UKIP welcomes Irish 'No' to treaty

UK Independence Party leader Nigel Farage MEP has congratulated the people of the Irish Republic for rejecting the Lisbon Treaty in the only referendum held in any EU country. He demanded that implementation of the treaty should be stopped immediately.

"The only people to have a say on the treaty have kicked it into the long grass," Mr Farage said.

His comment came after Irish justice minister Dermot Ahern conceded even before the official result was declared that the people's answer on the treaty would be No. In the event, the treaty was thrown out by 53.4% of those who voted.

Mr Farage reacted furiously to a comment by Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso indicating that the treaty is not dead and other states should ratify it

"What part of 'No' don't they understand?" he demanded. "This reaction shows more than even the gaping chasm that exists between the people and the politicians. They will stop at nothing to achieve their goal of a European state."

The UKIP leader was also angered by a statement from the British government that the ratification process would go ahead here.

"The third reading of the treaty in the House of Lords next week must be halted because the project now has no legitimacy," he said.

He was joined by UKIP MP Bob Spink, who said: "I am now calling for the proceedings in the British Parliament to be suspended, pending the EU honouring its pledge and withdrawing the Lisbon Treaty, which we all know is just the EU Constitution under a different name."

The party's MEP for the Eastern Counties, Jeffrey Titford, warned: "The EU bureaucracy has long ago set about implementing most of the contents of the Treaty and there is already talk of a 'bridging mechanism' under which

Ireland would be removed from the list of signatories and would not be legally obliged to abide by it.

"These are indeed dark days for democracy in Europe, but at least the Irish referendum of June 2008 stands out as a beacon in the darkness."

Mr Farage congratulated Irish MEP Kathy Sinnot, his colleague in the Independence and Democracy Group in the European Parliament, and said he was "delighted that UKIP had been able to make such a significant contribution to the No campaign."