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VIEWS OF ANTI-LISBON CAMPAIGNERS SUPPRESSED

Former Green MEP Patricia McKenna claims the Government is in a state of denial over the results of the Lisbon Treaty referendum and is determined to suppress the voice of those opposed to the treaty.

McKenna, who is chairperson of the People's Movement, was reacting to reports in today's media that plans for the French president Nicolas Sarkozy to meet in public with anti-Lisbon Treaty campaigners have been scrapped. She said "Scrapping such a move raises serious concerns about the Government's commitment to listen to the people and to respect the result of the Lisbon referendum. It also displays a fear of public debate that would allow Mr. Sarkozy hear the views of the No side and allow the Irish people hear his reaction to those views."

She said "the Government's failure to make contact with any of the No groups since the referendum indicates an unwillingness to engage in genuine debate". She said, "reports in today's media that 'the Government had been strongly opposed to the idea of a National Forum on Europe-type meeting from the beginning, believing it would grant the No side unreasonable prominence' clearly demonstrates that the Government is still in a state of denial about the result. The reality is that the No side are already prominent by virtue of the fact they the won the referendum and no amount of suppression, spin doctoring or censorship will alter that fact."

The former MEP also questioned the claim by the French president that he wanted "to listen" to the views of the No side during his visit to Ireland. She said "Mr. Sarkozy's private remarks earlier this week when he told French MPs that Ireland would have to vote again indicates that he already has his mind made up. However, this comes as no surprise from a man who publicly admits that his own people would reject Lisbon again if they were given the chance to vote on it."

“President Sarkozy was elected on a promise that he would deliver a slimmed down mini-version of the EU Constitution to his people. Instead they got a treaty that is over seven thousand words longer; admittedly it is over 50 pages shorter, because the font size was reduced and the line spacing removed. Although he did not promise the French people a referendum, he did promise them a mini-treaty, which he failed to deliver and now denies them the right to vote on this treaty because they would say NO.”

“Perhaps President Sarkozy would be better to focus on getting his own house in order before he starts dictating to the Irish people. As the current president of the EU he should be using the rejection of Lisbon to push for a full public debate on Europe’s future where the views and concerns of real people take centre stage” concluded McKenna.

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