



**ПОСТОЯННО ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛСТВО НА РЕПУБЛИКА БЪЛГАРИЯ**  
ПРИ СЛУЖБАТА НА ООН И ДРУГИТЕ МЕЖДУНАРОДНИ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ В ЖЕНЕВА  
**MISSION PERMANENTE DE LA REPUBLIQUE DE BULGARIE**  
AUPRES DE L'ONU ET DES AUTRES ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES A GENEVE  
**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**  
TO THE UN AND TO THE OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN GENEVA

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**61<sup>st</sup> SESSION**  
**COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS**  
**GENEVA**  
**16 MARCH 2005**

## **S T A T E M E N T**

**BY**

**H.E. MR. PETKO DRAGANOV**  
**DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
**REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

Mr. Chairman,  
Madam High Commissioner for Human Rights,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel deeply honoured to speak before the Commission today.

Let me first of all warmly congratulate Ms. Louise Arbour on taking up the responsible position of High Commissioner for Human Rights and express our confidence that under her guidance the Office will continue to work efficiently for broadening the world's commitment to the fundamental notion of human rights.

May I also congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, upon your election and wish you well in the performance of your duties. Our sincere word of appreciation goes as well to the members of the Bureau, the special rapporteurs and representatives, and to all others who have participated in the preparation of the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of our Commission.

Bulgaria aligned itself with the statement of the European Union, delivered by H.E. Mr. Jean Asselborn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Let me just try to make a few points.

Mr. Chairman,

The concerted efforts of the world community to enhance the efficiency of the international protection of human rights correspond to the vision of the Secretary General that the internationally recognized human rights standards should be mainstreamed in all spheres of activity of the UN system.

In this context, my country is seriously examining the proposals made in the High Level Panel's report for reforming the international protection of human rights system. We consider them as a good foundation for further efforts towards rationalization. The idea of universalizing the CHR membership has its positive aspects, but we should also be aware of a certain risk of bringing the promotion and protection of human rights to the lowest common denominator, thus lowering, rather than raising the Commission's standards. We should probably, therefore, exploit the idea of higher objective criteria to be formulated for the membership in this Commission. We regard the proposal of an annual report by the High Commissioner on the situation of human rights worldwide as a viable initiative that could contribute to improving the monitoring and to strengthening the basis for country resolutions. I think it is important as well to reconfirm our support for the Office of the High Commissioner and not allow any limitations being imposed on its mandate in the process of reforming the system. It is particularly urgent to refine the mechanisms for adequate and fast reaction to human rights crisis

situations, so that more emphasis is placed on prevention rather than rehabilitation. To our view the effectiveness of the CHR could also be improved by decreasing the number and streamlining the substance of our thematic resolutions. Bulgaria is ready to play its role as a full member of the Commission which is why we are candidates for membership in 2008.

Mr. Chairman,

The protection of human rights and freedoms and the full observance of the international human rights standards, in particular for those who are most vulnerable, is a top priority in Bulgaria's national and international agenda.

We would like to reiterate the importance of the full and adequate implementation of the Convention on the rights of the child provisions. Last year the Bulgarian National Assembly adopted a National Action Plan against the sexual exploitation of children. The State Agency for Child Protection is supervising the implementation of the Action Plans in all its specific aspects.

Fully committed to the principle that all persons should live in dignity and enjoy all human rights, Bulgaria would like to reiterate its support to the elaboration of an International Convention on the rights and dignity of disabled persons. My government continues its efforts to provide persons with disabilities with equal opportunities and hopes that a special law on Persons with Disabilities will be adopted by the National Assembly soon.

In tune with the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and last year's resolution of the CHR on that issue, my Government established a special National Commission, which adopted a detailed National Programme of Action and started working actively for the realisation of its provisions in cooperation with interested partner countries. We believe that countries of destination as well as countries of origin and transit, should all collaborate and each play their part through concerted efforts and shared responsibilities.

The 2004 Bulgarian chairmanship of the OSCE placed the human rights education high on the agenda as a powerful tool for promoting human rights and security and for combating racism, xenophobia, intolerance, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and other forms of discrimination.

Mr. Chairman,

The interdependence between development and human rights is an axiom. The profound economic changes in Bulgaria during the process of transition towards a market economy have affected all segments of the society. Due to a number of objective reasons, some groups, like the Roma, suffered from unfavourable socio-economic conditions, which rendered them vulnerable. The

basic principles of humanism are violated when large groups of people slow down their development, as compared to the rest of society. With the task of improving the situation of the Roma the Bulgarian Government took steps to strengthen the national anti-discrimination legislation and developed relevant policies and programmes with additional budgetary support. My Government joined the World Bank Initiative to declare the period 2005-2015 as the Roma Inclusion Decade which was officially launched on February 1<sup>st</sup> 2005, in Bulgaria. Allow me, Mr. Chairman, at the end of my address to hand in a copy of the Decade Declaration which was signed in Sofia by the prime ministers and senior government representatives of the Decade Participating States, as it confirms their collective commitment to the improvement of the status of the Roma and their equal integration in society.

I would like to single out one more issue which has been extremely important and even painful for Bulgaria and the Bulgarian society in the last six years. The processes of work migration in a globalizing world, along with all the other ensuing consequences, has posed the problem of effective implementation of international instruments on human rights by the independent national judiciary. We have realized that this problem transcends national borders. It is paramount that, even without putting in motion the existing monitoring mechanisms, all countries be guided by the internationally accepted standards when it comes to prosecuting and trial of foreign nationals.

In conclusion, Mr.Chairman, Bulgaria would like to reaffirm the fundamental importance of the Commission's work in forging an ever widening consensus with respect to the recognition of the universal character of human rights and the need for their full realization throughout the world. Let me reiterate the commitment of my country to contribute, together with the other delegations, to the constructive and effective work of the Commission's 61<sup>st</sup> session.

Thank you.