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## **MONTENEGRO'S PRESIDENT: NORTH MACEDONIA HAS A CHOICE ON EU PATH**

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When it comes to European integration, North Macedonia has a choice, Montenegro's President Jakov Milatovic said in an interview for state broadcaster MRT, adding that both citizens and political leaders must decide whether they want to be right or see the country join the European Union.

"I believe North Macedonia has suffered a great deal of injustice in the European integration process. As you noted, it received candidate status as early as 2005, before Montenegro even restored its independence. However, bilateral relations between North Macedonia and its neighbours have often been the main obstacle on its path to the EU. But the world we live in is not always fair," Milatovic said. "It is up to the Macedonian people and decision-makers to determine how best to approach this. Ultimately, you have a choice: whether you want to be right, or whether you want to become a member of the European Union. That is the choice you have," he added.

Montenegro has set an ambitious but achievable goal, to become the 28th EU member state by 2028, Milatovic said. "Although it is the smallest among all candidate countries, Montenegro wants to send an important message through its example, together with its European partners, that enlargement is alive, that it is happening, and that it is not just rhetoric from European politicians," he added.

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