

UN envoy welcomes 'visionary step' by Greek Parliament on name-change for former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy dealing with the name dispute between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Matthew Nimetz, [welcomed](#) on Friday the Greek Parliament's ratification of a name-change deal for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia that 'opens the door' to ending a dispute that has lasted some 28 years.

Commending the Greek Parliament and Government on taking "this visionary step", Mr. [Nimetz](#) said the historic Prespa Agreement between two neighbours "opens the door to a new relationship between them and ushers in a new era for the consolidation of peace and security in the Balkans."

The dispute stretches back to 1991, when the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia declared its independence from Yugoslavia and announced its intention to be named "Macedonia." Neighbouring Greece refused to recognize the name, insisting that only the northern Greek region of the same name should be called Macedonia, and arguing that the former Yugoslav Republic's use of the name was a challenge to Greek sovereignty.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Parliament and the country's citizens approved the change – renaming the country the Republic of North Macedonia – in a referendum held in September 2018, shortly after the leaders of the former Republic of Macedonia and Greece signed a deal on the issue in a ceremony at Lake Prespa, where the borders of the two countries (and Albania) meet.

In today's statement, Mr. Nimitz looked forward look forward to completion of the process as outlined in the Agreement and reiterated the "continued commitment of the United Nations to working with the two Parties."