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Dear Taoiseach,

On the 25th of September in Brussels the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament published a press release asking for transparency in regards to the financing of the referendum on the Lisbon Treaty.

While ostensibly expressing confidence in our independent Commission responsible for this assignment (Standards in Public Office Commission), the content of this paper in reality attempts to discredit the results of the June 12th referendum, and even more so, the proper functioning of Irish democracy.

I have to express my astonishment at your silence after such an attack against our democratic system, against the Irish people and the unwarranted interference that it constitutes.

Our Referendum Commission together with SIPO has since 2001 guaranteed the legality of the financing of our electoral process. Our country is a unique example in Europe of transparency and equality in both elections and referendum campaigns from which the European Union could draw inspiration. Therefore the leader of no political group in Brussels, or any other authority should attempt to discredit our democratic result or dictate to our institutions the way in which they should act without eliciting a reaction from our Taoiseach.

Bearing this in mind, since Brussels has asked for transparency on the financing of the referendum campaign, let me ask for your assistance in shedding light on the expenses made during this campaign by European parliamentary groups, the European Parliament Office in Dublin and political foundations as well as by organizations, movements, media, and think-tanks subsidized by the European Commission and by the Commission Office in Dublin itself.

These European public finances can be divided into three categories.

First are subsidies for politics groups of the European Parliament involved in the Irish referendum campaign. As the President of the Independence and Democracy group, I can state that we budgeted for a leaflet for every Irish household presenting our arguments against the Lisbon Treaty, for information meetings and posters calling for a No vote. At the same time, five of the seven European Parliament groups representing 90% of MEPs, representing the same percentage in terms of budget,

financed the "yes" campaign. Moreover numerous "yes" posters carried the required logo signature of these groups.

Can each of these European Parliament groups and political foundations be asked to make public the exact expenses that they made for this referendum campaign in Ireland? My parliament group, Ind/Dem is prepared to respond to this request in full.

Second are the subsidies provided by the European Commission especially to the media (*Euronews*, *EurRadio*, video productions, internet...) and the "training of journalists", the *Europe Direct* network (exhibitions, conferences), requesting surveys and qualitative studies, organizations that are "proactive on European debates", *Euroglobe* (journalists) as well as hundreds of "targeted written publications". It is obvious that these media sources and communication outlets that are subsidized by Brussels leave hardly any space for "no" arguments. In 2008 alone, the European media budget is 98,992,000 euros.

What part of this public budget, under the pretence of information for the Irish citizens, in reality funded the "yes" campaign? 20, 40, 50%?

Finally there are the abundant European subsidies that helped fund the myriad of movements, organizations and think-tanks, many of which openly took action (conferences, exhibitions, publications) during the 2005 referenda campaign in favour of the European Constitution. From 2004 to 2006, they have collectively received 121,098,317 euros (source: European Commission report, 3 January 2008).

Which of these organizations were active in Ireland during the period that takes into account the expenses for the June 12th 2008 referendum? What were the amounts spent by them in 2007 and 2008 in preparation for the Treaty referendum?

Our fellow-citizens, like all European taxpayers, have the right to know how much the Commission, the Irish political parties, the European foundations and political groups have spent during this campaign on the Lisbon Treaty, bearing in mind that almost all of these organizations and institutions have been promoting the "yes" vote.

When all of these figures are placed in the public domain everyone will be able to fairly judge the respective efforts of both the "yes" and "no" camps.

I am distressed to hear that Brussels and the "yes" parties that lost the referendum believe that the Irish voters could be "bought".

The Irish people expect that you, Taoiseach, whatever your involvement during the Lisbon Treaty campaign, will now defend the results of the referendum, guarantee its transparency and protect Irish democracy.

Yours sincerely,



Kathy Sinnott, MEP for Ireland South