

## **Speech Kathy Sinnott, MEP**

### **Press Conference 13th December 2007**

I will be opposing this Treaty for many reasons but today I would like to focus on the significant additional loss of democracy that it entails.

This is not an additional Treaty to the European Union something that makes it more workable. 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, undemocratic European Nation. And the sad thing is that today our heads of government are signing away more of our national democracy in a document I would be certain none of them have read. It is unreadable in its present form. I invite you to go to the Council website and see if you really think Bertie has spent the weeks meticulously cross referencing this collection of unintelligible amendments, footnotes, references and deletions and then spent months trawling through court documents to understand what he is signing. True to the undemocratic nature of this Treaty process, the Inter-Governmental Conference made a decision not to publish the Treaty in its full form, that is in the body of the treaties where it will be embedded with a road map of the relevant ECJ judgments so that people can see what we are getting into. It has taken our entire team of legal experts weeks to get through the Treaty properly, a process sabotaged by at least three complete changes in numbering systems over the last year. In doing this work, our team has discovered that the new Treaty is virtually identical to the Constitutional Treaty that failed to gain the necessary unanimity after being rejected by the voters of France and the Netherlands. That this is essentially a reheated constitution has been confirmed by its original architect, Giscard d'Estaing.

This Treaty, more than any other before it, institutionalises and codifies a move from real democracy to "process" or what I call "European democracy". We know what democracy means, rule by the people, directly and/or through their elected representatives. After 700 years being ruled by another, I would hope, we in Ireland value being a democratic nation. This Treaty, by such a large shift of power from Dublin to Brussels effectively removes the citizen and even to a great extent their elected representative both national and European from decision making. In exchange, process democracy grants the citizen such tit-bits as the right to complain and their representatives the right to give opinions while power for decision-making is being further removed from the people.

It is not surprising that the people of 26 nations, seven of which were promised referendums, are being denied that democratic right in the face of such a loss of power. I would like to pay tribute to Raymond Crotty who defended the sole right of the Irish people to protect their sovereign power or to relinquish it as they see fit . Which will they do in the upcoming referendum? I am sure the majority of Irish people will vote no. Not a no to the present European Union which I think with (*many*) reservations has broad acceptance but a no to the new European Union envisioned in this new Constitutional Lisbon Treaty.

A Treaty which contains such sleights of hand as the so-called passarelle clause which will make this Treaty self-amending so that Europe will not have to face the Irish people again and which will allow the Council to change by unanimous vote to QMV those items which are currently outside its scope.

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 diluting the value of digressive proportionality which gives protection to smaller populations.

The larger countries have been patient while they gathered in the majority of countries in geographical Europe and it is evident from this not so new Treaty, they feel they have waited long enough. This is a good old fashioned power grab by the elite of Europe. And I for one won't stand by and watch Ireland become merely the remote North West Corner of Europe.

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