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Referendum Commission accused of bias

One of the leading groups campaigning against ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, the People's Movement, has accused the Referendum Commission of being biased in its approach to the Lisbon Treaty debate.

Reacting to a Referendum Commission booklet distributed to homes throughout the country today the chairperson of the People's Movement, former MEP Patricia McKenna, said "the content and tenor of this so-called guide to the Lisbon Treaty is clearly designed to allay people's concerns and to secure a 'Yes' vote in the forthcoming referendum. The booklet in some areas is misleading, in others selective and overall toes the line of those advocating a 'Yes' vote."

She said that: "While the guide, which has been distributed at taxpayer expense to every house in the state, does not openly advocate a 'Yes' vote it has nevertheless been cleverly designed to do exactly that. It is most regrettable that a body set up initially to give balanced and impartial information to the public has now become a tool for the yes side."

She went on to say: "Over the weekend our organization will be seeking the advice of legal experts and we will be producing a critique of this document which appears to fly in the face of the principles established by the Supreme Court that taxpayers' money should not be used to influence the outcome of referendum."

"Quite frankly, it appears that Irish citizens would be better off without the Referendum Commission if it cannot act in an impartial and non-partisan fashion. The public currently believes that the information coming from this body is not designed to influence their decision but this is not the case and therefore is even more dangerous than blatant Yes propaganda – at least the voter can see that for what it is" concluded McKenna.

[ENDS]

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