

Britain's central bank keeps interest rate, QE size unchanged

LONDON, Dec. 6 (Xinhua) -- Bank of England, Britain's central bank, has decided to keep the benchmark interest rate at the historical low of 0.5 percent and refrain from more quantitative easing (QE) programs, a statement said on Thursday.

The low interest rate has been kept for over three years by the Monetary Policy Committee under the central bank, while total QE size now stands at 375 billion pounds (603.75 billion U.S. dollars) after a 50-billion-pound expansion was last made in July.

Amid bleak economic outlook, further QE programs are expected to come up as a boost to growth.

The Treasury on Wednesday published Autumn statement on the annual budget, which cut economic growth for this year to a 0.1-percent contraction and 1.2-percent growth next year.

Britain unexpectedly grew by 1 percent last quarter, mainly due to one extra working day than the second quarter as well as the 2012 London Olympic Games. Yet consensus of economists showed that the fourth quarter is expected to see GDP growth rate drop again and even return to shrinkage. (1 pound = 1.61 U.S. dollars)