



Raphaelswerk e.V.

BULGARIA: Information for refugees who are returned to Bulgaria

Last updated in October 2023

Under the Dublin Regulation, refugees may be transferred to the EU country responsible (in most cases, the country of first entry), so that the asylum procedure is carried out there. Refugees who have already been recognised in another EU country will be returned to that country on the basis of the safe third country clause because their asylum application is not admissible in Germany.

For many refugees, their imminent return to another EU country creates great uncertainty.

Our guide is intended for advisers, voluntary support groups and people who are affected. It is supposed to show existing services and contacts. Refugees will be given information about their situation after being returned as well as addresses of organisations they may contact locally for support. However, no assessment of these organisations and services is made.

Many services offering help in Bulgaria are short-term projects and not subsidised on a regular basis. At the time when the information provided herein was compiled (October 2023), there was only a small number of permanent support structures. We therefore do not claim that the list is exhaustive. This report must not be used as general proof of existing services offering help.

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Preliminary remark

As regards the current situation for asylum seekers in Bulgaria, we especially refer to the report of the Swiss Refugee Council: "Bulgarien: Aktuelle Situation für Asylsuchende und Personen mit Schutzstatus, die unter der Dublin-III-Verordnung oder bilateralen Rückübernahmeabkommen überstellt werden, inkl. Rechtsprechung" (Bulgaria: Current situation for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of protection who are transferred under the Dublin III Regulation or bilateral readmission agreements, incl. court decisions) of 6 August 2023, retrievable at <https://www.fluechtlingshilfe.ch/publikationen/dublin-laenderberichte>.

The Jesuiten-Flüchtlingsdienst Deutschland reports on the situation of refugees after being returned from Germany to Bulgaria and on the problems they encounter: <https://www.jrs-germany.org/news/not-nach-rueckueberstellung>

Procedure after re-entry into Bulgaria

The State Agency for Refugees (SAR) informs the border police of the arrival of returnees. The Agency specifies whether the returnees are to be taken to a reception centre for refugees or to a detention centre. That depends on the stage of the returnee's asylum procedure.

What needs to be done first?

That depends on whether the person concerned left Bulgaria while the asylum procedure was in progress or whether he/she had not yet initiated an asylum procedure in Bulgaria before his/her departure. Depending on the situation, different steps must be taken.

1. The person concerned had not yet lodged an application for asylum in Bulgaria before his/her departure:

The person concerned applies for asylum in accordance with the procedure described below.

2. The person concerned had already lodged an application for asylum in Bulgaria and left Bulgaria during the asylum procedure:

a) A decision in favour of granting the asylum application has been taken: Protection status has been granted. The person concerned has residence status in Bulgaria.

b) No decision has yet been taken on the asylum application:

Asylum procedures can be suspended because of the refugee's absence. The procedure is resumed if no decision has been taken on the case. The application to reopen the procedure must be filed with the State Agency for Refugees (SAR). To do so, you should contact a legal adviser.

Until the procedure is reopened, the person concerned is not entitled to accommodation and health care. In that case, the returnee may be detained pending deportation.

c) The asylum application was rejected:

If the asylum application was rejected with final and binding effect, the returnee may be detained pending deportation, mostly in the detention centres in Busmantsi near Sofia or in Lyubimets near the Turkish border.

An asylum application is deemed rejected with final and binding effect if and when the notice of rejection was delivered and no appeal was lodged within the prescribed time limit.

Persons whose asylum application was rejected with final and binding effect are deemed irregular migrants. They are not entitled to accommodation and health care. Due to a lack of documents, they generally have no access to the labour market and to basic provisions and services.

3. Recognised refugees in Bulgaria: the person concerned had already been granted protection status when he/she left Bulgaria

International protection can be withdrawn or can expire if status holders fail to have their identity papers extended within the prescribed time limit of 30 days when the papers expire. In the case of subsidiary protection, the documents expire after 3 years; if refugee status has been granted, they expire after 5 years. An application for issue or extension of identity papers is filed with the Migration Directorate in Sofia or the regional offices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Mol).

