**Statement by Bulgaria**

United Nations Human Rights Council

33rd session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

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

6 May 2019

Mr. President,

Bulgaria welcomes the high level Delegation of the Republic of Albania.

Bulgaria notes with appreciation that the Republic of Albania attaches high priority for the promotion and protection of human rights, including in the EU membership negotiation process.

Bulgaria commends the Republic of Albania for the steps taken to reinforce the protection of human rights of persons, belonging to national minorities. The Law on protection of national minorities in the Republic of Albania, adopted in 2017, recognizes for the first time all national minorities in the country, including the Bulgarian national minority, and encompasses guarantees for their equal and non-discriminatory treatment.

Bulgaria recognizes that the draft Law on Population Census 2020 is being elaborated in line with Eurostat and UN recommendations and is accompanied by consultative process, which includes meetings with representatives of the national minorities.

Our expectations are that the Albanian authorities will reasonably approach the elaboration of legalization on the private real estate property in the country.

We recognize the progress of the Republic of Albania in strengthening equality between women and men, protecting the rights of the child and promoting the integration of the persons with disabilities in society.

Bulgaria would like to make the following recommendations:

1) To take further measures to fully implement the Law on protection of national minorities in the Republic of Albania, to ensure that the rights of the persons, belonging to national minorities are protected, including their rights of self-identification, right to learn the mother tongue, right to use minority language, etc.

2) Discontinue the practice of temporary placement of children in institutions and develop and implement a comprehensive deinstitutionalization strategy;

3) Take further steps to provide accessibility, welfare services and social assistance to all persons with disabilities, especially children.

Thank you, Mr. President!