**Statement by Bulgaria**

United Nations Human Rights Council

28th session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

***Review of Ukraine***

15 November 2017

Mr. Vice-President,

Bulgaria warmly welcomes the high level Delegation of Ukraine and thanks for the presentation of the national report.

We commend that despite the adverse effect of the armed conflict in the eastern regions of the country and the illegal annexation of Crimea, the Government of Ukraine has achieved progress in the follow-up actions undertaken in compliance with the accepted recommendations from the second UPR cycle. Bulgaria praises the ratification of a number of international human rights instruments. We value the latest positive developments in the normative, policy and institutional framework which contribute to strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights in Ukraine.

Bulgaria remains concerned by the trend of high conflict casualties in Ukraine, particularly among the civil population. We are especially alarmed about the lack of improvement of the humanitarian situation of people living along the conflict line in Eastern Ukraine.

Bulgaria closely follows the developments, related to the recently enacted Law on Education of Ukraine and continues to expect that the rights of the ethnic Bulgarians to study in their mother tongue will be respected. Therefore Bulgaria notes with appreciation that on 6 October 2017 the Government of Ukraine has officially submitted the Law on Education to the Council of Europe/Venice Commission for its qualified opinion. We also welcome the commitment of the Ukrainian Authorities to benefit from the best practices of education in minority languages of the Council of Europe Member States. Bulgaria encourages the Government of Ukraine to take into full consideration the forthcoming opinion of the Venice Commission.

Bulgaria would like to make the following recommendation to Ukraine:

• To step up efforts to promote and protect the rights of the child, in particular the right to education.

• To continue its efforts to advance the empowerment of women and to promote gender equality.

We wish the Delegation of Ukraine a successful outcome of the review!

Thank you, Mr. Vice-President!