**Third Cycle of Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Bulgaria**

**Geneva, 6 November 2020**

**Statement of Mr. Rumen DIMITROV, Deputy Minister of Culture**

**Dear Madam President,**

**Dear Delegates,**

**Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Thank you for the opportunity to send a message during the third Universal Periodic Review for Bulgaria regarding the media freedom and the media pluralism in the country.

Bulgaria is taking active measures in this area, some of which are legal amendments aimed at the transparency on media ownership.

We have prepared amendments to the Radio and Television Act to give the necessary tools to the media regulator to exercise more effective control, as well as more guarantees of independence. It will also have more powers to protect the rights and the interests of the consumers, with a particular focus on the people with disabilities. The powers of the regulator to protect the audience from racist and xenophobic content are to be increased. The provisions apply to both traditional media and video hosting platforms.

Bulgarian government is also paying attention to strengthening the administrative capacity of the regulator. To this end, an increase in its budget is foreseen in the coming year. It will cover the additional maintenance costs, as well as will help develop a media content monitoring system.

Media regulator maintains and updates a register of the electronic media ownership. Since January 2020, an additional opportunity for disclosure of media ownership has been introduced by linking its register with the Commercial Register and the Non-Profit Legal Entities Register maintained by the Registry Agency.

Another regulatory measure introduced in the country is the obligation for media service providers to annually announce information about their ownership and financing. This is possible through the creation and maintenance of a public register by the Ministry of Culture of the obliged persons, which discloses the declared information about their actual owner.

The topic of media pluralism is also important for us and is included in the project of the National Programme for Development of Bulgaria 2030. This demonstrates the country's long-term commitment to improve the media environment in line with the international standards. Following the adoption of the programme, specific action plans for the implementation of the measures will be developed.

**Thank you for your attention!**