**Statement by Bulgaria**

United Nations Human Rights Council

36th session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

***Review of the Republic of Belarus***

2 November 2020

Madame President,

Bulgaria welcomes the distinguished delegation of Belarus and thanks for the comprehensive presentation of the national report.

Despite the efforts in the implementation of recommendations accepted by Belarus following the second cycle of the UPR, we remain deeply concerned over the serious violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially during the post-electoral period in 2020.

We call on the Belarusian government to put an end to all acts of intimidation, arbitrary detentions, forced exile and excessive use of force against opposition members, peaceful protesters and independent media workers.

Bulgaria also strongly condemns the persisting attacks against the freedom of opinion and expression as well as media independence and pluralism in Belarus.

Bulgaria reiterates its call on the Belarusian government to release all political prisoners and detainees and to undertake an independent and impartial investigation into all alleged human rights violations.

Furthermore, Bulgaria regrets to see the lack of progress with regard to phasing out the death penalty. We **recommend** to Belarus to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR aimed at the abolition of the death penalty.

Thank you!