

STATEMENT

ENGLISH only

of Ambassador Svetoslav Spasov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Bulgaria to the UN, the OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna in response to the report by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Amb. Lamberto Zannier

Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

Bulgaria fully aligns itself with the statement made by Austria on behalf of the European Union, and would like to take this opportunity and add some remarks in its national capacity.

Bulgaria warmly welcomes the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Lamberto Zannier back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his efforts in helping participating States fulfil their commitments, address concerns, and defuse tensions with regard to persons belonging to minorities.

High Commissioner, Bulgaria carefully studied your report and would like to address several concerns. We welcome the information about your recent visit to Serbia as well as your continued focus on the issues relating to the rights of persons belonging to national minorities in the country. We are thankful for the information regarding the public consultation process resulting in an updated legal framework covering the rights and freedoms of national minorities.

We are worried by the shared information in your report about undue political interference in the upcoming elections of the National Councils of the National Minorities.

Bulgaria would like to commend your commitment to follow closely the electoral process for National Councils of the National Minorities in Serbia during all its stages and encourages you to remain actively seized with the matter.

Thank you!