

General Affairs and External relations Council

**Statement made by M. Bernard Kouchner, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs
during his joint press conference**

**with M. Jean-Pierre Jouyet, Minister of State responsible for European Affairs,
Mr. Javier Solana, European Union Secretary-General,
High-Representative for the Common Foreign policy,
and Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner in charge of External
relations and European neighbourhood policy**

Excerpts

(Brussels, 22 July 2008)

(...)

Q. - You said that Mr Karadzic's arrest is a good sign, but, at the practical level, how can this help Serbia speed up her access to the European Union?

THE MINISTER - To join the European Union a country has first to be a candidate and to be a candidate it has to comply with a number of demands - to do with human rights, trade - which we call chapters. This process applies to everyone, so chapter by chapter, we open the discussions and Serbia will follow the same path. She just has to be admitted as a candidate and until now this hasn't been acceptable for some countries and when it comes to European Union enlargement all the countries have to be unanimous. I'm not going to talk to you about the Lisbon and Nice Treaties, but all the same, things are very different depending on which one we're under. For the moment we haven't got unanimity for the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) because a number of countries - they weren't wrong - were arguing as follows: "they must arrest the war criminals, if they don't, they can't join the European Union." Certainly, you can't join the European Union and not comply with its rules and legislation.

(...) There is the matter of the basis on which treaty Serbia's application is considered: the Nice or Lisbon Treaty. The Nice Treaty is for the 27, so no further enlargement. So we're going to look at this, but, irrespective of the uncertainties and difficulties which the European Union will certainly overcome, we think Serbia has to be a member of the European Union.

(...)

Q. - Do you think that with Mr Karadzic's arrest, wholehearted cooperation with the ICTY, the sine qua non for all Europeans, has been perfectly fulfilled or does it require the European Union to take new steps?

THE MINISTER - This cooperation is halfway or at least a third of the way to being achieved. There remain another two criminals who must be arrested, including General Mladic. It's nevertheless very good news and I congratulate our Serbian friends, this new government and President Tadic whom we have supported. (...) There are other conditions to fulfil; Serbia will follow the same path as the others, like Croatia in particular. We are pleased.

Q. - Does this get the SAA, a first step towards accession to the European Union, back on the road?

THE MINISTER - We have to work on this, we need the unanimity of the European Union members. We haven't asked for this, we'll see, we're going to work on it in the COREPER (...) and then very soon we'll have a position on it. (...)/.

AMBAFRANCE LONDRES