

# Opponents of 'Lisbon Monster' Take to the Streets

In a countdown towards the scheduled April 9 parliamentary ratification vote on the Lisbon Treaty, dubbed by Helga Zepp-LaRouche the "Lisbon Monster," the citizens' initiative group Rettet Österreich (Save Austria) mobilized 10,000 people in Vienna, on March 29, to turn out in favor of a popular referendum on the Treaty.

After the crowd had marched peacefully from the Staatsoper in the center of Vienna to St. Stephen's Cathedral, a number of university professors addressed the demonstration on the implications of the new European Union Treaty. Prof. Hans Peter Aubauer from the University of Vienna stated that the Treaty "will end democracy in Austria, the freedom of doing politics in the interests of Austrians. Decisions regarding our destiny and future will then be decided by politicians who have not been democratically legitimized, and who cannot be voted out. Because our politicians are afraid that we will not choose to get rid of democracy, they do not risk a referendum. They abolish our democracy without our approval."

Simultaneously, LaRouche Youth Movement (LYM) organizers in France, Germany, and Italy, and a number of Citizen Initiatives from the left-to-right political spectrum held similar demonstrations. The rally in Milan drew support from two national politicians, Sen. Lidia Menapace (see the March 28 *EIR*) and Alfonso Gianni, Undersecretary for Economic Development in the outgoing Prodi government (see below).

The response from the citizens met on the streets has been very strong, with hundreds of signatures being gathered every day in support of a referendum. It is precisely for this reason that the Treaty's drafters determined to basically keep it secret, knowing that public disclosure of its destruction of national sovereignty would lead to rejection. LYM members have called their campaign "Operation Dracula," since, as in the case of Dracula, exposing the Treaty to the light will destroy it.

## Parliaments Are Capitulating

The popular action is required in the face of the near-total capitulation of the parliaments throughout Europe, seven of which have already ratified the Treaty. Despite a flurry of opposition from the conservatives in the Polish Parliament, the lower house, the Sejm, ratified the Lisbon blueprint for a European dictatorship by a vote of 384 to 56 on April 1. The government achieved this victory by throwing a bone to the opposition, an amendment asserting that "ultimately" Poland's sovereignty will always supersede the Treaty.

Many Treaty opponents are pinning their hopes of defeating the supranational dictatorship on Ireland, which, by law, must have a referendum. As Helga Zepp-LaRouche pointed out in her interview with leading Danish Treaty opponent Jens-Peter Bonde (see the April 4 *EIR*), "Don't you think it's a little bit worrisome to leave the whole fate of all of Europe to Ireland?"



EIRNS/Elisabeth Neudecker

Thousands of protestors demonstrated in Vienna, Austria on March 29, calling for a popular referendum against the "Lisbon Monster." Here, members of the German BüSo (Civil Rights Solidarity party) organize in Heidelberg against the Treaty on the same day.

There are other isolated indications of resistance, including discussion in France of attempting to reopen the matter, which the government rammed through the Parliament with dubious legality. In Germany, the ÖDP (Ecological Democratic Party) filed a lawsuit in the Constitutional Court on March 27, challenging the Treaty as being incompatible with German Basic Law (Constitution), making it the second such lawsuit, after that of Christian Democratic parliamentarian, Prof. Peter Gauweiler.

Leadership of the anti-Lisbon drive, however, falls to the LaRouche political movement, which is concentrating on mobilizing forces in every European nation to take action to stop what would be a disastrous step toward world war, as well as dictatorship. Among the anti-Treaty activities underway, is the circulation of critiques by leading opponents internationally, of which we present another here below.

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## Interview: Harry van Bommel

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# Treaty Would Deprive Nations of Veto Right

*Mr. van Bommel is a member of the Parliament of the Netherlands, and the foreign policy specialist of the Socialist Party, which is the country's third party and is currently leading the opposition in Parliament. Dean Andromidas interviewed him on March 26, 2008.*



Govert de Roos

**EIR:** I understand you were the leader of the “no” vote during the referendum of 2005 in the Netherlands, which led to the defeat of the European Constitution. Could you tell us about your party’s role in that campaign?

**van Bommel:** In the Netherlands we have two political groups; they are really streams, because there are more political parties on the left and the right that are against Europe federalizing at a quick speed. And of all the parties campaigning against the treaty, we were the biggest party, the best organized party. We have a long tradition of campaigning at all levels—local, national, and international. And we were able to organize all our branches throughout the country to play a role in a national campaign, first to inform the people what the

treaty was about, and second to get people out to vote, and to vote “no.” As a socialist party, people did not immediately expect us to be against this treaty, but we were able to prove that this Europe [which would result from the treaty] is the Europe that is wanted by the multinationals, who think that the market is the only way to achieve things; and we showed that this constitutional treaty was a neo-liberal product in itself, leading to an undemocratic superstate, leading to a militarizing Europe, and a Europe where especially the smaller states have far less of a role to play. Those arguments, all together, made many people interested in what the treaty was about, and gave them the opportunity to get more information. More information in many instances leads to a “no,” when it comes to European treaties.

We were the only party on the left [opposing the treaty]. On the right side was Wilders,<sup>1</sup> who is now in the news with his film. He was very much against the treaty, because it would give Turkey, after accession to the EU, more influence in Europe. That was one of his main reasons. Also smaller Christian parties were against the treaty, because they do not want Europe to become a federal state. And they acknowledged, just as we did, that this treaty was taking a big step towards a federal Europe.

**EIR:** Your party is now leading a campaign to hold a national referendum on the treaty.

**van Bommel:** Our activists have been trying to collect signatures. But I have to be honest, that it’s not right now at the top of the agenda of the general public in the Netherlands. Maybe that is because our government has been very successful in depoliticizing the debate on the treaty, by saying, “No, it is not a constitution anymore,” and, “We got what we wanted” and “There is not much left of the old treaty,” which is all a pack of lies. But it does give the coalition parties the possibility to kill all attempts to have a debate. Nonetheless, we will have more debate when ratification comes closer, and in order to have the political possibility of a referendum, we, together with a couple of other political parties, prepared a bill for Parliament, which will be taken up, I think, within two months or so. So we tried it at both ends; the political end and the public end, by writing articles, by having public debates, by collecting signatures.

## Impact of the Financial Crisis

**EIR:** We are experiencing the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. We are clearly in a systemic crisis, where the collapse of the current international financial system can only be resolved through national governments establishing a new system, along the lines of the New Bretton Woods system. As the economic crisis deepens, do you think

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1. The Islamophobe Geert Wilders is the leader of the Dutch Freedom Party, which has campaigned against immigration. He produced a 15-minute film, “Fitna,” which is an attack on Islam.