

**Women Say No To Lisbon, Buswells Hotel, Dublin, 11am Wednesday,  
September 30 2009**

## **Time for Change – *Women Say No To Lisbon***

The privatisation of health services and cuts that the Lisbon Treaty facilitates will directly affect women. An example of this is what is happening now with cervical smear testing. In 2008, the HSE awarded US company Quest Diagnostics a contract to analyse smear tests – a company that had to pay out \$40 million in fraud settlements over the past 10 years and \$302 million over faulty test devices.

There are consequences for women from this outsourcing. When smear tests are analysed abroad indigenous laboratory expertise is lost and, worse for the women concerned, their medical records are not readily accessible – or perhaps not accessible at all.

If Lisbon is passed on Friday, we'll get more of the same because Article 207 of the treaty removes the veto governments now have on the EU's international proposals to liberalise health, education and social services. Keeping the power to veto proposals could help us tthat would let even more multinationals make profits from essential services.

In addition, Article 136 strengthens the EU's powers to set policy for member states who don't adhere to the Stability and Growth Pact – the reason for the cuts proposed by Colm McCarthy. This means more pressure to cut public spending. This resulting cuts in services will directly affect women who are primarily responsible for childcare and care of the elderly.

Proinsias De Rossa MEP has accused Women Say No to Lisbon of isolationism and a lack of solidarity with the victims of people trafficking. We reject his false and shallow accusations.

While he praises the Lisbon Treaty's provisions for enhanced cross-border police co-operation, we believe the needs of these women should be put at the heart of our response to tackling trafficking. Policing targets the gangs responsible, but it does not tackle the circumstances that bring women into their orbit.

Extreme poverty is a prime reason for this. And research shows that women from Eastern Europe, where EU competition policies have devastated indigenous industry, are one of the largest groupings to be trafficked into and through Ireland. The Lisbon Treaty, if passed, would not help to alleviate the poverty which has brought them here. Far from it. It reaffirms the primacy of competition: enterprises which can't compete must be let close, whatever the social cost.

Lisbon is informed by the economic policies that have led to the crash. It would deepen the race to the bottom and push more people into poverty and more women into trafficking and the sex trade. Ireland has opted out of the policing provisions of Lisbon. But opt out or opt in, more policing won't change the poverty which drives women into prostitution.

This treaty is out of date and out of step. It's time for a change of direction. It's time to say No – again.

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## **Women Saying No To Lisbon – Again**

Ailbhe Smyth, People Before Profit

Therese Caherty, People Before Profit, CAEUC – Sayno.ie

Íte Ní Chionnaith, Lecturer, School of Media , DIT, Iar-Uachtarán, Conradh na Gaeilge

Mary Crotty, People’s Movement

Mary Cullen, historian

Margaretta D’Arcy, writer and peace activist

Bernie Dwyer, Radio Cuba presenter and documentary film maker

Rita Fagan, community activist

Carol Fox, Peace and Neutrality Alliance

Maura Harrington, political activist, Shell To Sea

Sinead Kennedy, NUI Maynooth

Patricia McKenna, People’s Movement

Eilish Moore, singer

Cathleen O Neill, educator and community activist

Bronwen Maher, former Dublin City councillor and political activist

Marie O’Connor, author and health policy analyst

Jo Tully, Irish Nurses Organisation, executive member, personal capacity

Bairbre de Brun, Sinn Fein, MEP

Cllr Rosaleen Branley, Sinn Fein, Donegal

Cllr Joan Collins, People Before Profit

Cllr Catherine Connolly, Independent

Cllr Colette Connolly, Labour, Galway

Cllr Rose Conway Walsh, Sinn Fein, Mayo

Cllr Ruth Coppinger, Socialist Party, Mulhuddart

Cllr Edel Corrigan, Sinn Fein, Louth

Cllr Clare Daly, Socialist Party, Swords

Cllr Criona Ni Dhalaigh, Sinn Fein, Dublin

Cllr Jane Dillon Byrne, Labour Dun Laoghaire

Cllr Kathleen Funchion, Sinn Fein, Kilkenny

Cllr Marie Terasé Gallagher, Sinn Fein, Donegal

Cllr Graine Mhic Geidigh, Sinn Fein, Donegal

Cllr Cora Harvey, Sinn Fein,

Cllr Fiona Kerins, Sinn Fein, Cork

Cllr Louise Minihan, Independent

Cllr Imelda Munster, Sinn Fein, Louth

Cllr Cathy McCafferty, Sinn Fein, Clare

Cllr Rachel McCarthy, Sinn Fein, Cork

Cllr Sandra McLellan, Sinn Fein, Cork

Cllr Therese Ruane, Sinn Fein, Mayo

Cllr Jane Suffin, Sinn Fein, Roscommon

Cllr Brid Smith, People Before Profit

Cllr Pauline Tully McCauley, Sinn Fein, Cavan