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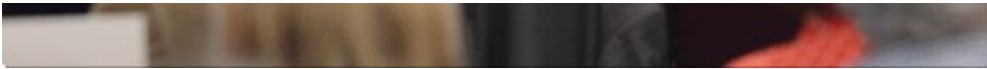


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Reading Eagle: Tim Leedy | Metodija Koloski, co-founder and president of the United Macedonia Diaspora headquartered in Washington, speaks Wednesday at a luncheon of the World Affairs Council of Greater Reading at the Inn at Reading, Wyomissing.

United Macedonia Diaspora president makes American case for Macedonia

By [Bruce Posten](#)

Thursday October 15, 2015 12:01 AM

WYOMISSING, PA — Many people believe the Republic of Macedonia is a part of Greece but it is not.

It is a neighbor of Greece, and the Greeks have exerted influence over Macedonia, preventing it from entry into the European Union or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The consequences of not being in the EU include no extra funding to help the tiny nation deal with the influx of migrants from the Middle East.

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Macedonia, a Balkan state of about 2 million, was once part of communist Yugoslavia, but for more than 20 years since the breakup of Yugoslavia, it has been a landlocked republic bordered by Greece, Bulgaria, Albania, Kosovo and Serbia.

Metodija Koloski, co-founder and president of Washington-based United Macedonia Diaspora, says Americans should be concerned about Macedonia and for the stability of the region.

Koloski presented "The American Case for Macedonia" at a luncheon Wednesday of the World Affairs Council of Greater Reading at the Inn at Reading, Wyomissing.

He estimated there are about a half-million people in the United States of Macedonian heritage.

Koloski said Greece has blocked Macedonia's NATO and EU entry efforts for complex political and cultural reasons, while insisting that the nation be called "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia," claiming Macedonia as a purely Greek name.

"That is like calling the United States the former British Colonies of the United States of America," Koloski said.

Macedonia has been an independent republic since 1991 and a United Nations member since 1993.

Macedonia has been diplomatically recognized and financially aided by the United States even though it's not fully embraced by the greater European organizations, Koloski said.

In return, Macedonia has allied with the U.S. in its interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Koloski said his parents migrated to the United States in the early 1950s because of Yugoslavia's anti-democratic policies.

Macedonia along with Serbia and Greece are on the front lines of the migrant crisis, with 140,000 to 200,000 passing through the nations since June.

"A majority of the migrants who enter Europe through Greece proceed farther into Europe

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through Macedonia's southern border near Gogelija, a town with fewer than 16,000 inhabitants and vastly insufficient infrastructure to deal with such a high number of immigrants," Koloski said.

"The amount of funds that Macedonia receives from the EU to deal with this incredibly complicated issue is laughably inadequate," he said.

He said Macedonia has received 90,656 euros from the EU to deal with the crisis compared to an 8.2 million-euro package to Serbia through 2020 and more than 474 million euros to Greece for the same period.

A euro was worth about \$1.15 in trading Wednesday.

"Resolution of the current crisis is viable only if responsibility is shared," he said. "No single country can rely solely on its own resources to solve a problem as complex as this."

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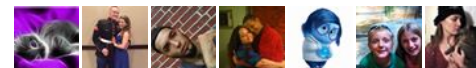


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