

British Parliament Votes in Favor of EU Exit Referendum



London, June 10 (RHC)-- British parliament members have overwhelmingly voted in favor of plans to hold a referendum on the UK's membership in the European Union. Following a lengthy debate, the EU Referendum Bill -- backed by the Labour Party -- was pushed through the House of Commons with 544 yes votes on Tuesday. Out of the 650 MPs, 53 voted against the move.

"We've had referendums on Scottish devolution, referendums on Welsh devolution, referendums on our electoral system and on a regional assembly for the North East," said Britain's Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond during the debate. "But an entire generation of British voters has been denied the chance to have a say on our relationship with the European Union... today we are putting that right," he added, noting that the public must have the "final say" about the UK's place in Europe.

If the referendum takes place -- supposedly by the end of 2017 at the latest -- it will be the first time Britain's links with Europe are put to vote since 1975. The bill, which passed its second reading, now faces further examination by a committee of MPs and will go through several other stages before it can become law to mandate the plebiscite.

The referendum was first promised in 2013 by Prime Minister David Cameron, who had also vowed to negotiate a "better deal" for the UK in Europe ahead of the vote.

Earlier in the day, Cameron also denied he suggested that ministers who wish to campaign for an EU exit must first resign. He stated that the comments he had made during the G7 summit were misinterpreted by reports.

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