**Statement by Bulgaria**

United Nations Human Rights Council

43rd session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

***Review of Serbia***

10 May 2023

Mr. President,

Bulgaria welcomes the high-level delegation of the Republic of Serbia and thanks for the comprehensive presentation of the national report.

Bulgaria recognizes that the Republic of Serbia as an EU candidate country continues its efforts to promote and protect human rights.

We acknowledge that the recent amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act have introduced improvements to the anti-discrimination legislative framework. We highlight that in December 2021 the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions accredited the Protector of Citizens of the Republic of Serbia with A status.

Bulgaria notes that the Republic of Serbia has taken steps to upgrade its legislation on the rights of national minorities and to facilitate the economic and social development of their regions. At the same time, we witness that the Dimitrovgrad/Tzaribrod and Bosilegrad municipalities in Eastern Serbia, where the Bulgarian national minority lives are still the least economically developed municipalities in the country and face multiple ecological challenges that remain unaddressed.

Bulgaria would like to offer the following recommendations:

1. Continue to pay particular attention to non-discrimination treatment and full respect of the fundamental rights of persons belonging to all national minorities throughout Serbia, including achieving tangible improvements in the effective exercise of their rights in the fields of education, use of minority languages, access to media and religious services in minority languages and representation in public administration and representative bodies.
2. Promptly address all manifestations of ethnic intolerance and hate speech, especially those based on fabricated historical narratives;
3. Expedite the translation into Bulgarian of textbooks for primary and secondary schools, which are necessary for the quality education in the mother tongue of students from the Bulgarian national minority.

We wish the delegation of the Republic of Serbia a successful outcome of the review!

Thank you, Mr. President.