**Universal Periodic Review 36 – Bulgaria**

**Statement by the Kingdom of the Netherlands** – **6 November 2020**

Madam President,

The Kingdom of the Netherlands thanks the delegation of Bulgaria for the presentation of its national report.

It is positive that Bulgaria has continued to improve civil and socio-economic human rights. These improvements need to be irreversible and sustainable.

Yet concerns regarding the lack of media pluralism and freedom of the press in Bulgaria still remain. We encourage implementation of the highest standards as regards to freedom of expression and transparent media ownership in line with the observations in the recent rule of law report of the European Commission. Furthermore, the rights of vulnerable groups, such as LGBTI and the Roma community remain a concern.

The Netherlands **recommends** Bulgaria to :

1. Investigate all forms of attacks, threats and violence against journalists and to ensure full accountability.
2. Ensure equal access of the Roma community to healthcare, education and labour structures, in line with the National Roma Integration Strategy, and to share visible results.

The Netherlands wishes Bulgaria success with the implementation of the recommendations it receives during this third UPR cycle.

Thank you Madam President.