Returnees should check whether their protection status is still valid or whether it has been withdrawn. If the status is still valid, they should apply for issue of new identity papers as soon as possible. It is best to contact a lawyer or an advisory centre that can support them in this regard (see addresses for legal advice in the annex).

If the status is no longer valid, the option of taking legal action against such withdrawal should be examined.

Returnees whose protection status has been withdrawn and who, as a result, have no right of residence any longer can be arrested when entering the country.¹ They must lodge a new asylum application, which will be treated as a subsequent application.

Beneficiaries of protection in Bulgaria who were deported to Bulgaria from another country are not entitled to accommodation. Without identity documents and without a registered address, they have no access to social services.

Residence status in Bulgaria

International protection:

- **Refugee status** (*статут на беганец*): unlimited residence status. The person concerned is granted a residence permit ("card of a refugee") that is valid for 5 years

¹ *Bulgarien: Aktuelle Situation für Asylsuchende und Personen mit Schutzstatus, die unter der Dublin-III-Verordnung oder bilateralen Rückübernahmeabkommen überstellt werden, inkl. Rechtsprechung* (Bulgaria: Current situation for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of protection who are transferred under the Dublin III Regulation or bilateral readmission agreements, incl. court decisions), report of the Swiss Refugee Council, 6/8/2023, <https://www.fluechtlingshilfe.ch/publikationen/dublin-laenderberichte>, p. 19, last retrieved on 19/10/2023

and may be extended. He/she is entitled to family reunification. With a few exceptions, recognised refugees have the same rights as Bulgarian citizens.

- **Subsidiary protection** (humanitarian status – *хуманитарен статус*): unlimited residence status. The person concerned is granted a residence permit ("card of an alien with humanitarian status") that is valid for 3 years and may be extended. He/she is entitled to family reunification. Persons entitled to subsidiary protection have the same rights as third-country nationals with a permanent residence permit.

Procedures under the law of residence/asylum procedures

The wish to apply for asylum may be expressed vis-à-vis the State Agency for Refugees or other state authorities, either in the country or at the border. Subsequently, asylum seekers are registered by the State Agency for Refugees and file their application for asylum in person.

After entering the country illegally, most asylum seekers are detained at first until they are taken to a reception centre for asylum seekers. There they are registered by the State Agency for Refugees and their asylum application is recorded formally.

After registration, they are given a provisional identification document, the "registration card".

Subsequently, asylum seekers are invited to an interview. During the interview, the flight as well as the reasons for the asylum application are described. If further clarification is required, a second interview may take place. An interpreter is present during the interview. Before the interview, asylum seekers are asked whether they wish to deal with a person of the same sex during the interview and for interpreting.

According to various reports², there are problems with interpreting during asylum procedures because for many languages there are no interpreters and the quality is often poor. This concerns registration, the interview in the asylum procedure and the appeal procedure. Moreover, the authorities do not always inform asylum seekers of the asylum procedure and their rights in a language they understand. Often, this is only done by NGOs.

A decision on lodged asylum applications is to be taken within six months. This period may be extended by another 9 months. The total duration of the asylum procedure is not supposed to exceed 21 months. There may be delays and a longer duration of the procedure.

An accelerated procedure may be carried out in the case of manifestly unfounded applications. In such cases, a decision must be taken within 14 days of lodging the application.

Decision:

The decision on the asylum application is given in writing and communicated in a personal talk, during which the result is explained.

