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## **NATO SECRETARY GENERAL WELCOMES THE PRIME MINISTER ZORAN ZAEV OF NORTH MACEDONIA**

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Mr. Stoltenberg said that the agreement with Athens has already created a lot of positive political momentum and that NATO membership will further bring peace, stability and prosperity to South-Eastern Europe. He highlighted that several Allies have already ratified the Accession Protocol and that once all Allies have completed this process, North Macedonia will become the 30th member of the Alliance.

Your country already has a seat at NATO's table, he said. Last month I welcomed Minister Sekerinska to the meeting of NATO Defence Ministers here. And next month, Foreign Minister Dimitrov will join us in Washington to mark the founding of our Alliance seventy years ago.

The NATO Secretary General said that NATO's open door policy is one of NATO's great success stories and that welcoming new members into the NATO family has made Europe and North America more secure.

Mr. Stoltenberg said that North Macedonia already makes important contributions to the Alliance, participating in NATO's training mission in Afghanistan, promoting regional cooperation in Southeast Europe and implementing major reforms. He encouraged North Macedonia to continue on the path of reform, stressing that this is important as the country prepares for full membership.

I look forward to the day when North Macedonia becomes a full member of our Alliance. What once seemed a distant hope for your country is set to become a reality, he said.

[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_164671.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_164671.htm)

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