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New EU embassies a threat to Ireland's international identity

The EU's conversion of 54 of its foreign delegations into embassy-type missions authorized to speak on behalf of the entire EU has been strongly criticized by the People's Movement. In a statement today, the organization's chairperson, former MEP Patricia McKenna, claimed that the establishment of these EU embassies would threaten Ireland's unique independent identity at an international level.

McKenna said: 'This move follows the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty which provides for the creation of a new EU diplomatic corps as one of its main provisions. It is a monumental step towards a single EU state that will speak on behalf of all member states and it will lead to a significant downgrading of our own national embassies and eventually wipe out Ireland's unique independent identity at an international level.'

The former MEP has called on the government to examine the economic wisdom of continuing to fund embassies at Irish taxpayers' expense in countries where we will now, in effect, have EU embassies representing us. She said: 'Considering that the EU now has embassies in and will be speaking on our behalf in countries where Irish embassies already exist the government needs to examine whether some of these embassies can be justified in the long term'.

'In effect, the EU's new embassies will now be representing Ireland in 54 countries around the world including Norway, Switzerland, China, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nigeria and South Africa. Ireland currently has national embassies in all these countries and if the status of these embassies is reduced or downgraded as they compete with EU embassies then the taxpayer will want to know if they are justified. At the upcoming summit in China in mid-March Ireland will not have independent representation but will instead be represented by the new EU ambassador.'

'The conflict between national representatives and EU representatives was already exposed at the recent EU summit when, for the first time in the EU's history, national ministers were not allowed attend. The government needs to adopt an honest approach to EU issues and address the consequences of adopting common EU policies including a common EU foreign policy' she concluded.

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