

Del Ponte Opposes New EU Talks with Serbia

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By IWPR staff in The Hague (TU No 487, 02-Feb-07)

Del Ponte, who met EU chief diplomat Javier Solana on January 31, told reporters any reopening of stalled discussions with Belgrade would send the "wrong signal" to Serbian leaders who continue to refuse calls for the arrest of former Bosnian Serb general Ratko Mladic and other key war crime suspects.

"I hope the EU will continue to support our needs," said Del Ponte, whose mandate ends in September and will not be extended.

She added that following recent elections in Serbia, this was a "crucial time" to step up pressure for the arrest of Mladic and other fugitives.

The EU froze negotiations on a stabilisation and association agreement with Serbia in May last year, demanding that Belgrade show "full cooperation" with the UN court.

But several states - including Spain, Hungary and Slovenia - have said in recent weeks that the EU must not isolate Serbia, especially since Belgrade's cooperation will be crucial in ensuring a peaceful deal on the final status of Kosovo.

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