EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

THE DOUBLE TAXATION RELIEF AND INTERNATIONAL TAX ENFORCEMENT (BULGARIA) ORDER 2015

2015 No. 1890

1. This explanatory memorandum has been prepared by HM Revenue & Customs ("HMRC") and is laid before the House of Commons by Command of Her Majesty.

2. Purpose of the instrument

The Order brings into effect a convention between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Bulgaria for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and on Capital Gains ("the Arrangements").

3. Matters of special interest to the Select Committee on Statutory Instruments

None.

4. Legislative context

4.1 This Order is being made to give effect in UK legislation to the Arrangements. The Arrangements are scheduled to the Order, and are thus given domestic legislative effect.

4.2 This Order does not implement EU legislation.

5. Territorial extent and application

This Order applies to all of the United Kingdom.

6. European Convention on Human Rights

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury, David Gauke, has made the following statement regarding Human Rights:

"In my view the provisions of the Double Taxation Relief and International Tax Enforcement (Bulgaria) Order 2015 are compatible with the Convention rights".

7. Policy background

- ***What is being done and why***

7.1 Arrangements of the kind scheduled to the Order aim to eliminate the double taxation of income or gains arising in one country and paid to residents of another country. They do this by allocating the taxing rights that each treaty partner has under its domestic law over the same income and gains and/or by providing relief from double taxation. They provide additional protection for taxpayers by specific measures combating discrimination in tax treatment. More generally, such arrangements benefit the taxpayer by ensuring certainty of treatment and, as far as possible, by reducing compliance burdens.

7.2 They also serve an Exchequer protection role by including provisions to combat tax avoidance and evasion — partly by measures providing for the exchange of information between revenue authorities.

7.3 They also encourage and maintain international consensus on the appropriate tax treatment of cross-border economic activity and thus promote international trade and investment. The UK's double taxation arrangements largely follow the approach adopted in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's ("OECD") *Model Tax Convention on Income and on Capital*. The Arrangements scheduled to the Order continue that approach.

- ***Consolidation***

7.4 Not applicable.

8. Consultation outcome

HMRC regularly consults with external interested parties, including business representatives, about the effectiveness of existing arrangements for the avoidance of double taxation and fiscal evasion as well as new needs. The annual treaty negotiating programme is agreed with Ministers and published on the HMRC website.

9. Guidance

General guidance on the operation of the UK's double taxation agreements can be found on the HMRC website at:
http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/manuals/intmanual/INTM150000.htm

or in the Double Taxation Relief Manual at:
http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/manuals/dtmanual/index.htm.

This Manual will be updated once the arrangements enter into force.

10. Impact

10.1 The impact on business, charities or voluntary bodies is negligible. The provisions of the Arrangements do not introduce new tax burdens; rather, they provide relief from tax and thus are of benefit to business both large and small. Taxpayers may have to make a claim to HMRC or the other country's fiscal authority in order to benefit from the Arrangements.

10.2 There is no impact on the UK public sector. HMRC already operates the terms of many other similar arrangements currently in force.

10.3 A Tax Information and Impact Note has not been prepared for this Order as it gives effect to a previously announced policy to enact a double taxation convention.

11. Regulating small business

The Arrangements only apply to small businesses if they have taxed income arising in Bulgaria. As with other businesses, the impact is negligible. No special approach for small business is therefore necessary.

12. Monitoring & review

There are no specific plans to review this Statutory Instrument. However, both Governments will keep the Arrangements scheduled to the Order under consideration to ensure that they continue to meet the policy objectives set out above in section 7.

13. Contact

Tom Matthews at HM Revenue & Customs (tel: 03000 585476/email: tom.o.matthews@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk) can answer any queries regarding the Order.