² Country Report: Bulgaria; aida Asylum Information Database, 2022 update; <http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/bulgaria> and "Report of the fact-finding mission by Ambassador Tomáš Boček, Special Representative of the Secretary General on migration and refugees, to Bulgaria, 13-17 November 2017", Council of Europe, Information Documents SG/Inf(2018),18, 19/4/2018, <https://rm.coe.int/report-of-the-fact-finding-mission-by-ambassador-tomas-bocek-special-r/16807be041> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/special-representative-secretary-general-migration-refugees/-/srs-g-on-migration-and-refugees-to-visit-bulgaria>, last retrieved on 19/10/2023

If the asylum application was granted, the applicant is given a residence permit, depending on the status granted (refugee status or subsidiary protection).

If the asylum application is rejected, the applicant loses the right of residence in Bulgaria and may be deported to the country of origin.

Appeal:

If a decision against the application is taken, an appeal may be lodged with the competent Regional Administrative Court. The time limit is 14 days for the normal procedure and 7 days for the accelerated procedure. An appeal has a suspensive effect, so that no asylum seeker may be deported until a decision is taken.

Legal assistance:

The law provides for a right to free legal assistance in asylum procedures; however, there are no publicly funded services. Vulnerable persons can apply to the National Legal Aid Bureau for legal assistance. Other asylum seekers should contact an NGO such as the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee in order to obtain legal assistance.

In appeal procedures, a lawyer is provided. However, the lawyer only takes action during the procedure and does not provide any support in connection with lodging the appeal.

Subsequent application:

After the initial asylum application was rejected with final and binding effect, a subsequent application may be lodged. Only if there are new reasons indicating that the refugee is in need of protection or if there is new evidence will a new asylum procedure be carried out.

Asylum seekers who have lodged a subsequent application for asylum are not entitled to accommodation and the provision of food, clothes, etc. and they are not issued with a registration card. Exceptions apply to vulnerable persons.

Detention

Detention prior to deportation

Asylum seekers may be held in detention for illegal entry for an initial period of up to 30 days. Further reasons for detention are missing identification documents or a risk of absconding. After expiry of the 30-day period, a decision on continuing reasons for detention must be taken or the person concerned must be transferred to an open refugee centre. The maximum term of detention for refugees who are detained pending deportation is 18 months. The detention centres (Busmantsi and Lyubimets) are run by the police.

If the detained persons are not transferred to an open refugee centre in time, they can often only gain access to the asylum procedure at a later time.

Detention conditions are poor as regards hygiene, food, security and access to health care, interpreters and legal advice.³

Closed refugee centres

The person concerned may be placed in closed refugee centres (detention) for the entire duration of the asylum procedure. If, for example, the person's identity must be established or

³ Country Report: Bulgaria; aida Asylum Information Database, 2022 update;
<http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/bulgaria>, last retrieved on 19/10/2023

if there is a risk of absconding, the person concerned may be placed there. The centres are operated by the State Agency for Refugees. An action may be brought before the courts against placement in a closed refugee centre.

Competent authorities

Stage of the procedure	Competent authority	English name of the authority
Application	Държавна агенция за бежанците (ДАБ) и друг държавен орган	State Agency for Refugees (SAR) & any state authority
National security clearance	Държавна агенция "Национална сигурност"	State Agency for National Security (SANS)
Dublin procedure	Държавна агенция за бежанците (ДАБ)	State Agency for Refugees (SAR)
Admissibility procedure	Държавна агенция за бежанците (ДАБ)	State Agency for Refugees (SAR)
Accelerated procedure	Държавна агенция за бежанците (ДАБ)	State Agency for Refugees (SAR)
Refugee status determination	Държавна агенция за бежанците (ДАБ)	State Agency for Refugees (SAR)
First appeal	административен съд по местоживееене	Regional Administrative Court
Onward appeal	Върховен административен съд	Supreme Administrative Court

Source: Country Report: Bulgaria; aida Asylum Information Database; 2022 update

What duties do asylum seekers have in Bulgaria?

Asylum seekers are obliged

- to remain in Bulgaria until a decision on the asylum application is taken;
- not to leave the area specified on their registration card ("movement zone") unless this has been approved by the management of their accommodation facility;
- to live at the address approved by the State Agency for Refugees; it is only possible to leave refugee accommodation overnight with the permission of the management of the facility;
- to inform the State Agency for Refugees of any changes in their contact details;
- to attend the interviews at the State Agency for Refugees.

