Ireland ‘No’ vote plunges EU into crisis

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0806/080614-european_union.html

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14th June, 2008
The people of Ireland have rejected the European Union’s reform treaty in a referendum and plunged the EU into crisis. The Irish delivered a Friday the 13th bad omen to European integration. All 27 countries needed to agree to the Lisbon Treaty in order for it to come into force. Ireland represents less than one per cent of the EU population, but their ‘no’ vote meant it was back to the drawing board for the whole of the EU. The treaty was supposed to replace the constitution, give the EU stronger leadership and allow streamlining reforms to take place more quickly. It took many years to draw up and just a few hours to vote into the trash can of history. The ‘no’ vote also highlights how unpopular the EU is to its citizens. Three years ago, the French and Dutch voted to reject the EU constitution.

Other European countries are now debating how to progress in the wake of the Treaty’s collapse. Britain, France and Germany are keen to somehow ratify the treaty through backdoor legal means. France takes over the EU Presidency on July 1st and President Sarkozy will now need all his diplomatic skills to paper over the cracks that are appearing in Euroland. France’s foreign minister Bernard Kouchner warned Ireland last Monday that it would be a bad idea to vote no. He said: “We would not be able to count on the Irish who counted a lot on Europe’s money.” He was referring to the millions of Euros the EU has given Ireland to turn it into a booming economy. There will now be considerable pressure on Dublin to find a workable solution that will allow the reforms to go ahead.
WARM-UPS

1. **EUROPEAN UNION:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about the European Union. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your partner(s) and share your findings.

2. **CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

   rejection / referendum / crisis / EU population / constitution / reforms / trash can / debating / collapse / diplomatic skills / booming economy / pressure / solution

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. **REFERENDUM:** Would you like a greater say in your country’s affairs? With your partner(s), discuss your ideas on how you would vote in the referenda below. Write your ideas in the table. Change partners and share your ideas. Have your own class referenda.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referendum on</th>
<th>How would you vote?</th>
<th>Why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Going to war</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terror-related laws</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling of national companies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of national sports coaches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing interest rates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting immigration levels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **TREATY:** Rank these countries: 10 = my country would hugely benefit from a treaty with this country; 1 = there would be no benefits whatsoever having a benefit with this country. Share, explain and discuss your rankings with your class.

   _____ Ireland  _____ Afghanistan  _____ USA  _____ Zimbabwe  _____ China  _____ Brazil  a #1 ________________  a #1 ________________

5. **HEADLINE PREDICTION:** With your partner(s), use the words in the “Chat” activity above to predict what the news article will be about. Once you have your story, change partners and share them. Who was closest to the real story?

6. **TREATY:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word ‘treaty’. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.
1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article’s headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

   a. A vote by the Irish on an EU treaty has caused trouble in EU politics.  T / F
   b. Just over two per cent of the EU population is Irish.  T / F
   c. Politicians started writing the Lisbon Treaty in Lisbon last August.  T / F
   d. The Irish are the first EU citizens to vote ‘no’ in an EU referendum.  T / F
   e. Other EU countries are now debating whether or not to leave the EU.  T / F
   f. The French president will need to do some wallpapering in July.  T / F
   g. The French foreign minister said the Irish always counted their money.  T / F
   h. Now Ireland has voted, the pressure is off for Irish politicians.  T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

   1. rejected  a. sign
   2. plunged  b. proceed
   3. omen  c. create
   4. the drawing board  d. descended
   5. draw up  e. following
   6. in the wake of  f. cover
   7. ratify  g. square one
   8. paper over  h. rely on
   9. count on  i. given the thumbs down to
   10. go ahead  j. accept

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

   1. a Friday the 13th bad  a. for it to come into force
   2. agree to the Lisbon Treaty in order  b. of the Treaty’s collapse
   3. back to the drawing  c. unpopular the EU is
   4. allow streamlining reforms to take  d. the cracks
   5. The ‘no’ vote also highlights how  e. economy
   6. in the wake  f. board
   7. paper over  g. solution
   8. We would not be able to count  h. place more quickly
   9. turn it into a booming  i. omen
   10. find a workable  j. on the Irish
WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The people of Ireland have ________ the European Union’s reform treaty in a referendum and plunged the EU into crisis. The Irish ________ a Friday the 13th bad omen to European integration. All 27 countries needed to agree to the Lisbon Treaty in ________ for it to come into force. Ireland represents less than one per cent of the EU population, but their ‘no’ vote ________ it was back to the drawing board for the whole of the EU. The treaty was supposed to ________ the constitution, give the EU stronger leadership and ________ streamlining reforms to take place more quickly. It took many years to draw up and just a few hours to vote into the trash can of _________. The ‘no’ vote also highlights how unpopular the EU is to its citizens. Three years ago, the French and Dutch ________ to reject the EU constitution.

