoted from the biggest political pulpits in the EU. Barely a week passes without another boost for the crusade to abolish the veto. And each time the true aims become clearer. This week an expert commission, led by the German and French ministers of European affairs, declared that the further expansion of the EU by 2030, to include Ukraine and Balkan states, is essential for “geo-political” reasons. But this expansion cannot happen, they declared, without scrapping the need for unanimous votes in the Council.

The same message was echoed last week, in a major report by the Centre for European Studies think-tank. It warned that abolishing the veto to facilitate the West Balkan states joining the EU is vital to counter a “dangerous external influence and power play in the region.” They meant Russian and possibly Chinese interference. Some EU members could be forgiven for seeing another dangerous external power play in Europe—the bid by Brussels and the Franco-German axis to exert more control over their borders and internal affairs.

But, supporters of majority voting might say, why should we bow to the ‘tyranny of the minority’ on the European Council? After all, it is surely necessary for any democracy to have “losers’ consent,” where the minority accepts the will of the majority. This is the argument advanced by an arch Euro-federalist such as Belgian MEP Guy Verhofstadt, who protests that, “Virtually everything that matters to Europeans is subject to veto by one government or another. Our sovereignty is handicapped by our own outdated rules.”

But the key question is: whose sovereignty? Contrary to the assertions of Guy de Brussels, the European Union is not a sovereign body, but an association of sovereign nation states. National sovereignty is the only basis on which democracy has ever come close to working. Anything that seeks to override the nation state, with notions of ‘Europe-wide democracy,’ means shifting power away from the peoples of Europe’s nations towards unaccountable supra-national bodies such as the European Commission.

Forget fantasy talk of EU sovereignty; abolishing the veto in the European Council would mean the real sovereignty of nation-states being further ‘handicapped’ by Brussels; and

would allow the EU to impose their version of 'everything that matters to Europeans,' regardless of what actual Europeans might want.

Even with the veto intact, the European Council is a problem for democracy. Yes, it brings together the elected heads of government. But once they enter the Council chamber they are transformed from the representatives of nation states to 'member states,' primarily responsible not to their electorates but to the Council. There is no official public record of what is said; all we see are the inevitable photo-op of assembled leaders, and the final statement called Council Conclusions. Drawn up by the secrecy-obsessed civil servants of the Brussels bureaucracy, this document binds governments to what has been agreed, regardless of what happens in their domestic politics or elections between meetings.

The abolition of the veto in the Council would make matters much worse, removing the key opportunity for elected governments to stand up for their nations' independent 'existential interests' on anything from sanctions on Russia to sex education in schools. The veto abolitionists make no secret about who they are targeting- the conservative governments of Hungary and Poland and anybody else who would join them in rejecting the imposition of EU rules on migration, foreign policy, or family law.

It might seem reasonable to ask how they could succeed in abolishing the veto? After all, so long as governments who believe in national sovereignty are sitting in the Council, surely they could, well, veto any such proposal? But we would be unwise to underestimate the lengths to which the EU's veto-phobics will go. Just look at the story, reported by The European Conservative this week, of how Germany and France [have allegedly plotted](#) to bring down Poland's national populist Law and Justice government, offering Ukraine fast-track EU membership in return for joining their secret scheme.

The EU powers will interfere in forthcoming national elections in Slovakia, Poland, and elsewhere to try to ensure the 'right' result and change the complexion of the European Council. They will sacrifice any principle to advance their centralising mission. In response, anybody who believes in a Europe of sovereign nation needs to stand up for the veto and say yes to the right to vote no.