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**Ireland's anti-nuclear stance under threat as EU pushes for nuclear energy
as a solution to climate change.**

Campaigners against the Lisbon Treaty have raised concerns about Ireland's anti-nuclear stance following calls by the EU's Energy Commissioner for nuclear energy to play a significant role in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Europe and his claim that the industry's expansion will help deliver the bloc's energy needs at a time of 'persistently high' oil prices.

Speaking at the European Nuclear Assembly in Brussels yesterday, the EU Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs said, 'Nuclear energy makes an important contribution to our fight against climate change and our security of energy supply'.

Spokesperson for the People's Movement, former Green MEP and anti-nuclear campaigner, Patricia McKenna warned today that the EU's support for the nuclear industry coupled with the need to tackle climate change could result in a rapid growth in nuclear power within the EU. She said that the Lisbon Treaty contains a legally binding Protocol which commits all member states, including Ireland, to support the Euratom Treaty which is designed to 'create the conditions necessary for the speedy establishment and growth of the nuclear industries'.

Ireland and the taxpayer, despite being opposed to nuclear power, could end up financing this growth because the Euratom Treaty commits all member states to supporting the principle of 'facilitating investment to develop nuclear energy'. Britain and France are already planning more nuclear power stations and if the Lisbon Treaty comes into effect it will provide a major boost to their plans.

Commissioner Piebalgs argues that the EU needs substantial investments in order to replace its ageing power plants. McKenna said: 'This clearly implies investment by all member states including Ireland and as we have no opt-out on the matter we will have to pay our share in such investments'.

The EU Commissioner acknowledged that nuclear energy remains controversial in several member states and that the commission has only recently started to speak out so strongly in favour of it. The commissioner called on ‘public authorities in member states to introduce safety regulations that would ensure public acceptance, but that at the same time would not endanger investment’.

However, Ms McKenna said his emphasis on protecting investment indicates that safety regulations would not take priority over financial matters.

Ms McKenna called on the Government to make a statement on the implications for Ireland of the Euratom Protocol included in the Lisbon Treaty and said that it has already been criticised by the current Minister for the Environment when it was agreed at the Convention on Europe which drafted the original EU Constitution.

‘This Protocol still remains intact and unchanged in the Lisbon Treaty and any concerns that were voiced prior to the formation of the current government are still valid and the Irish public, who by and large are opposed to nuclear power, deserve to know the truth’ she concluded

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