
STOLTENBERG: MONTENEGRO'S NATO MEMBERSHIP BENEFICIAL FOR WESTERN BALKANS

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The Secretary General of NATO, Jens Stoltenberg, said today that the NATO membership of Montenegro contributed to the stability of the Western Balkans.

The accession of Montenegro to NATO showed that our door is open too, said Stoltenberg during the meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the NATO Member States who considered the Open Door Policy.

Stoltenberg thinks that having Montenegro as the member of NATO is a big thing since it gives its contribution to NATO missions.

Our Open Door Policy is a historical success. It brought peace, stability and prosperity to millions of people around the Euro-Atlantic region and it encouraged cooperation. And as shown on the example of Montenegro, the NATO door remains open, said Stoltenberg.

Stoltenberg said Montenegros NATO membership makes this country a positive example of stability in the Balkans and region, and it also contributed to expansion of democracy, safety, prosperity and stability across Europe.

In his interview with weekend edition of Dnevne Novine, Stoltenberg said NATO membership opened possibilities for European integrations to many countries as well as that the open-door policy does not mean changes in NATOs position towards the east.

Last year, Montenegro became the 29th member of NATO and its membership represented a significant turning point for our Alliance, which thus confirmed its open-door policy and successful Alliance expansion. Were pleased to have Montenegro as our member state with all rights and obligations as any other member state and right to vote in shaping policies of the Alliance in future. We appreciate concrete and significant contribution of Montenegro to joint safety and collective defense system. We also appreciate the countrys decision to spend 2% of its GDP on defense by 2024, added Stoltenberg.

He also reckons Montenegros NATO membership boosts security across the Balkans. NATO doors are opened for all European countries willing to undertake obligations stemming from membership and contribute to Euro-Atlantic security, explained NATO Secretary General.

As for the recent statement of Jean-Claude Juncker that the Western Balkans need the EU path to avoid the risk of a new war, Stoltenberg noted that the EU membership, just as the NATO one,

consolidates the democratic institutions, rule of law and good neighbourly relations.

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