What rights do asylum seekers have in Bulgaria?

As soon as an application for asylum is lodged, asylum seekers are entitled

- to remain in Bulgaria until a decision on the application is taken;
- to remain in Bulgaria until the court gives a decision if an action is brought against a rejected application;
- to accommodation, provision of food and health care;
- to an interpreter during the interviews;
- to free legal assistance.

If asylum seekers are discriminated against or if their rights are infringed, they should contact an advisory centre of an NGO (see addresses in the annex).

Return to the country of origin

Refugees who want to return to their country of origin may receive financial support on certain conditions. Information may be obtained from IOM Bulgaria.

Further information:

<https://refugeelight.bg/en/articles/dobrovolno-zavrschane-i-reintegraciya>

Residence document for asylum seekers (registration card)

After their registration with the State Agency for Refugees, asylum seekers are given a provisional document, the registration card. This card counts as proof of their right of residence in Bulgaria during the asylum procedure. It shows the address at which the asylum seekers are accommodated and in the vicinity of which they may stay. Normally, the card is valid for 3 months and must be extended on a regular basis.

The registration card is required so that asylum seekers may avail themselves of their rights (right of residence, accommodation, financial support, health care).

Entry in the population register

Recognised refugees and persons entitled to subsidiary protection must be entered in the electronic population register (ЕЦГРАОН). To do so, the registration card, the decision on the refugee status or humanitarian status and proof of residence must be presented.

After registration, the identification number EGN (единен граждански номер, ЕГН) is assigned.

Entry in the population register is required so that the residence permit may be issued.

It is a problem that a place of residence must be proved in order to be entered in the population register. The refugee centre in which the person concerned stayed during the asylum procedure may not be given as a place of residence. However, a valid residence permit is required to rent an apartment or the like.

Moreover, a valid residence permit is required to get access to social services, health care, etc.

Accommodation after re-entry

The accommodation of **returnees** depends on their status:

Returnees whose application for asylum was rejected with final and binding effect are not entitled to accommodation. Usually, they are detained pending deportation. Otherwise, they run the risk of becoming homeless.

If the asylum procedure has not been completed yet, returnees may be accommodated in a refugee hostel. However, anyone who has left the hostel or Bulgaria may have lost his/her entitlement to accommodation. For that reason, it is possible that returnees under the Dublin Regulation are not admitted to refugee hostels and they run the risk of becoming homeless. To make matters worse, refugee hostels are generally quite full.⁴ Exceptions only apply to families with children and vulnerable persons, who are given food and accommodation. Other returnees must find a place to stay at their own expense or apply for a place in a shelter for the homeless.

If the asylum procedure was suspended or discontinued during the applicant's absence, there may be delays; it is possible that returnees are only placed in a refugee hostel if their asylum procedure was resumed.

Beneficiaries of protection in Bulgaria who were deported from another country to Bulgaria must find a place to stay on their own. It is not possible for them to be placed in a refugee centre again because they left it when leaving Bulgaria. Consequently, they run a serious risk of becoming homeless.

Moreover, without a registered address, they have no access to state support services such as receipt of social welfare benefits or registration as a job seeker with the Bulgarian employment office.

Asylum seekers who lodge an asylum application in Bulgaria for the first time are entitled to accommodation. In most cases, they are placed in refugee hostels. Families have the right to be accommodated together.

⁴ Cf. Country Report: Bulgaria; aida Asylum Information Database, 2022 update; <http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/bulgaria>, pp. 45/46

Asylum seekers going through the regular procedure who have means of their own may also find a place to live outside the facilities at their own expense. As a result, they lose their entitlement to food and financial support. They generally have no right any more to be admitted to a refugee hostel at a later point in time.

