

Britain's PM condemned at EU meeting

by UPI

LISBON, Portugal -- European diplomats condemned British Prime Minister Gordon Brown's late arrival in Portugal to sign an EU reform treaty as shunning the European bloc. Brown arrived more than three hours late to a signing ceremony in Lisbon, Portugal, in what many British diplomats see as a marked detachment from the European Union, the Financial Times reported Friday. The European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said a strong British presence in the European community would offset calls for protectionism by French officials. "(French President) Nicolas Sarkozy is there, putting in initiatives, and I welcome that," Barroso said. "I would prefer to have Britain doing the same." Brown said the ongoing controversy surrounding the fixing of dairy prices in Britain delayed his visit to Lisbon and called on his European counterparts to "turn its attention to strengthening international capacity to secure greater financial security." The revamped Lisbon Treaty updates EU rules and establishes offices of a president and foreign minister of the union.

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