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## **MACEDONIA REMOVES ALEXANDER THE GREAT STATUE FROM AIRPORT**

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Macedonia has removed a statue of the ancient Greek warrior-king Alexander the Great from its main airport terminal, in yet another goodwill gesture to Greece as the two neighbors work to resolve a 27-year-old dispute over the name of the former Yugoslav republic.

The 2-meter-high statue, which was removed on March 1, had been placed in 2011 as a gift from the Turkish concessionary TAV, which operates the airport in the capital, Skopje.

The move came after Macedonian authorities on February 24 dismantled an "Alexander the Great" sign from the airport, following a government decision last month to rename the airport and the countrys main highway, which was also previously named after Alexander the Great.

The capital's airport was renamed International Airport Skopje and the highway will be known as the Friendship Highway.

Name signs were also removed from the highway running from Macedonia's border with Greece to the border with Serbia.

Skopje and Athens have recently stepped up efforts to resolve the dispute that has hampered Macedonia's efforts to join NATO and the EU. Greece is a member of both entities.

Greece objects to the former Yugoslav republic's use of the name Macedonia, which Athens says could imply territorial claims over its own northern region of the same name.

Negotiations between the two neighbors have been inconclusive since 1991, when Macedonia gained independence from the former Yugoslavia.

Macedonia has now said it is ready to add a geographical qualifier to its name to help resolve the dispute. An agreement could include Macedonia adding "Upper," "New," or "North" to its name.

<https://www.rferl.org/a/macedoniaa-removes-alexander-the-great-statue-airport/29071239.html>