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SE Europe & the SE Mediterranean

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Current Edition | Athens Stock Exchange | Useful Information | Greek Edition | Site Search

Search



S/E EUROPE

Company Profile | Health & Emergency

Home page

ENGLISH EDITION

Date

08/10/2008

- Frontpage
- News
- Commentaries
- S/E Europe
- Features
- Business. & Fin.
- Arts & Leisure
- Sports
- ◊ Weather
- ◊ Classifieds
- ◊ Cartoon Archive
- ◊ XML RSS

INFORMATION

- Company Profile
- Health & Emergency



## Balkan Brief

### Dutch to veto crucial deal for Serbia with EU deal until Ratko Mladic is arrested

ZAGREB (AFP) – Dutch Foreign Minister Maxime Verhagen said yesterday his country would block a key aid and trade pact between Serbia and the European Union until the arrest of genocide suspect Ratko Mladic. "I would like to underscore that the Euro-Atlantic perspective also for Serbia is of the utmost importance... So therefore if they arrest Mladic and they deliver, then we will deliver," Verhagen told journalists. Verhagen, in a one-day visit to Croatia, stressed there was "no need to have another position in relation to the stabilization and association agreement as we have agreed upon," that to unblock the SAA with Serbia, Mladic had to be captured and delivered to The Hague.

### Belgrade warns Podgorica against recognizing Kosovo as independent

BELGRADE (AFP) – Serbia on Monday warned its former federal partner Montenegro against recognizing Kosovo's independence, with Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic saying it would be a "stab in the back." "Serbia would not be able to comprehend this (move) which would be not only a stab in the back of Serbia, but also to our diplomatic efforts to peacefully solve the status of Kosovo," Jeremic was quoted as saying, the state-run Tanjug news agency reported. Montenegro was until a 2006 referendum on independence allied with Serbia in a loose federation. Possible recognition of Kosovo by Montenegro would "have consequences," Jeremic said. "Serbia does not want to threaten anyone... but it will not sit with its hands crossed" in case of Montenegro's recognition of Kosovo, Jeremic said without elaborating.

### Romanians march in pre-election unrest

BUCHAREST (Reuters) – Thousands of Romanian workers, civil servants and teachers marched through Bucharest yesterday demanding higher wages, in a demonstration of growing social unrest just weeks before a parliamentary election on November 30. "Thieves! Thieves!" shouted a crowd of 10,000 protesters from the country's biggest unions who rallied outside parliament, waving banners reading "We want a decent life." New European Union member Romania faces mounting public pressure for higher state spending as civil servants have demanded hefty salary hikes to match soaring double-digit pay rises in the private sector.

### Srebrenica appeal

Survivors of the 1995 massacre in Srebrenica in Bosnia yesterday lodged an appeal against a court decision that they could not sue the UN in the Netherlands for failing to protect the enclave. "Today the Mothers of Srebrenica (survivors' group) appeal against this decision... The Mothers of Srebrenica find it unacceptable if the UN... can never be held accountable," said lawyers Marco Gerritsen and Axel Hagedorn in a statement. The "Mothers of Srebrenica" group comprises 6,000 survivors, mostly women, and relatives of the 8,000 men and boys killed in the massacre by Bosnian Serb forces. (AFP)

### Ex-fighter detained

Arab former fighter Imad al-Husin, also known as Abu Hamza, was detained and placed in an immigration center in Sarajevo, his lawyer said yesterday, accusing Bosnian authorities of breaking the law. Abu Hamza's lawyer Osman Mulahalilovic said that the move was "the initial legal step in the deportation process in violation of an order by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg." Mulahalilovic filed a criminal complaint with the Bosnian state prosecutors accusing the country's deputy security minister and head of the service for foreigners, Dragan Mektic, of overstepping his authority and of illegal arrest. (AFP)

### Married but jobless

Romanian Prime Minister Calin Popescu Tariceanu fired a Cabinet minister yesterday for using a government helicopter to make it to his wedding on time. Tariceanu took the action against Education Minister Cristian Adomnitei, 33, after it emerged that he and another minister had attended a government meeting in Bucharest on Saturday, then ridden the chopper 300 miles (485 kilometers) to Iasi, the city where Adomnitei was getting married that day. (AP)

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- Vote outcome dampens Bosnia's EU prospects
- Balkan Brief
- Gangland showdown in Croatia
- AKP resists emergency measures
- Gates: US to remain in Kosovo until late 2009