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GROUP CALLS FOR REJECTION OF THE RE-NAMED EU CONSTITUTION

At a press conference in Dublin today to mark the signing of the re-named EU constitution by EU heads of State in Lisbon, the People's Movement, an Irish organization set up after the Nice Treaty referendums, strongly criticised what they called the 'sheer arrogance and disregard' shown by political leaders throughout the EU for the wishes of the voters. Speaking on behalf of the People's Movement, former Green Party MEP, **Patricia McKenna** said that, The People's Movement would be playing a major role in the forthcoming referendum and would be striving to ensure that Irish people are not bullied into submission by the powerful and well-resourced political establishments of Dublin and Brussels.

Ms. McKenna said, 'Regardless of the fact that the voters of France and the Netherlands have rejected the EU constitution, it has been repackaged and put back on the table as if nothing had happened.'

She said, 'There is almost unanimous agreement among EU leaders, including Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, that the substance of the rejected constitution hasn't changed. "The difference between the original constitution and the present Lisbon Treaty is one of approach, rather than content ... The proposals in the original constitutional treaty are practically unchanged. They have simply been dispersed through the old treaties in the form of amendments" says Giscard D'Estaing the former French president and chairman of the convention which drew up the original text.'

Ms. McKenna went on to say, 'The blatant conspiracy by EU governments to deny their electorates the right to vote on this treaty has been extremely effective and resulted in even the Danish voters, who have voted on every EU treaty since they joined the EU, being denied a say on this. The Danish prime minister, Fogh Rasmussen unashamedly admitted, "Risk is that a referendum could trigger indirect demands of referendums in other member states, which in turn could jeopardise the treaty". French

President Nicolas Sarkozy has said “There will be no treaty if we had a referendum in France, which would again be followed by a referendum in the UK”. The conspiracy to push this through against the wishes of the majority of citizens of EU member states is undeniable’, she said.

The former MEP said, ‘What we are going to vote on will have profound ramifications not just for Ireland but for the future of the EU as a whole.’ The military aspects alone should be reason enough to reject it, she said.

McKenna pointed out that ‘The renamed constitution states unambiguously in section 2, article 27 (2) that: “The common security and defence policy” it proposes “shall include the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy”. This will lead to a common defence. Member States must “make civilian and military capabilities available to the Union for the implementation of the common security and defence policy ...” and “undertake progressively to improve their military capabilities”.

This means there would be an EU constitutional obligation on Ireland to provide military resources to the EU for its security and defence policies and to increase military spending through the European Defence Agency in order to ensure compatibility. There is also a “solidarity clause” that proposes a mutual defence pact – similar to that of NATO. This “solidarity clause” has even been extended by Lisbon to cover the supply of energy and other issue.’

Munster MEP **Kathy Sinnott** said, ‘This is a foundational document that sets up a new European Union that has a new legal personality, and sets it on a course not of facilitating better cooperation among sovereign democratic member states and their people, but of creating a sovereign, democracy-flavoured European Nation. And the sad thing is that our heads of government are signing away our national democracies in a document I would be certain none of them have read’.

‘This treaty by such a large shift of power from the nations to Brussels will effectively make us revert to being a province of mainland Europe ... the northwest corner’ said Sinnott.

She said, ‘there is an additional loss of power for Ireland in this treaty. As a small nation we will be affected by the particularly insidious loss of influence of the small nations in favour of the large nations. We will be without a commissioner for five years at a time; the change in the council voting system will significantly reduce our influence. At present, Ireland’s 7.8% of blocking power in the Council will be reduced to 2.3%. Even within the parliament there is pressure to determine the number of MEPs after future enlargements by simple mathematical formulation rather than digressive proportionality which gives limited protection to smaller populations.’

Finian Mc Grath TD, said that it is clear that the fundamental rights that would be conferred on us by the Charter of Fundamental Rights would not be fundamental at all but could be varied or restricted in the interest of a ‘common organisation of the market’ or to advance ‘objectives of general interest pursued by the Community’. This would occur despite the accession of the Union to the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms because Protocol No. 5 qualifies this accession in stating: ‘that the accession of the Union shall not affect the competences of the Union or the powers of its institutions’.

Robert Ballagh said that it is hard to think of any major function of a state which the new European Union would not have if the Lisbon Treaty were to be ratified. The new Union would have its own government, with a legislative, executive and judicial arm, its own political president, its own citizenry and citizenship, its own human and civil rights code, its own currency, economic policy and revenue, its own international treaty-making powers, foreign policy, foreign minister, diplomatic corps and United Nations voice, its own crime and justice code and public prosecutor and it is rapidly creating its own army..

[ENDS]

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