

German leader set to ask for Dec. 16 confidence vote, paving way for election as early as February

BERLIN (AP) — German Chancellor Olaf Scholz is expected to ask for a vote of confidence in his government on Dec. 16, paving the way for a new parliamentary election as early as February, German media reported Tuesday.

The expected vote in the Bundestag would come well ahead of original plans, marking a step to reach compromise between Scholz's party, the Social Democrats, and the main opposition party in parliament, the center-right Christian conservatives.

The move comes after the collapse of Scholz's three-party coalition last week, at a time when the leaders of Europe's biggest economy have been grappling with ways to revive Germany's anemic economic growth.

Experts predict the economy will shrink or at best stagnate this year, due to external shocks and homegrown problems including red tape and a shortage of skilled labor.

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