

## **Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew receives Republic of North Macedonia President Pendarovski; Tomos of Autocephaly for Archdiocese of Ohrid discussed**



The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, on Monday received at the Mother Church's Phanar-district seat, the visiting president of the Republic of North Macedonia, Stevo Pendarovski.

The Balkan country's head of state was accompanied by his spouse and senior members of the country's presidency.

In his statements posted on the presidency's website, Pendarovski expressed his gratitude to the Ecumenical Patriarch for "...his special role in resolving the ecclesiastical conflict related to our Church."

A historic decision of the Sacred and Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate last May restored eucharistic communion with the Archdiocese of Ohrid, which

represents the dominant Christian faith in the republic of North Macedonia, and also opened the path for its canonical recognition by other Orthodox Churches.

The next phase of recognition, namely, the granting of the Tomos of Autocephaly by the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the Archdiocese of Ohrid, dominated talks during Monday's meeting.

The announcement by Pendarovski's office later added that "...As a state and Church, we expect the highest institution in Orthodoxy to provide us with the official document of ecclesiastical independence – the Tomos of Autocephaly."

The Republic of North Macedonia lies due north of the Greek province of Macedonia, the latter being the land that more closely approximates to the ancient Macedonian Kingdom, and which comprises more than half of geographical Macedonia.