

Statement by the Republic of Cyprus on

Bulgaria

Mr. President,

Cyprus would like to join previous speakers in welcoming the Bulgarian delegation and in thanking H.E. *Ms. Katya Todorova, Deputy Minister* for his opening remarks and comprehensive introduction of the country's national report on progress made concerning the implementation of 1st Cycle recommendations.

We seize this opportunity to commend important systemic measures adopted since the last Cycle examination by the Government of Bulgaria, such as the establishment in 2013 of the National Coordination Mechanism on Human Rights and the setting up of specialised Working Groups tasked with following up on the implementation of recommendations.

We would like, also, to welcome the signature and ratification by Bulgaria of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as concrete initiatives currently in progress, aimed at combating human trafficking and eliminating discrimination in all its forms.

Cyprus welcomes the development and progress since 2011 of the National Roma Integration Strategy and, within this framework, **recommends** that Bulgarian authorities intensify their efforts for implementation of their integration policy, especially in the areas of health and education.

I thank you.