

Hungary is 1st country to ratify EU treaty

by UPI

BUDAPEST, Hungary -- Hungary became the first country to ratify the European Union's reform treaty, less than a week after EU 27 leaders signed it in Portugal. The Hungarian parliament in Budapest Monday approved, on a 325-5 vote and 14 abstentions, the reform treaty that makes easier the mechanism of decision-making and running the union, the Serbian news agency Beta reported Tuesday. The Lisbon treaty was signed Thursday as a replacement for an EU draft constitution, which French and Dutch voters rejected in 2005. Under the treaty, the EU will take decision by a majority vote and not by consensus. However, consensus will be needed for the issues of foreign policy, defense, social welfare, taxation and culture. EU leaders will elect a president with a 5-year tenure and the European Commission will have 17 members, instead of the current 27. Every member state is to ratify the treaty before it is scheduled to go into force early in 2009.

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