

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 581

Affirming the support of the United States for the Republic of North Macedonia's accession to the European Union.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 7, 2024

Mr. WELCH (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. RICKETTS, and Mr. TILLIS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Affirming the support of the United States for the Republic of North Macedonia's accession to the European Union.

Whereas the Republic of North Macedonia peacefully asserted and achieved independent statehood in 1991, during the course of the former Yugoslavia's violent disintegration, and has since become a secure, democratic, and prosperous country and a key United States ally and strategic partner in the Western Balkans;

Whereas North Macedonia affirmed its commitment to joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1993, adopted major defense reforms, built a modern, professional defense force, and became the 30th NATO alliance member on March 27, 2020;

Whereas, in 1993, the National Guard State Partnership Program was established between the State of Vermont and the Republic of North Macedonia;

Whereas North Macedonia was the first Western Balkan country to sign a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union (EU) and became an official EU candidate country in 2005;

Whereas, in 2008, the United States signed a Declaration of Strategic Partnership and Cooperation with North Macedonia;

Whereas, on June 17, 2018, the foreign ministers of the Hellenic Republic and the Republic of Macedonia signed the Prespa Agreement, resolving a bilateral dispute that had hindered North Macedonia's EU membership bid;

Whereas, in March 2020, European Union member states endorsed opening accession negotiations with North Macedonia, and pursuant to a July 2022 protocol, North Macedonia committed to adopt certain constitutional changes in order to resolve an additional bilateral disagreement;

Whereas, in June 2022, North Macedonia became the first Western Balkan country to start a strategic dialogue with the United States, marking a significant bilateral milestone and step toward implementation of the Declaration of Strategic Partnership;

Whereas, in November 2023, the European Commission outlined a new growth plan to provide Western Balkans countries certain EU membership benefits ahead of accession, boost economic growth, and accelerate socio-economic convergence with the EU;

Whereas North Macedonia remains an important European Union and United States security partner and NATO ally, providing Ukraine with humanitarian aid and considerable military equipment, voting in favor of United Nations Security Council and General Assembly resolutions against Russian aggression, and adopting all European Union Russian sanctions;

Whereas, on November 29, 2023, United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with North Macedonia's Foreign Minister Bujar Osmani and commended North Macedonia's strong contributions and leadership as the Chair-in-Office to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and reaffirmed the United States would remain a steadfast partner and ally in support of North Macedonia's Euro-Atlantic path;

Whereas, in November 2023, the European Commission adopted the 2023 Enlargement Package and assessed that North Macedonia has continued to fully align with the European Union Common Foreign and Security Policy; and

Whereas the Government of North Macedonia has made significant progress in its work to join the European Union: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) appreciates North Macedonia's active role in
3 regional cooperation and long-standing commitment
4 to the European Union accession process;

5 (2) recognizes that there is strong support for
6 EU membership across North Macedonia's multi-
7 ethnic communities and that North Macedonia's di-

1 verse cultural heritage would be strengthened
2 through EU membership;

3 (3) encourages the Government of North Mac-
4 edonia to continue its important work toward mem-
5 bership in the European Union, as well as efforts to
6 further peace, stability, and prosperity in Eastern
7 Europe;

8 (4) recognizes the cooperation between the
9 State of Vermont and North Macedonia and the
10 joint military partnership between the Vermont Na-
11 tional Guard and the Army of the Republic of North
12 Macedonia;

13 (5) recognizes the significant evidence of the
14 benefits of North Macedonia's membership to the
15 North Atlantic Treaty Organization in closer eco-
16 nomic and political ties and in its commitment to
17 foster regional stability and the principle of mutual
18 defense;

19 (6) recognizes the importance of European
20 Union membership for North Macedonia for its eco-
21 nomic growth, strengthening of its democratic insti-
22 tutions and norms, and bolstering the rule of law in
23 Southeast Europe;

1 (7) encourages the Government of North Mac-
2 edonia to undertake the reforms necessary to ad-
3 vance their European Union membership;

4 (8) calls on the President, the Secretary of
5 State, and European allies to advocate for the open-
6 ing of the first European Union negotiation cluster
7 with North Macedonia without further bilateral con-
8 ditions;

9 (9) urges the President and the Secretary of
10 State to continue to—

11 (A) work closely with the Government of
12 North Macedonia; and

13 (B) support European Union enlargement
14 for the Western Balkans, including North Mac-
15 edonia on its European Union path; and

16 (10) affirms the desire of the United States
17 Government and American people to strengthen the
18 transatlantic partnership with the European Union
19 and all member countries.

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