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Dutch PM Demands 'Assurances' Before Ratifying EU-Ukraine Deal

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Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte has said that he wants certain "legally binding assurances" from European Union leaders before he ratifies a trade deal with Ukraine, the Reuters news agency reported Tuesday.

Rutte said that solutions to his country's concerns about the deal had not yet been fully established.

The Dutch people voted to reject the EU agreement with Ukraine in a referendum in April 2016. The Netherlands are the only EU state to not ratify the deal.

The deal, which was provisionally implemented in March 2014 after the Russian annexation of Crimea, aims to create closer political, trade and security ties between the EU and Ukraine.

The Dutch referendum, which had a 32 percent turnout, saw 61 percent of people voting against the treaty. Many voters cited dissatisfaction with the European Union generally as the

reason for their opposition, rather than the agreement itself.

Rutte is now seeking guarantees that the deal will not lead to EU membership for Ukraine, although says he is unsure of these assurances' "exact form." The Dutch parliament will not sign if a deal is not reached, he told reporters.

EU officials said that they hoped to solve the problems within the year, but the deal could fall through without the Netherlands' ratification, Reuters reported.

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