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Polls heavily influenced by media exposure of 'Yes' side – McKenna

According to Patricia McKenna, chairperson of the People's Movement which is campaigning against ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, the lack of fair and balanced coverage in the media has a role to play in the apparent growing support for the 'Yes' side. McKenna said today: "The Red C poll in today's *Sunday Business Post*, which puts the 'Yes' side at 62%, the 'No' side at 23% and the 'don't knows' at 15%, reflects the percentage of print media coverage that both sides have been receiving so far in this referendum campaign."

Recently the Mediamarket – part of TNS Media Intelligence – produced an analysis which took place between August 31st and September 6th, which shows that 'Yes' campaigners for Lisbon 2 are getting 51% of the national daily and Sunday newspaper coverage, compared to 24% for the 'No' campaign groups.

McKenna went on to say that it was not just a case of media coverage itself but also the type of coverage that is afforded each side. As an example of what she claims is a biased approach on the Lisbon debate in some sections of the print media McKenna highlighted the *Irish Times*. She said: "Some sections of the print media are particularly partisan. For example the *Irish Times* in its Saturday edition carried six articles – three on the 'Yes' side of the Lisbon debate and three on the 'No' side. But their approach to both sides was noticeably and unashamedly different. The 'Yes' side's articles were written without any attempt to get the views of those on the 'No' side while the 'No' side's articles were written with constant rebuttals throughout from those on the 'Yes' side." This has been the consistent approach of the *Irish Times* to the Lisbon Treaty debate – they report the 'Yes' side unchallenged but will only quote the 'No' side when it is accompanied by a rebuff. Surely this cannot be passed off as objective journalism with both sides being treated in an entirely different fashion?"

She added: "The same edition carried no less than five opinion pieces advocating a 'Yes' vote, one opinion piece that was undecided, and no opinion whatsoever from the 'No' side. This is totally unacceptable in the run up to a vote where the readers themselves have the final say."

"So it's no surprise that the 'Yes' side is gaining ground for the moment. But the situation was similar last time around and the 'No' side won out in the end despite being at a serious disadvantage regarding media coverage" concluded McKenna.

[ENDS]

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