In the case of subsequent applications, there is no right to accommodation. Exceptions apply to vulnerable persons.

Asylum seekers who are placed in refugee hostels are given meals there.

Asylum seekers who live outside the refugee hostels or are not entitled to accommodation have no access to food and psychological support.

Conditions in the refugee hostels, above all hygienic conditions, are often poor. This also concerns the provision of food. Some of the hostels rely on donations (e.g. food, hygiene products, bedlinen, medicines, schoolbooks and other articles for children) because existing supplies are not sufficient. Moreover, the safety of the occupants is inadequate. In addition, there is not enough qualified personnel, for example with regard to interpreting or psychological support.⁵

The period of accommodation in facilities for refugees during the asylum procedure is unlimited. Asylum seekers may also stay there during the appeal procedure.

Persons granted international protection usually have to leave the refugee centre after the decision on their asylum application has been taken. In individual cases, vulnerable persons may stay in the refugee centre for a few months, provided there is a place available.

Financial support for rent for persons granted international protection for a period of six months has been abolished.

For beneficiaries of protection, access to housing is more difficult because valid identification papers are required to sign a lease. As described above, a place of residence is necessary to be issued with such a paper.

In order to rent social housing, it is usually necessary that the person concerned has previously resided in the relevant municipality for a period of 5 to 10 years. The exact requirements vary from town to town.

Voluntary support groups in Germany can support returnees by collecting money as an initial aid for them and transferring it to them as soon as they arrive in Bulgaria. They should not take cash with them.

Cash payments to asylum seekers

By law, asylum seekers who are placed in refugee accommodation are entitled to financial support. However, cash payments to asylum seekers were suspended in 2015. Besides, the amount provided by law was too low to meet the basic needs.

Asylum seekers in refugee accommodation only receive packages of hygiene products. Cost of medication and medical examinations that are not covered by the health service as well as baby products are not covered.

⁵ Cf. Country Report: Bulgaria; aida Asylum Information Database, 2022 update; <http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/bulgaria>, pp. 14/15, p. 74 ff

The law does not provide for financial support for asylum seekers who live outside refugee hostels.

Social services

Persons granted international protection are entitled to all support services that the law provides for Bulgarian citizens.

The competent authority is the local social welfare office (Agency for Social Assistance, ASA).

In practice, most beneficiaries of protection who have returned from abroad do not have access to social services, especially when they have no accommodation. To receive social welfare benefits, a place of residence and a valid identity card are required. Often registration with the local employment office is another requirement.

In addition, for many benefits it is required that the person concerned has previously resided locally for a certain period of time.

Besides, the formalities of applying for social welfare benefits are complicated. Support and advice are only offered by NGOs.

Information on social services for beneficiaries of protection:
<https://www.refugee-integration.bg/en> – Social assistance.

Access to health care

Asylum seekers have health insurance free of charge during the asylum procedure. They are entitled to health care on the same terms as Bulgarian citizens. They choose a general practitioner who will transfer them to a specialist if necessary. Some treatments such as dental treatments are not covered by the insurance and must be paid by the asylum seeker.

The refugee hostels have their own medical practices where basic health care is provided. If necessary, asylum seekers must undergo specialist treatments outside the facilities; however, this is not always possible because they often lack the financial means for co-payments.

Returnees under the Dublin Regulation are normally covered again by health insurance as soon as their asylum procedure is continued. However, there may be delays when it comes to readmitting the person concerned to the health insurance scheme.

If an asylum application was rejected with final and binding effect, there is no access to health care.

There are no special treatments for victims of torture or persons with mental disorders. Some NGOs offer psychological help.

In practice, access to health care is often insufficient; the Bulgarian health care system does not have sufficient funds and there are not enough doctors and nursing staff.

Beneficiaries of protection must pay the health insurance premium themselves as soon as their status is recognised. As a result, many people without means have no health insurance. Access to health care is difficult because of the shortage of doctors. A lack of language skills represents another obstacle.

