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Supposedly 'hard fight' by Ireland to secure guarantees on Lisbon Treaty – a clever tactic to mislead voters, says McKenna

Speaking on the assurances obtained by the Irish government on the Lisbon Treaty in Dublin today, Patricia McKenna, chairperson of the People's Movement, one of the leading groups campaigning for rejection of the treaty, said: "the so-called legally binding guarantees which the government claim they fought hard to secure do not change one single aspect of the Lisbon Treaty all they do is reiterate the same assurances given by EU heads of government during the first referendum. These assurances given by the Yes side were not enough to convince people to vote in favour of the treaty first time around and will be dismissed by the voters with the same mistrust in any second referendum."

McKenna, who was speaking at a joint press conference with the Peace and Neutrality Alliance, went on to say:

"Not one single word of the Lisbon Treaty will be altered by these guarantees, which is why they do not need to be ratified by the national parliaments of the 27 member states. The so called 'legal guarantees' are nothing more than an interpretation by EU heads of government as to what they think the Lisbon Treaty means. However, if the Lisbon Treaty comes into force, it will be the EU Court of Justice in Luxembourg which will interpret Lisbon. The EU court is the only body authorised under the European treaties to interpret the treaties themselves and decide how they should be applied. The political decision and agreement of a particular group of EU prime ministers and presidents, which is what we are being presented with, cannot and will not decide what Lisbon means.

The 'decision' of the European Council that certain provisions of the Lisbon Treaty mean specific things is just an agreement between 27 heads of government as to what they believe to be the case. This 'decision' is not an international treaty between states because it does not require and will not go through the ratification process of all 27 member states through approval in their national parliaments. This is the normal process for ratifying international treaties and it is clear that without such a legally binding ratification process the 'legal guarantees' do not have this legal status.

The run-up to and presentation of these so-called legal guarantees is a deliberate attempt to divert attention away from the contents of the Lisbon Treaty which will remain unchanged in a second referendum. The hype surrounding the supposedly hard fight that the Irish government faced to secure these guarantees is a clever way of getting people to believe that Ireland, after a long struggle, managed to achieve something. But all they have achieved is a regurgitation of the Yes side's arguments endorsed by the EU heads of government.

Even promises of ‘protocols’ at a future date are irrelevant because once the new EU established under Lisbon comes into force then no protocol can pull back from what Lisbon has established and it will be the EU Court of Justice that will decide what the Treaty means once it comes into force.”

[ENDS]

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