**Statement by Bulgaria**

United Nations Human Rights Council

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

***Review of Norway***

6 May 2019

Mr. President,

Bulgaria welcomes the high level Delegation of Norway and thanks for the comprehensive presentation of the national report.

Bulgaria commends that most of the accepted and partially accepted recommendations of the Second UPR have been or are being implemented by Norway.

Bulgaria takes positive note that a separate chapter on human rights has been included in the Constitution and welcomes the establishment of the Norwegian Human Rights Institute in 2015, which has been accredited with A - status.

We appreciate the valuable support provided to our country under the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism in key human rights areas, as well as the continuing dialogue with the Norwegian authorities on issues of mutual interest in the area of the rights of the child and children welfare.

Bulgaria would like to make the following recommendations:

1. Elaborate and establish clear criteria regarding the best interests of the child according the international instruments applicable to Norway and guarantee that the municipal child welfare services take into consideration the child’s background when providing a foster care in cases with international involvements;
2. Consider surveying the current practices relating to separation of children from their parents, deprivation of rights of biological parents and limitation of contact rights of biological parents with their separated children with a view that such forceful steps are only used as exceptional measures and measures of last resort;
3. Take appropriate steps to facilitate the communication between the Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs of Norway and the competent central authorities and specialized agencies of the countries which citizens face problems on issues related to protection and promotion of the rights of children and their welfare in Norway.

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

Thank you, Mr. President!