

PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT GLUAISEACHT AN PHOBAIL



Press statement

www.people.ie

107 Amiens St, Dublin 1. 087- 230 8330.

1 September 2009

**You can be pro-Europe and vote 'No' to Lisbon say 'No' campaigners.
This is not a referendum on EU membership.**

The People's Movement, a non-party citizens' group campaigning against ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, launched its campaign on the forthcoming second referendum in Dublin today. Chairperson of the organization, former MEP Patricia McKenna, said: "being anti-Lisbon is not anti-Europe – real European democrats must say 'No' to Lisbon for a better EU for all Europeans". She warned voters to be extremely careful about the message from the 'Yes' side which she said was cynically using the current economic problems as a scare tactic to frighten people into supporting a treaty they had already rejected. She said the current 'Yes' campaign, which has unlimited resources from unknown quarters, slickly disguises the scare-mongering behind the two key elements of their campaign. They give the impression that by voting 'No' Ireland will somehow be a lesser member of the EU and that this vote is about being at the heart of Europe. The fact is that if we vote 'No' we will still be at the heart and still full members. This is not a referendum about EU membership but rather about the type of EU we want.

The second argument by the 'Yes' side is that a 'Yes' will restore confidence in and boost our failing economy while a 'No' will do the opposite. Again there is no basis for this argument; since the last 'No' vote foreign direct investment has in fact increased according to the IDA's own figures. Furthermore, Lisbon is based on the failed economic approach that has created the current international economic crisis. It would be absolute folly to enshrine such an approach into the EU treaties.

Speakers at the press launch today included artist Robert Ballagh, Cllr Catherine Connolly and former Danish MEP Jens Peter Bonde.

McKenna said that the People's Movement has examined the booklet of the Referendum Commission which has been delivered to voters and we believe it to be directly misleading and deliberately evasive and we call on the Commission to withdraw it immediately. This document, which the voters believe to be balanced and non-partisan is one of the most disturbing aspects of the campaign to date. It is clearly designed to achieve a 'Yes' vote and we believe is in breach of the law on how taxpayer's money can be used during a referendum campaign.

The booklet fails to point out that we reduce our vote in the Council of Ministers by

over 50% while Germany increases it by over 100%. This is the key change in the decision making process of the future EU and it radically shifts the power to the bigger states. The booklet also fails to mention the loss of the veto, which means moving to majority voting, in a whole range of new policy areas. These two changes are of crucial importance but the Referendum Commission has basically ignored them. The booklet is also misleading on one of the key changes in the Lisbon Treaty regarding the EU Commissioner. After Lisbon Ireland will no longer 'propose' our commissioner but instead make 'suggestions'. The Referendum Commission wrongly claims there is no change in this area.

The Booklet is designed to return a 'Yes' vote and as such should be withdrawn. The Peoples Movement is seeking legal advice on what action can be taken if the Commission continues to indirectly assist the 'Yes' side.

The People's Movement is also extremely concerned about the fact that big corporations, such as Intel and Ryanair are bankrolling the yes side. This flaw in the legislation was pointed out to the Department of the Environment by the Standards in Public Office Commission many years ago but no action has ever been taken to correct it. It is quite alarming that the corporate world can have such an unrestricted influence in changing the constitution of this state. The Minister for the Environment, John Gormley, must take action immediately to protect the integrity of our constitution and the rights of the people enshrined therein.

The Peoples Movement has no objection to any individual taking a position on the treaty but they must be able to defend their position based on what Lisbon proposes and not be allowed hide behind expensive advertising campaigns. The secretary of our North Kildare branch, **Michael Quinn**, has today delivered a challenge to the chief executive of Intel, Jim O'Hara, to engage with him in a public debate on the Lisbon Treaty. Quinn says Intel's chief should be able to stand over his views and publicly justify them.