

# UN chief hails victory of 'political will' in historic Republic of North Macedonia accord

The UN-brokered agreement between Athens and Skopje to formally recognize the "Republic of North Macedonia", is a welcome, "historical" step that should be supported by regional and international Member States, [António Guterres](#) has announced.

In a statement following on from the entry into force of the Prespa Agreement between the two countries on Tuesday, the UN Secretary-General confirmed that he had received official notification of the development, which settles a near 30-year dispute between the two neighbours.

Mr. Guterres congratulated the two sides and Prime Ministers Alexis Tsipras of Greece, and Zoran Zaev "on their determination in creating a forward-looking vision for relations between the two countries and reconciliation in the Balkan region and beyond".

He added that he was "deeply grateful" to the UN's longest serving envoy [Matthew Nimetz](#) of the United States, for his "unwavering commitment and dedication" in pursuing the deal.

## **Name-change deal solves 'seemingly intractable' split**

The Prespa Agreement was signed by both countries on 17 June last year and ratified by their parliaments last month. It demonstrates that "even seemingly intractable issues can be resolved through dialogue and political will", Mr. Guterres insisted.

Negotiations on the name dispute began in 1993 and have been led by the UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy Mr Nimitz since 1999.

The major diplomatic spat stretches back to 1991, when the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) declared its independence from Yugoslavia and announced its intention to be named "Macedonia".

Greece refused to recognize the name of its landlocked northern neighbour, insisting that only the northern Greek region of the same name should be called Macedonia.

Athens also maintained that the former Yugoslav Republic's use of the name was a challenge to Greek sovereignty.

## **Next steps: UN chief to notify General Assembly and Security**

## **Council**

According to UN protocol, once the Secretary-General is notified by the parties of the name change agreement, he will then notify the [General Assembly](#) and the [Security Council](#).

Thereafter, all UN departments are instructed to begin using the new name – Republic of North Macedonia – and the correct terminology when referring to the new State or its representatives, namely “Macedonian”, or “of North Macedonia”; and “the Macedonian representative” or “the delegate of North Macedonia”.

Keen UN flag alley watchers and vexillophiles may soon spot that the country’s standard – a yellow sun radiating rays onto a red background – will be positioned ahead of Norway’s as per the alphabetical ordering convention, outside the organization’s main headquarters in New York, and also in Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna.