



**Congress of the United States**  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

November 18, 2021

His Excellency Tihomir Stoytchev  
Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to the United States of America  
Embassy of the Republic of Bulgaria  
1621 22nd Street NW  
Washington D.C. 20008

Dear Ambassador Stoytchev,

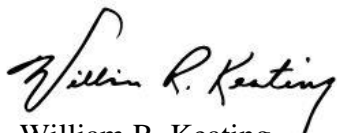
We, Members of the U.S. House of Representatives, write you on the heels of a House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee hearing on the Western Balkans. During that hearing, Members of Congress recognized that the Western Balkans are a complex, dynamic, and geostrategic region in Europe. Members also underscored that these countries have worked hard to resolve regional disputes, establish democracy, and ultimately foster the political processes necessary to speedily integrate into the European Union. Through similar efforts, three of the Western Balkan countries, Albania, Montenegro, and North Macedonia, have successfully joined NATO. For these reasons, Members of Congress — from both sides of the aisle — voiced their strong support for the swift integration of the Western Balkans into the European Union.


At the same time, Members of Congress recognized that, despite North Macedonia and Albania having met the requirements to begin accession negotiations with the European Union, there remains a dispute between your country and North Macedonia that is preventing Albania and North Macedonia from starting these talks.

Ambassador Stoytchev, the continued delay of North Macedonia and Albania's progress toward European Union membership has cast doubt on the commitments made by Western leaders, opening a door for anti-Western political influences throughout the region, particularly those from China and Russia. We believe eventual EU membership for North Macedonia and Albania is critical for long-term peace and stability within the Balkan region and for the whole of the transatlantic community.

As such, we write you today as bi-partisan Members of the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee, to urge you to reach a final resolution to this bilateral dispute that will allow Albania and North Macedonia to launch their EU accession negotiations before year's end. We hope you will put your differences aside and support the full political integration of North Macedonia and Albania into the European Union.

Sincerely,

  
William R. Keating  
Member of Congress

  
Claudia Tenney  
Member of Congress

Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress

Peter Meijer  
Member of Congress

Jim Costa  
Member of Congress

Bradley S. Schneider  
Member of Congress

Dean Phillips  
Member of Congress

Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

Ann Wagner  
Member of Congress

Susan Wild  
Member of Congress

Albio Sires  
Member of Congress

Vicente Gonzalez  
Member of Congress