Other European countries are now debating how to ________ in the wake of the Treaty’s collapse. Britain, France and Germany are keen to ________ ratify the treaty through backdoor legal means. France ________ over the EU Presidency on July 1st and President Sarkozy will now need all his diplomatic skills to paper over the ________ that are appearing in Euroland. France’s foreign minister Bernard Kouchner ________ Ireland last Monday that it would be a bad idea to vote no. He said: “We would not be able to ________ on the Irish who counted a lot on Europe’s money.” He was referring to the millions of Euros the EU has given Ireland to turn it into a ________ economy. There will now be considerable pressure on Dublin to find a workable ________ that will allow the reforms to go ahead.
LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

The people of Ireland ______________ European Union’s reform treaty in a referendum and plunged ______________. The Irish delivered a Friday the 13th bad omen to European integration. All 27 countries needed to agree to the Lisbon Treaty in ______________ come into force. Ireland represents less than one per cent of the EU population, but their ‘no’ vote meant it was back to the drawing board ______________ EU. The treaty was supposed to replace the constitution, give the EU stronger leadership and allow streamlining reforms ______________ quickly. It took many years to draw up and just a few hours ______________ trash can of history. The ‘no’ vote also highlights how unpopular the EU is to its citizens. Three years ago, the French and Dutch ______________ EU constitution.

Other European countries are now debating how ______________ wake of the Treaty’s collapse. Britain, France and Germany are ______________ ratify the treaty through backdoor legal means. France takes over the EU Presidency on July 1st and President Sarkozy will now need all his diplomatic skills to ______________ that are appearing in Euroland. France’s foreign minister Bernard Kouchner warned Ireland last Monday that it would ______________ vote no. He said: “We would not ______________ the Irish who counted a lot on Europe’s money.” He was ______________ millions of Euros the EU has given Ireland to turn it into a booming economy. There will now be considerable pressure on Dublin to ______________ that will allow the reforms to go ahead.
AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'reform' and 'treaty'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>reform</th>
<th>treaty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.
- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>people</th>
<th>wake</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bad</td>
<td>legal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>order</td>
<td>paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>allow</td>
<td>idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trash</td>
<td>count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>highlights</td>
<td>ahead</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### STUDENT EUROPEAN UNION SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about the European Union in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>STUDENT 1</th>
<th>STUDENT 2</th>
<th>STUDENT 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q.1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q.5.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.
EUROPEAN UNION DISCUSSION

STUDENT A’s QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

a) What did you think when you read the headline?
b) What springs to mind when you hear the term ‘European Union’?
c) What do you think of Ireland voting no?
d) Do you think people in other EU countries will be angry with the Irish?
e) How deep is the EU crisis in the wake of Ireland’s rejection?
f) Do you think this is a good example of “the little guy” having a say?
g) Is it right that a country with less than one percent of the EU population can destroy such an important treaty?
h) Do you think the EU needs to be reformed?
i) Do you think this no vote makes the EU weaker in the world?
j) Do you think all EU citizens should vote in their own referendum?

EUROPEAN UNION DISCUSSION

STUDENT B’s QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

a) Did you like reading this article?
b) Do you think the Lisbon Treaty is now dead in the water?
c) If larger EU countries continue to try and ratify the treaty, does this mean they don’t care about the Irish vote?
d) Do you think President Sarkozy can paper over the cracks?
e) Do you think the EU will integrate more or less in the future?
f) Should the Irish have been happy with how the EU has improved their country and voted ‘yes’?
g) Does your country have any international treaties you don’t agree?
h) What do you think will happen to the Lisbon Treaty from now?
i) What questions would you like to ask President Sarkozy?
j) Did you like this discussion on the European Union?
The people of Ireland have rejected the European Union’s reform treaty in a referendum and (1) plunged the EU into crisis. The Irish delivered a Friday the 13th bad omen to European integration. All 27 countries needed to agree (2) by the Lisbon Treaty in order for it to come into (3) force. Ireland represents less than one per cent of the EU population, but their ‘no’ vote meant it was (4) down to the drawing board for the whole of the EU. The treaty was supposed to replace the constitution, give the EU stronger leadership and (5) allowing streamlining reforms to take place more quickly. It took many years to draw (6) up and just a few hours to vote into the trash can of history. The ‘no’ vote also highlights how unpopular the EU is to its citizens. Three years ago, the French and Dutch voted to reject the EU constitution.

Other European countries are now debating how to progress in the (7) wake of the Treaty’s collapse. Britain, France and Germany are keen to somehow ratify the treaty through backdoor legal (8) means. France takes over the EU Presidency on July 1st and President Sarkozy will now need all his diplomatic skills to paper over the (9) cracks that are appearing in Euroland. France’s foreign minister Bernard Kouchner warned Ireland last Monday that it would be a bad idea to vote no. He said: “We would not be able to (10) sum on the Irish who counted a lot on Europe’s money.” He was referring to the millions of Euros the EU has given Ireland to turn it (11) into a booming economy. There will now be considerable pressure on Dublin to find a workable (12) solution that will allow the reforms to go ahead.
WRITING:
Write about the European Union for 10 minutes. Correct your partner’s paper.
HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google’s search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about the effects of the Irish ‘No’ vote. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. EU: Make a poster about the different EU countries and what they get out of the EU. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. CRACKS: Write a magazine article about Ireland’s ‘No’ vote. Include imaginary interviews with French President Sarkozy and an Irish person who voted no. What do they think of the EU’s future?

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to President Sarkozy. Ask him three questions about what he will do in Europe over the six months of the French presidency of the EU. Give him three pieces of advice on what he should do paper over the cracks. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.
Ireland 'No' vote plunges EU into crisis

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