Access to educational institutions

Children seeking asylum and children of beneficiaries of protection are entitled to school education at regular schools and to vocational training. The State Agency for Refugees generally organises the way from the refugee hostels to the schools. If the refugee hostel is in a remote area, it may be difficult to get to school.

Children who are placed in a closed refugee centre together with their parents often do not have the chance to attend school.

Adult asylum seekers and beneficiaries of protection may take up vocational training and go to state schools and universities. Since qualifications gained in the country of origin are often not recognised, access to university is difficult.

Language courses

Bulgarian courses are only offered by NGOs. In some refugee hostels, Caritas organises language courses given by volunteers. Bulgarian courses are also offered at the integration centres of Caritas and the Bulgarian Red Cross in Sofia.

Access to the labour market

Asylum seekers in possession of a registration card are allowed to work 3 months after their registration in Bulgaria. The work permit is issued by the State Agency for Refugees. With that permit, asylum seekers have unrestricted access to the labour market. If they lose their job, they are entitled to unemployment benefit if they fulfil the requirements for receiving such benefit.

Asylum seekers may also take up vocational training.

Beneficiaries of protection have unrestricted access to the labour market and do not need a work permit. They may register with the Bulgarian employment office as a job seeker and take part in training and employment measures.

In practice, it is difficult for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of protection to find a job due to a lack of language skills and a high level of unemployment in Bulgaria. The recognition of qualifications is problematic as well; often qualifications must be gained again in Bulgaria.

Access to the labour market is very limited for beneficiaries of protection returning from abroad as long as they do not have a registered address. They cannot register with the Bulgarian employment office as a job seeker.

Integration support for beneficiaries of international protection

In practice, there is no integration support for beneficiaries of international protection.

As a result, access to basic social rights, to work and health care is extremely limited. Beneficiaries of international protection run a high risk of living in poverty.

Vulnerable groups

Among the vulnerable persons are children, unaccompanied minors, pregnant women, disabled persons, elderly people, single parents with minor children, persons with serious physical diseases or severe mental disorders, victims of human trafficking as well as persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other forms of severe psychological, physical or sexual violence.

The needs of vulnerable persons should be identified and recorded during the initial medical examination. The identification of vulnerable asylum seekers and their needs by the State Agency for Refugees is not done systematically throughout the country.⁶ The early identification of vulnerable persons is often done by NGOs.

The special needs of vulnerable persons are supposed to be considered when accommodation is provided; however, this is often done at the discretion of the official and without any systematic requirements⁷. No special accommodation is provided in the refugee centres for women, families or traumatised persons.

Psychological support in the reception centres is only offered by NGOs.

Before vulnerable persons are returned, e.g. families with small children, individual guarantees regarding the reception conditions are requested in advance. In most cases, these are obtained through the diplomatic missions in Bulgaria.

In the event that vulnerable persons are returned from Germany, the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (*BAMF*) notifies the competent Dublin Unit in Bulgaria. The notification gives information on the special needs with regard to accommodation and medical care. This also applies, for example, to families who are transferred separately due to violence within the family and are to be placed in different accommodation facilities. The responsibility of the German authorities ends upon arrival in the country of destination and will pass to the authorities in the country of destination.

In practice, however, it becomes apparent that special needs are not always sufficiently taken into account in the country of destination. If possible, advisers should remain in touch with the transferred persons where critical cases are concerned. If their needs are not taken into account after arrival, they can take action, if required, and arrange contact with relief organisations.

⁶ Cf. Country Report: Bulgaria; aida Asylum Information Database, 2022 update; <http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/bulgaria>, p. 83

⁷ Cf. Country Report: Bulgaria; aida Asylum Information Database, 2022 update; <http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/bulgaria>, p. 82

Annex: Where can I get advice and support?

