

European Council/EPP Summit

Reinfeldt: Leave door open for treaty change

By Sarah Collins | Thursday 28 October 2010

Sweden's Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt has said the EU should leave the door open for treaty change but hinted that Germany should not push such a sweeping overhaul that it would force a referendum in any EU state. Speaking ahead of an EPP leaders' meeting on the same day as the European Council, Reinfeldt said that, "if Germany tells us that, to achieve [governance reform], we need a treaty change then we are open to that, but solving German problems shouldn't cause problems for everyone else". But he ruled out the German idea of suspending the voting rights of countries that persistently flout EU debt and deficit rules, saying that he would only support economic sanctions.

He was backed by Finland's Finance Minister Jyrki Katainen, who said that it was "realistic" to leave the door open to a change but that it would be preferable to bring in a new bailout fund without having to resort to a popular vote. "We don't want to exclude the possibility of treaty change but the primary target would be a crisis resolution mechanism without treaty change."

But Irish opposition leader Enda Kenny said a treaty renegotiation would cause "serious problems" for many countries, including his own. "I'm not sure about the wisdom of going down that route," he said.

According to the latest information before *Europolitics* went to press, Germany's Chancellor Angel Merkel says that she still wants treaty change to give the eurozone a financial safety net and is sticking to her guns on the voting right withdrawal idea. Merkel's hands are tied by a constitutional court that she fears will rule the current EU bailout fund illegal, making it impossible to extend it beyond 2013 without a Lisbon overhaul.

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