DUTCH VOTERS DEAL A BLOW TO GOVERNMENT IN EU TREATY REFERENDUM

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The Dutch government may have to reconsider ratifying a treaty on closer European Union ties with Ukraine after voters rejected a partnership deal in a non-bindingreferendum.

Unofficial results indicate 64 percent voted No with 36 percent in favour. The turnout appears to have only just passed the required 30 percent to validate the result.

Dutch Foreign Minister Bert Koenders said the outcome left the government in uncharted waters:

The ratification can not proceed as was expected before, so we have to take a step by step approach. We have now to talk within the cabinet, with the parliament, with our European partners, also with the Ukraine, to see what the consequences of this decision might be.
The vote launched by anti-EU forces is being seen as a test of the strength of Eurosceptics such as Freedom Party leader Geert Wilders who quickly turned to social media to express what he saw would be the consequences of such a result.

The political, trade and defence treaty with Ukraine is already provisionally in place but has to be ratified by all 28 European Union member states for it to have full legal force. The Netherlands is the only country that has not done so.

The vote could have repercussions beyond the Netherlands. With Britains citizens due to decide in their own referendum on June 23 on whether to leave the EU altogether, perceived Dutch disenchantment with the EU could galvanize the exit campaign.

Kaynak/Source: