

Libertas is not quite LIBERTAS

LIBERTAS – European Institute on „The Libertas Institute“ of eurosceptics in Ireland

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“Since some time before the Irish referendum on the EU Lisbon Treaty we have observed that the main frontwind against this Draft Treaty came from an organization named ‘The Libertas Institute’. We don’t want to discuss its democratic structure or its finances, but just state that there is also another ‘Libertas’, LIBERTAS – European Institute, which is a very pro-European think-tank on European and international economy and policy”. This Libertas, which is convinced of Europe – and convincing also!, has its origins in a journal in 1974 and in its present form since 1992. Since many years it also has a four-language Website, www.libertas-institut.eu, which had, by the way, a lot of access from Ireland in the last months. “We will not do anything for the protection of the name”, says Hans-Juergen Zahorka, the Libertas leader, a former German Member of European Parliament, “we believe in the competition of ideas. And I am sure that our Libertas will live longer than the Irish one – as they have no rational arguments, and we have survived since 1974”. Of course, so the trained lawyer Zahorka (who also spoke on behalf of the pro-European “Libertas” in April 2004 on the impact of the EU enlargement on the IT sector before the Irish Computer Society, at the ICS Expo at Dublin RDS), the Lisbon Treaty could be a better piece of legislation, but it is an acceptable compromise, and it has nothing to do with many things the anti-Lisbon Treaty Libertas has mentioned in this context, he says. He also pointed out that any attempt to found a likewise movement in the Czech Republic will not be much honoured there. The Czech citizens are close enough to “old Italy” where “libertas” as word for “freedom” still has a kind of magic sound. “Maybe Ireland is too far away from Rome, so that this could be done”, and “The Czech President showed a very un-sovereign handling of the EU flag which has been given to him by a M.E.P. these days, when he flipped out”. Europe in the last decades had its downs, and its ups, and whenever the “nationalisms from the capitals determined the speed of the whole fleet, it didn’t really proceed as it could”. Who is for real liberty, Zahorka said, cannot be against a structure in Europe which enables the whole to preserve this liberty, and should not name his organisation “Libertas”, which is often instrumentalised by anti-European radicals in the other European states, too.