

ECFA review consensus reached

Written by Taipei Times
Tuesday, 17 August 2010 00:26 -

The Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT)-dominated legislature is expected to ratify the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) and amendments to related legislation as early as tomorrow after a consensus on how to review the pact was reached yesterday.

The consensus, pending confirmation at the legislature's plenary session today, is expected to defuse the possibility of a boycott by Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) lawmakers should they be denied the right to vote on the agreement article by article.

The DPP is expected to propose to revise each of the 16 articles in the text of the ECFA and each of the motions to revise each article will be voted on. That will be followed by a motion by the KMT to vote on the ECFA as a whole package.

Sources at the legislature said Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-pyng (王金平) had broached the idea with President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九), who had previously insisted that the legislature either ratify or reject the ECFA as a whole, saying it could not revise the content of the ECFA.

KMT caucus whip Lin Hung-chih (林滄敏) said each article of the DPP's version would be voted on, but that would not be tantamount to an article-by-article vote on the ECFA.

Lin said the KMT would agree to vote on the DPP's motion to revise each article and when the motion had been voted down there would be no need to vote on the content of the DPP's proposal.

"We will not vote on the contents of each article proposed by the DPP," Lin said.

According to the consensus, the KMT will propose a motion to vote on the ECFA as a whole after the DPP fails in each of its motions to revise the agreement.

"Only then will the contents of the ECFA will be voted on, in the form of a package," Lin said.

DPP lawmakers were optimistic over the preliminary consensus, saying it addressed their requests for a clause-by-clause vote.

The compromise should break months of gridlock over the legislature's role in reviewing the agreement. It should also mean that DPP lawmakers will not walk out of tomorrow's session.

"We are satisfied with the compromise, it gives the DPP what we want and saves face for the KMT, since that's what they wanted all along," DPP Legislator Kuan Bi-ling (關基銘) said.

DPP lawmakers have said that the consensus, which they say has been put into writing and signed, means the legislature will take an "individual review, individual vote and package vote approach," fulfilling the requests of both parties.

ECFA review consensus reached

Written by Taipei Times

Tuesday, 17 August 2010 00:26 -

While the wording of the agreement does not explicitly state that lawmakers would be granted a clause-by-clause vote, opposition party lawmakers said it was made clear through their negotiations that they would be granted a vote on individual clauses.

“Of course ‘handling it by procedure’ means holding a vote, each article at a time,” DPP Legislator Pan Meng-an (潘孟安) said in reference to the wording on the signed copy of the consensus. “It can’t mean anything else.”

Pan said five representatives from the DPP, five from the KMT and one independent lawmaker would first review, then raise questions on each clause. After that has been completed, all 113 lawmakers in the legislature would be allowed a vote on the article.

While the vote is expected to have no binding effect, a record of it will be attached to the final ECFA bill when it is voted on as a package.

The compromise came hours after DPP Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) met the DPP caucus and said the party would not waver from its demands.

“We are committed to holding a substantial review with a discussion and vote on every clause,” she said after the morning meeting. “The DPP is completely against a package vote.”

Tsai said that while similar agreements in other countries have been subject to a package vote, it was either because the legislature pre-authorized economic negotiations or because of its full participation in the negotiation process.

“However, in the case of Taiwan’s talks with [China] on the ECFA, government officials did not allow either input or monitoring by elected representatives,” she said.

The DPP says the agreement will have an impact on traditional industries and middle-class salaries because of an influx of cheaper goods from China.

A hotly debated issue is Article 16 of the ECFA, in which Taiwan would have to wait at least 180 days before it could terminate the agreement in the event of a breakdown in cross-strait talks.

The DPP has criticized the clause, saying that Taiwan would have no way to immediately back out of the ECFA if it was found to be damaging the economy. KMT lawmakers say the clause is essential to protect Taiwanese businesses in China.

Lawmakers yesterday voted against the DPP’s motion that the legislature, during the second provisional session, initiate a referendum on the ECFA and revise the Act Governing the Allocation of Government Revenues and Expenditures (《分配中央收入及支出條例》) to ensure that counties and cities that are to be upgraded to a municipality after Dec. 25 receive more funds from the central government.

ECFA review consensus reached

Written by Taipei Times

Tuesday, 17 August 2010 00:26 -

The KMT's proposal to ratify the ECFA, the Cross-Strait Cooperation Agreement on Intellectual Property Rights Protection and other bills during the second provisional session was confirmed.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2010/08/17](#)