**Statement by Bulgaria**

United Nations Human Rights Council

47rd session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

***Review of the Republic of Albania***

4 November 2024

Mr. President,

Bulgaria warmly welcomes the delegation of the Republic of Albania and thanks for the comprehensive presentation of the national report.

We note with appreciation the progress Albania has made in implementing the accepted recommendations of the previous UPR cycle, including the adoption of an approach for inclusive education for children with disabilities and the development and implementation of a national deinstitutionalization plan, as recommended by Bulgaria.

Bulgaria places great importance on Albania’s ongoing efforts to ensure the realization and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, allowing them to self-identify and to preserve their ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural identity. The protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities is an essential part of the Copenhagen criteria for accession of new member states to the EU.

Bulgaria would like to make the following recommendations:

1. Continue the adoption of the remaining by-laws to ensure the full and effective implementation of Law No. 96/2017 on the Protection of National Minorities.
2. Consider creating conditions for at least one year of free pre-school education and free secondary education.

We wish the delegation of Albania every success with this UPR cycle!

Thank you, Mr. President!