

**Statement of the Republic of Bulgaria on
Agenda item 1(f): General Discussion**

**10th Session of the
Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against
Corruption**

11-15 December 2023, Atlanta, USA

Distinguished President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

Bulgaria fully aligns with the Statement of the EU and would like to add a few remarks in a national capacity.

I would like first to express our gratitude to the United States for hosting the 10th Session of this Conference, which marks the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Convention against Corruption – one of the most impactful instruments for combatting corruption on global level.

Corruption undermines the stability and security of our societies. It poses a serious threat to the values of democracy and jeopardizes sustainable development and the rule of law.

Therefore, preventing and combating corruption at all levels and in all its forms should be a priority and responsibility of each State. It requires strong political will, active participation of the civil society, effective and transparent institutions and effective international cooperation.

The implementation review of the UN Convention against corruption plays an important role in the global fight against corruption. The review process helps State Parties to self-reflect and to identify good practices and gaps in the implementation of the Convention.

Despite the significant delays in the completion of the country reviews, Bulgaria believes that the resulting backlog could be remedied soon and the second review cycle of the Implementation Review Mechanism could be completed in a timely manner.

Bulgaria is at the finishing line of its second review cycle having already hosted an on-site visit this July and currently at the stage of approving of the executive summary. In addition to our own review, we are actively involved in other countries' reviews.

Fighting corruption has been a longstanding priority for the Bulgarian Government. A clear expression of the will of the Bulgarian State to counter corruption is the National Strategy for Preventing and Countering Corruption (2021-2027) and the Roadmap for its implementation,

adopted in 2021, which are the country's main strategic documents for fighting corruption. The Government is committed to building up the capacity, increasing transparency in the work of the anti-corruption bodies as well as of the bodies entrusted with control and sanction powers in the administration.

In the area of judicial reform, the Bulgarian Government is taking active steps towards strengthening the independence of the judiciary, introducing an effective mechanism for holding the Prosecutor General and his/her deputies accountable for criminal offences, increasing the institutional capacity of the Inspectorate of the Supreme Judicial Council, fostering prevention of corruption amongst magistrates, etc.

In the last years, Bulgaria also undertook a number of significant measures to bring its anti-bribery legislation in line with the standards of the UN Convention against corruption and other international treaties.

We amended our Criminal Code to cover explicitly cases of active bribery and trading in influence where the advantage is intended for a third party. Major changes were introduced in the corporate liability regime. Further amendments were adopted to expressly ban the tax deductibility of bribes and bribe expenses. We are glad to share that the National Assembly adopted a separate Law on Whistleblower's Protection at the beginning of this year, which lays down detailed measures for protection of whistle-blowers in the public and private sectors who report corruption.

We highly appreciate the work of the Conference of the State Parties to this Convention and its subsidiary bodies. Bulgaria attaches great importance to the review mechanism and the recommendations received, which are considered valuable guidelines supporting the national anticorruption reforms.

Thank you, Mr. President.