

**UPR 18 – FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA – 30  
JANUARY 2014**

Statement by BULGARIA

Bulgaria welcomes the distinguished delegation, headed by...

We commend the positive developments in the FYROM since the last review, notably the adoption of important legislation pertaining to Human Rights' promotion and protection, as well as the recent increase of the pace of reporting under International Human Rights Instruments. We also welcome the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Human Rights Body.

Referring to some of the issues of concern contained in the reports of treaty bodies, special procedures, regional intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations, Bulgaria would like to make the following recommendations:

- ensure that no disadvantage shall result for citizens from the exercise of their right to identify themselves as belonging to any ethnic group
- enhance the support to the Office of the Ombudsman and strengthen the Commission for Protection Against Discrimination to ensure that both institutions fulfil their duties effectively and independently
- give a strong response to hate speech, including in offline and online media, as well as systematically denounce expressions of intolerance by opinion leaders.

Recognizing the important role of the freedom of expression and the independence of the media for the spirit of tolerance in a democratic society, Bulgaria will continue to follow carefully the measures undertaken by the FYROM to ensure compliance of draft media legislation with relevant international standards.

Finally, Bulgaria would recommend that the Government of the FYROM ensure that no impediments to the preservation, expression, and development of cultural identity by all citizens are created.

Thank you.