

Denmark preparing to give Greenland more autonomy

Greenland was slated to get more autonomy within Denmark under a plan presented Tuesday by a commission set up by parliaments of Denmark and Greenland.

Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen and Greenland Prime Minister Hans Enoksen received the report in Nuuk, capital of the self-governing Danish territory.

'This is a big day in the joint history of Greenland and Denmark,' Rasmussen said, according to online Greenland newspaper Sermisiaq.

Enoksen lauded Rasmussen 'who was the prime minister who gave the people of Greenland the right to self-rule', the newspaper reported.

Back in 2004, Rasmussen and Enoksen agreed to set up a commission of politicians from Greenland and Denmark who have discussed how to widen the home-rule Greenland was granted in 1979.

The plan - pending bills to be drafted and approved by both parliaments - includes a referendum on self-rule due in November. With a likely 'yes' vote, the widened self-rule would be in place as of June 21, 2009.

In March this year, the commission overcame a sticking point concerning how to divide income from oil and gas fields off the Arctic island.

The co-chairs of the commission, Jonathan Motzfeldt of the ruling Social Democratic party Siumut in Greenland and Danish parliament speaker Christian Mejdahl, said the 30-year period of home-rule had been 'a success'.

Greenland, a former colony, became a province of Denmark after the World War II until the introduction of home rule in 1979.

Denmark was likely to keep overall responsibility for foreign policy, security issues and the justice system.

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