

**16th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD
Statement – H.E. Ambassador Lachezara Stoeva,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Bulgaria to the UN
New York, 13-15 June 2023**

Mr.Chair,

Let me begin by congratulating you and the Bureau on the excellent stewardship of the Conference. You can count on Bulgaria's full support.

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union and I would like to add a few points in my national capacity.

This year's topic on harmonizing national policies and strategies with CRPD is of great relevance as a lot more needs to be done to ensure that persons with disabilities can fully enjoy their rights. Bulgaria's policies are based on the steadfast commitment to support persons with disabilities in exercising their rights by providing services and support in the fields of employment, accessibility, and social inclusion.

The implementation of the **National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities** for the period 2021-2030 plays a key role in this direction. The Strategy's goals and priorities aim to implement the commitments stemming from CRPD, which Bulgaria ratified in 2012, as well as to implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The core national legal instrument related to the rights of persons with disabilities in Bulgaria is the **Law on Persons with Disabilities**, in force since 2019. This law promotes, protects, and guarantees the full and equal exercising of the rights of persons with disabilities, in compliance with CRPD requirements. This law also established the National Council for Persons with Disabilities under the Council of Ministers and the Monitoring Board - an authority intended to promote and monitor the implementation of CRPD. In addition, the Law on **Personal Assistance** came into force in 2019. This legislation guarantees state financial support for personal assistance so that people requiring personal assistance will be facilitated in exercising their basic rights, will have more choices, a greater ability to live independently, and will be more included in society. Adhering to the CRPD principle of an individual approach in assessing disabilities and social inclusion options, Bulgaria's personal assistance policy is based on a personal assessment to establish the scope of needs. Furthermore, in 2021 the CRPD-compliant Law on Bulgarian Sign Language (BSL) came into force. This legislation promotes the recognition of BSL, as well as the right of persons with hearing impairment or with hearing and vision impairment to express themselves and to access information in BSL.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm Bulgaria's commitment to the full inclusion of persons with disabilities. We are convinced that societies can only be successful if they empower all individuals, do not discriminate, and support persons with disabilities in the realization of their full potential. And persons with disabilities are persons with agency and with great potential. We all need to work together to ensure that this potential is fully developed and utilized.

Thank you!