

25/08/2008

Roche exposes government's real plans on Lisbon Treaty

Leading anti-Lisbon group the People's Movement says the government's secret plans on Lisbon have been exposed by Minister for European Affairs Dick Roche and that his assertion that a new referendum on the Lisbon Treaty will be necessary displays the most accurate picture yet of how the government intends to address the rejection of the Lisbon Treaty by voters earlier this year.

The chairperson of the People's Movement and former Green Party MEP, Patricia McKenna, said today: 'Minister Roche's comments that a second Lisbon referendum was needed has confirmed the public's fear that the government, despite claims that it would respect the result of the Lisbon referendum, intends to re-run the Lisbon vote when the time is right and an effective pro-treaty marketing strategy has been put in place. While the government claims it will make no decision on this matter until after its detailed analysis of the referendum defeat has been completed and considered, it is clear that it intends using the findings of this research to present to the public with the same rejected treaty dressed up as something new. The words of Giscard d'Estaing come to mind: "Public opinion will be led to adopt, without knowing it, the proposals that we dare not present to them directly ... All the earlier proposals will be in the new text, but will be hidden and disguised in some way."'

Ms McKenna said: 'Irish people must not allow our government treat us with such contempt our politicians must respect their constitutional duty and obey the sovereign will of the voters'. McKenna called on the leaders of the Progressive Democrats and the Green Party to make a public statement on this matter and declare their position in relation to a second referendum. 'The people are fed up with politicians avoiding giving answers' she said, 'it's time for openness and honesty in politics. Prior to the result of the referendum Minister Roche claimed that there would be no second vote if we said "No" but now in typical Fianna Fáil fashion he is renegeing on that position.'

Ms McKenna also raised concern about the publicly-funded analysis of the referendum which she claimed was a 'secret survey'. She said: "the government is using taxpayers' money to mount an extensive confidential poll to "clarify the reasons underlying the referendum result" but intend withholding the results from the public'. She said that 'despite repeated calls the government has refused to state if it will make the findings of this research public as soon as it is available.'

'To withhold the findings of this research from the people who are paying for it is unjustifiable and implies the government intends using the information to circumvent the will of the people it's elected to serve. Both Minister Gormley and Minister Harney must make their position clear on this issue and state whether or not they will ensure that the public's democratic right to access to information they have paid for will be respected', McKenna concluded.

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