

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR SVETOSLAV SPASSOV
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
AT THE 939th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

31 January 2013

Mr. Chairman!

I would like to thank the Delegation of the United States for drawing the attention to some aspects of the rights of Roma in Bulgaria. The message will be duly conveyed to my authorities.

The US Delegation referred to the amendments to the Law on Civil Registration, adopted in May 2012 by the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria. In this context my delegation wishes to make the following clarifications:

Those amendments stipulate that in order to arrange their address registration Bulgarian citizens, including Roma, may submit not only property deeds or tenant agreements, but also other documents to prove the use of the housing units such as contracts for electricity, central heating and water supply or sanitation. In case that the inhabitant of such a housing unit is not in a position to submit any of these documents, the amendments to the Law on Civil Registration provide for a special procedure when a commission is set by the mayor of the municipality to examine circumstances and give opinion on the address registration. The commission is composed of officials of the municipality, the Agency for Social Assistance and the territorial department of the Ministry of Interior. The mayor of the municipality makes a decision on the address registration based on the opinion of the commission.

The amendments to the Law on Civil Registration enable all Bulgarian citizens, including those of Roma origin, who have not been in a possession of identity documents due to the unsettled address registration in the past, to apply for and to receive identity documents.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman!