

Public vote on EU rescue is ruled out

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By Macer Hall | Daily Express

MINISTERS provoked fury last night by ruling out a referendum on European Union action to bail out the crisis-hit eurozone.

A Government statement to MPs yesterday made clear that no national poll will be held in Britain over plans for a Â£380billion emergency fund designed to support Greece and other debt-laden eurozone nations.

Some MPs believe the establishment of the European Financial Stability Mechanism, which requires changes to the EU constitution, should trigger a vote in the UK under the Coalition's so-called "referendum lock" law.

But Tory Europe Minister David Lidington said the proposals did not need to be ratified by a referendum in Britain because only nations in the euro currency system were affected.

The decision enraged critics, who warned that the treaty changes threatened to create a powerful bloc of 17 euro nations that will be able to crush any British opposition to Brussels rule.

[...]

UK Independence Party leader Nigel Farage said: "The Government has set its own referendum rules, so of course ministers have decided there is no need for a referendum.

"But this treaty change will mean a fundamental change to the EU. It will create a bloc of 17 countries that can overturn anything Britain wants."

MPs are now pinning their hopes on a crucial Commons vote expected next month on whether to hold a national in-or-out referendum on Britain's EU membership.

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