8 September 2009

Minster clutching at straws to get people to believe in a legal certainty that does not exist – McKenna

Reacting to a press release issue by the Department of Foreign Affairs today, the chairperson of the People's Movement, former MEP Patricia McKenna, said: "The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Micheál Martin is clutching at straws when he says that the guarantees on the Lisbon Treaty will be "legally binding' and that they will soon be attached to the treaties as a protocol. Protocols are an integral part of the Treaties and have full legal status". McKenna said: "The Minister is trying to disguise the fact that there will be no protocols attached to the Lisbon Treaty when we vote on it and this is the core of the problem because once the treaty is ratified then every member state of the EU, regardless of their reservations, will be bound by its obligations. The constitutional amendment wording that the Irish people will be voting on makes this quite clear and makes no reference to any promises of what may happen it the future."

"The Minister knows that he is on very shaky legal ground and is trying to disguise this with his statement" she said.

"The Minister also says: 'The Treaty gives the Union the tools it needs to speak with a clear voice on the international stage and engage in more effective confliction prevention and peacekeeping'. However, he makes no reference to what is actually in the treaty regarding defence matters. Even at a glance it is clear that the solidarity clause provides for possible pre-emptive action when it talks of 'mobilize all the instruments at its disposal, including the military resources' to 'prevent the terrorist threat'. This wording is wide open to interpretation and could be used to justify military action similar to Iraq. The treaty, while it speaks of respect for the principles of the UN, makes no reference to the requirement for a UN mandate" concluded McKenna.

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