



UPR 22nd session

Statement by Sweden in the interactive dialogue on Bulgaria

*Delivered by H E Ambassador Jan Knutsson
Geneva, May 7, 2015 (speaking time 1 min 35 sec)*

Mr President,

Sweden wishes to welcome the delegation and express our thanks for the information related to our advance questions.

During its previous UPR, Bulgaria had accepted a recommendation to take all necessary measures to ensure that detention conditions fully meet international human rights standards. There are currently two detention centers for irregular migrants operated by the Ministry of Interior. Detainees in both facilities have complained about abusive, sometimes violent, treatment by guards, overcrowding and noise, tension among various nationality, limited means to communicate with the outside world, as well as a lack of communication with guards and other authorities. This has resulted in ignorance and confusion about procedures relating to release or to seeking asylum. (Abuses in migrant detention centers violate Article 10 of the ICCPR which requires that persons deprived of their liberty be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.)

Unaccompanied children in Bulgaria are routinely accommodated together with adults in reception centers. Bulgarian authorities do not have any specialized measures to conduct age verification or age assessment of people who appear or claim to be children. The absence of such procedures leaves unaccompanied children vulnerable to detention with adults. Moreover, access to education is non-existent in the open reception centers for unaccompanied and accompanied children alike, in violation of Bulgaria's international obligations (Article 22 of the Refugee Convention, Article 28 of the CRC, and Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights). Sweden recommends the Government of Bulgaria:

- 1) to ensure that all detainees in the custody of the General Directorate of the Border Police and the Ministry of Interior are treated in a humane and dignified manner and that their detention fully complies with Bulgaria's international obligations governing the administrative detention of migrants.
- 2) to not detain children with unrelated adults.

3) to guarantee the right to education by enrolling all migrant children into mainstream Bulgarian schools and provide necessary language support classes to facilitate their integration.

Thank you, Mr. President