Information material on Bulgaria for refugees in various languages

<http://asylum.bg/>: Online portal containing information for asylum seekers about the asylum procedure, rights and duties, family reunification; in 9 languages (Arabic, Bulgarian, Dari, English, Farsi, French, Pashto, Ukrainian, Urdu).

www.refugee-integration.bg/en/ and <https://refugee.bg/en/>: Information platform of the "Bulgarian Council on Refugees and Migrants" containing information on the integration of beneficiaries of protection in Bulgaria: accommodation, health care, education, work, social services, family reunification; in Bulgarian and English.

<https://migrantlife.bg/en/>: Information platform of the "Foundation for Access to Rights FAR" in Arabic, Bulgarian, English, Farsi, French, Pashto, Russian, Ukrainian and Urdu, containing information for refugees and migrants about the asylum procedure and life in Bulgaria as well as a list of services offering help

Contacts / local advisory services

State Agency for Refugees

State Agency for Refugees with the Council of Ministers

Държавна агенция за бежанците при Министерския Съвет

1233 Sofia

Serdika District

114-B, Maria Luiza Blvd.

Tel. +359 (0)2 80 80 923/24/25

E-mail: sar@saref.government.bg

<https://aref.government.bg/en>

Caritas Sofia

St. Anna Center for Migration and Integration

1 Struma Str.

Sofia 1303

Tel. +359 2 869 63 35

E-mail: st.anna@caritas-sofia.org

www.caritas-sofia.org

Services to support integration of third-country nationals:

social counselling, support in dealing with the authorities, psychological support, language courses, educational opportunities for children and families, job application training and help with job search

Council of Refugee Women

37 Iskar Str

1000 Sofia

Tel.: +359 87 81 36 231; +359 878 136 321, +359 876 766 588

office@crw-bg.org

<http://crw-bg.org/en/>

Services to support integration of third-country nationals:

social counselling, psychological support, support in dealing with the authorities, language courses, educational opportunities for children and families, job application training and help with job search

Bulgarian Red Cross

76 James Boucher blvd.

Sofia 1407

Tel. +359 2 81 64 700

<https://en.redcross.bg/>

Social counselling and advice on integration issues for refugees

Legal advice

Bulgarian Helsinki Committee

1 Uzundjovska Street

1000 Sofia

Tel. +359 2 981 3318, +359 2 980 2049

E-mail: refunit@bghelsinki.org

<https://www.bghelsinki.org/en/>

Legal advice for asylum seekers and refugees

Foundation for Access to Rights

E-mail: office@farbg.eu

Tel. +359 882873238

<https://www.farbg.eu/>

Advice following online request: <https://refugeelight.bg/en/request-assistance>

Legal advice for asylum seekers and refugees

Center for Legal Aid – Voice in Bulgaria

5B, Triaditsa Str., fl.2, office 226

1000 Sofia

Tel. +359 887470742

E-mail: voiceinbulgaria@gmail.com

<https://www.centerforlegalaid.com/en/articles/legal-aid-14>

Legal advice for asylum seekers and refugees

National Legal Aid Bureau

1 Razvigor St.

1421 Sofia

Tel. +359 2 8193200

E-mail: nbpp@nbpp.government.bg

<https://www.nbpp.government.bg/en/>

Free legal assistance for vulnerable asylum seekers in asylum procedures

Information on return to the country of origin

IOM Bulgaria

Tzar Assen str. 77

1463 Sofia

Tel: + 359 2 93-94-774

www.iom.bg

iomsofia@iom.int

Further organisations can be found at:

- <https://asylum.bg/ngo>
- <https://refugee-integration.bg/en> – Authorities and Partners – Civil Society Structures

Sources

- Country Report: Bulgaria; aida Asylum Information Database, 2022 update; <http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/bulgaria>
- State Agency for Refugees, <https://aref.government.bg/en>
- Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC), <http://asylum.bg/>
- Bulgarian Council on Refugees and Migrants <https://www.refugee-integration.bg/en/>
- Caritas Sofia, <http://caritas-sofia.org/en>
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