

Statement by NATO Foreign Ministers on Open Door Policy

1. Today we reaffirm our commitment to the Open Door Policy under Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, as most recently set out by our Heads of State and Government in Wales.
2. Successive rounds of enlargement have enhanced our security. Euro-Atlantic integration itself also fosters reform and ensures the stability necessary for prosperity. NATO's door is open to all European democracies which share the values of our Alliance, which are willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, which are in a position to further the principles of the Treaty, and whose inclusion can contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area. Decisions on enlargement are for NATO itself.
3. Today, fulfilling the tasking given to us by our Heads of State and Government at the Wales Summit, we have decided to invite Montenegro to begin accession talks to join our Alliance.
4. We congratulate Montenegro on this historic achievement. Our decision reflects the reforms implemented by Montenegro, and the commitment it has shown to our common values and to international security. NATO membership for Montenegro will strengthen security in the region and for the Alliance as a whole. We look forward to taking forward the accession talks, signing the Accession Protocols, and then concluding the ratification process without delay. During the period leading up to accession, NATO will involve Montenegro in Alliance activities, including the Warsaw Summit, to the greatest extent possible. We expect further progress on reform to be pursued, especially in the area of the rule of law, before and after accession, in order to enhance Montenegro's contribution to the Alliance. NATO will continue to provide support and assistance, including through the Membership Action Plan (MAP).
5. We reiterate NATO's firm commitment to the Euro-Atlantic integration of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹. We appreciate its steadfast contribution to our operations and its long-standing commitment to the NATO accession process.
6. We reaffirm our decision made at the 2008 Bucharest Summit and reiterated at subsequent Summits that NATO will extend an invitation to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹ as soon as a mutually acceptable solution to the name issue has been reached within the framework of the UN, and we continue to urge intensified efforts towards that end.
7. Given concerns over recent political developments in the country, we call upon all parties to honour and to continue to implement the June-July agreement facilitated by the EU; holding free and fair elections next year will be an important benchmark

for this process, which we will continue to follow closely. We encourage intensified efforts at political compromise and reform, in particular ensuring effective democratic dialogue, the rule of law, media freedom, and judicial independence. We also continue to encourage further efforts to build a fully-functioning multi-ethnic society based on full implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement. We encourage further efforts to develop good neighbourly relations.

8. NATO's commitment to a stable and secure Bosnia and Herzegovina was enshrined in the Dayton/Paris Accords 20 years ago and remains intact today, as does our full support for its membership aspirations. We commend Bosnia and Herzegovina for its contributions to NATO operations and for its commitment to regional dialogue, cooperation, and security. We call upon all of the country's leaders to work constructively and for the benefit of all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to undertake the political, economic, and defence reforms necessary for the country to realise its Euro-Atlantic aspirations.
9. In this context, we encourage the leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue demonstrating political will, particularly in pursuing reforms related to those aspirations and we welcome the progress made, including on registration of immovable defence property to the state. As agreed in Wales, we will keep these developments under active review. We look to the leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina to use the period ahead to accelerate efforts towards meeting the requirements set by NATO Foreign Ministers in Tallinn in April 2010 so that its first Membership Action Plan cycle can be activated as soon as possible, which remains our goal.
10. At the 2008 Bucharest Summit we agreed that Georgia will become a member of NATO with MAP as an integral part of the process; today we reaffirm all elements of that decision, as well as subsequent decisions. We welcome the significant progress realised since 2008. Georgia's relationship with the Alliance contains all the practical tools to prepare for eventual membership. We encourage Georgia to continue making full use of all the opportunities for coming closer to the Alliance offered by the NATO-Georgia Commission, the Annual National Programme, its role as an Enhanced Opportunities Partner, its participation in our Defence Capacity Building Initiative and the Substantial NATO-Georgia Package.
11. We welcome the important progress made in implementing the Substantial NATO-Georgia Package, including the start of joint exercises, the inauguration of the Joint Training and Evaluation Centre, which helps strengthen Georgia's self-defence and resilience capabilities. We underline the importance of Georgian ownership of this process for a sustained and comprehensive approach to implementation, together with the Alliance. We will continue to provide the

resources needed to implement the Substantial Package, which aims to strengthen Georgia's capabilities and, thereby, helps Georgia advance in its preparations for membership in the Alliance. As we prepare for the Warsaw summit, we will explore new, practical ways to intensify efforts including through high-level political dialogue and increased co-operation, including in defence and strategic communications.

12. NATO recognizes Georgia's efforts to strengthen its democracy, including to reform the judiciary and security services, and to modernise its military forces and defence institutions. Bearing in mind recent developments on media freedom and rule of law, we encourage Georgia to sustain momentum in its overall reform efforts, which we will continue to support. NATO highly appreciates Georgia's contributions to the NATO Response Force and our operations in Afghanistan and recognizes the sacrifices and contributions the Georgian people have made to our shared security.
13. We reiterate our support to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders. We welcome Georgia's commitment not to use force and call on Russia to reciprocate. We call on Russia to reverse its recognition of the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia as independent states and to withdraw its forces from Georgia. NATO does not recognize the so-called treaties signed between the Georgian region of Abkhazia and Russia in November 2014, and the South Ossetia region of Georgia and Russia in March 2015. These violate Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and blatantly contradict the principles of international law, OSCE principles and Russia's international commitments. We encourage all participants in the Geneva talks to play a constructive role, as well as to continue working closely with the OSCE, the UN, and the EU to pursue peaceful conflict resolution in the internationally recognized territory of Georgia.
14. As we have made clear again with our decision today, we remain committed to the Open Door policy, a founding principle of the Washington Treaty. We encourage partners to continue to implement the necessary reforms and decisions to prepare for membership, and we will continue to offer political and practical support to their efforts. The orientations we have given today fulfil the Wales summit tasking on Montenegro and provide guidance for other aspirants, with a view to the Warsaw summit. We look to them to take the steps necessary to advance their aspirations. Our decisions will remain based on these considerations.

1 Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.