

Denmark eyeing referendum on euro

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EUOBSERVER / BRUSSELS - The EU's economic convergence plans are forcing Denmark to reconsider its euro opt-out, with a referendum on "modernising" Copenhagen's relation with Brussels possibly taking place by June.

With plans for a "Competitiveness Pact" currently being drafted by EU institutions to replace a Franco-German draft on pensions harmonisation and constitutional "debt brakes", Denmark does not want to be left out of the decision-making process, due to not being in the single currency.

After meeting a group of MEPs on Wednesday, Danish Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen said his countrymen should reconsider the opt-outs in a referendum, especially since Denmark will take over the EU's rotating presidency on 1 January 2012.

"There are both the euro pact and the presidency, issues which make it relevant to consider whether we should modernise our relations with the EU," he was quoted as saying by Politiken daily newspaper.

The referendum may take place before the summer in order to give Mr Rasmussen a clear popular mandate when he participates in a June summit where EU leaders are set to decide on the competitiveness pact.

"It depends on what the pact will consist of exactly, but clarity [in a referendum] may be needed," he said, while stressing that he has no intention of trying to "sneak" Denmark into the euro.

"Currently, there is a no to the euro that is in place and that limits the degree to which we can be part of eurozone co-operation," the premier explained.

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