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Calls for government to state Ireland's position on strengthening EU's links with NATO

Reacting to today's controversial European summit in Brussels which will be seeking to strengthen EU links with the nuclear-armed military alliance NATO, the People's Movement, which held a lunchtime protest at the European Parliament offices in Dublin to coincide with the summit, called on the government to give a clear and unambiguous statement on Ireland's position on this issue.

Taoiseach Brian Cowen who is attending the summit in Brussels will, along with other EU leaders, be asking the Union's foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton, to explore ways of strengthening links between the Union and the military alliance.

The People's Movement, which campaigned against the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty last year because of the military implications, has strongly criticised the Fianna Fáil/Green government for supporting such an initiative.

'How can any government which claims to respect Ireland's traditional policy of military neutrality go along with such an agenda? Any effort to strengthen NATO via closer cooperation with the EU increases the potential for international conflicts. Furthermore it flies in the face of the claims made during the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign that the militarization of the EU was not an issue and that organizations like our own were misleading the voters.'

'It is clear that this development will lead to a further militarization of the EU's foreign policy and it will increase the tendency to use military force in conflict situations.'

'The silence of the Green Party, which has repeatedly played the peace and neutrality card in the past for electoral gain, is particularly cynical.'

Ends.

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