**U.S. Statement at the Universal Periodic Review of Bulgaria,**

**36th Session, November 5, 2020**

The United States recommends that Bulgaria:

1. Enact reforms to promote the independence of the judiciary and to eliminate corruption in the judicial system.
2. Promote equal rights and protections for women and members of minority groups, especially Roma, by revising domestic violence legislation and eliminating discrimination in education and employment.
3. Promote freedom of expression and media independence by requiring media ownership and transparency.

Corruption and interference in the judicial process undermines confidence in the rule of law. We encourage Bulgaria to continue efforts to reform its judicial system. We note Bulgaria’s efforts to improve educational opportunities for Roma, but the government must do more to combat discrimination in society and the workforce. Media independence is at risk due to corporate influence and political pressure, financial dependence on state advertising, and an increasing, nontransparent concentration of media ownership and distribution networks.

Word Count: 142

Approved: IO/FO – Pamela D. Pryor, SBO [PDP]

Drafted: DRL/EUR – Brian Campbell, ext. 7-5290; cell: 856-803-8613

Cleared:

IO/FO: Eric Ueland (ok)

IO/FO: Lisa Browne (ok)

DRL/FO – KMcDonald (ok)

DRL/MLGA - LSicade (ok)

DRL/EUR – TSelinger (ok)

DRL/SHR - MAsnes (ok)

DRL/ILA - SEpstein (ok)

DRL/IRF – SLibraty (ok)

DRL/MLGA- MCovington (ok)

DRL/MLGA – Lsalaka (ok)

DRL/GP - MDolan (ok)

IO/HRH – TWestfall (ok)

L/HRR – AMelamud (ok)

Mission Geneva – SGarcia (ok)

S/GWI – BDeRosa-Joynt (ok)

J/TIP – FTadle (ok)

EUR/CE – BCorby (ok)

J – NKrystel (ok)

P – MDe La Garza (ok)

S/P – CWeiland (ok)

D – SMarvasti (ok)

NSC – JFoltz (no response)