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The Irish NO: The end of the European idea?

After 18 countries had closed their ratification procedure on the Lisbon Treaty it came as a shock that Irish voters in a referendum said NO to that Treaty. CEEP having always supported the Lisbon Treaty, is very concerned about the consequences of this decision because the current Treaties are not able to sufficiently frame and legitimise necessary future policies of the European Union.

Rainer Plassmann, Secretary General of CEEP, comments as follows:

“The Irish NO is a stab in the back for democracy, subsidiarity, solidarity and stability within the European Union and not too conducive for economic growth and Europe’s position in a globalised world.

4 million Irish put the remaining 495 million EU citizens into trouble. Is that democratic? According to the present rules: Yes! Is that ingratitude or haughtiness? Those categories do not exist in politics. But the Irish might have only expressed what many other European citizens also feel. The “NO” is no wonder since an EU without a European press, without integrating personalities, without committed national politicians, in other words without a European identity, cannot be more than just an economic zone.

Should we say good-bye to the single market? No, but without the legitimating political instruments of the Lisbon Treaty it will be much more difficult to face and to mitigate the consequences of globalisation in Europe.

There is no alternative to the general approach of the Lisbon Treaty. Therefore, Member States and European politicians should not surrender to agony but go on designing European policy in the spirit of this Treaty, i.e. creating a climate of political and social progress and economic strength. Europe is, no doubt, a success story - and Ireland itself is proof of that.”

For more information, please contact Ms Inge REICHERT, Director
+32 (0)2 229 21 40
Inge.Reichert@ceep.eu