**Peace and Neutrality Alliance**

Comhaontas Na Neodrachta Agus Síochána

The Letters Editor,

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EU dictates Irish foreign policy on Venezuela

The Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney TD stated that, along with other EU countries he supports Mr Guaido, president of the National Assembly, "in order for him to call for free, fair and democratic presidential elections".

More than 300 international representatives/monitors were present for Venezuela’s May 20 presidential vote, and their voting system has been classified as one of, if not the most, secure and transparent in the world according former United States president Jimmy Carter.

Divisions over Venezuela emerged at the recent informal meeting of EU foreign ministers in Bucharest, with a noticeable split in NATO members, most pushing to recognise Guaido, whilst Italy and Greece demanded a more cautious line. Foreign policy positions require the unanimous support of all 28 EU countries, so Italy's veto upset German conservative Manfred Weber who believes the EU response to or fudge on Venezuela is 'a tragedy'. Weber was nominated last November as the European People's Party's (EPP) candidate to replace Jean-Claude Juncker as European Commission president. He has stated his opposition to the current unanimity system on foreign policy and wants this changed to a majority vote system.

Fine Gael MEPs, who are members of the EPP support this change in allowing the EU to dictate foreign policy, and should the Irish electorate raise concerns about Irish neutrality or plans for a European Army, they can just wash their hands, blame Brussels, or suggest let’s not upset the position agreed by other EU countries.

Yours,

Roger Cole, Chairperson,

Peace and Neutrality Alliance,

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