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## **NORTH MACEDONIA REFUSES TO CEDE TO BULGARIA'S REQUESTS OVER START OF EU TALKS**

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Prime Minister of North Macedonia Zoran Zaev has stated that Macedonians will join the European Union only as Macedonians who speak Macedonian.

Bulgaria has vetoed North Macedonia's start of EU talks over claims regarding the country's language and national identity. It claims that Macedonian language is a dialect of Bulgarian, and that no Macedonian minority exist in Bulgaria.

We leave the isolation in the past because we know that Macedonia's future is European. In that name, we continue to seek solutions. This is the only way it is European, this is the only way it is Macedonian. We will enter the EU as Macedonians who speak Macedonian!, Zaev wrote on Facebook on Sunday.

He made the remarks following a statement by Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov, who denied the existence of a Macedonian minority in Bulgaria.

In a statement to the German newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Borisov said he was surprised by the resolution of the European Parliament which raised the issue of the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria.

He stated that there is no Macedonian minority in Bulgaria, while adding that instead of having a positive debate on the neighboring country's path to EU, were moving towards a completely different debate.

The US Assistant Secretary of European and Eurasian, Philip Reeker sent a letter to Zaev encouraging two countries on agreeing with each other to pave the way for the integration process of North Macedonia in the EU.

We encourage you, and EU member states, to continue to solve bilateral disputes outside the EU accession process while aspirants simultaneously progress through the opening and closing of chapters, Assistant Secretary Reeker wrote.

The start of EU talks for North Macedonia remains uncertain until all EU member states approve it.

<https://exit.al/en/2020/11/30/north-macedonia-refuses-to-cede-to-bulgarias-requests-over-start-of-eu-talks/>

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