

INTEGRATION HANDBOOK

**A Starter Pack : Information for Persons Under Temporary
Protection in Bulgaria**

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Bulgaria!

You are about to embark on a long and sometimes difficult journey of adaptation to your new home. Fortunately, many institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are ready to support you every step of the way to help ensure your journey is successful.

This handbook aims to help you take your first steps. You will learn about your rights in Bulgaria with a temporary protection status, your obligations, and where and from whom you can seek support. It will provide you with information about the opportunities available to you in Bulgaria.



PART 1:
**GENERAL
INFORMATION**

What does your status mean?

Temporary protection is an instrument applied within the European Union to provide the fastest possible access to rights (e.g., education, healthcare, and employment) to a large group of foreigners forced to leave their country of origin due to armed conflict. This means that obtaining it is a relatively quick and easy process, and the scope of specific rights is determined by the relevant European and national regulations.

In Bulgaria, temporary protection status allows **access to all basic national sectoral services**. You are entitled to **short-term accommodation support for up to 60 days**, and if you are a vulnerable person, for the entire period of temporary protection. You have access to education and employment without additional complications, and you receive access to healthcare and social assistance services (*details for each sector are provided in the following chapters*).

At this stage, temporary protection does **not allow** automatic access to residence permits on other grounds or to the procedure for applying for Bulgarian citizenship.

Who Can Receive Temporary Protection?

Temporary protection is provided within the European Union, including Bulgaria. **You can get it if you were in Ukraine before February 24, 2022**, and you are:

- a citizen of Ukraine;
- have benefited from international protection or another type of equivalent protection status in Ukraine;
- a citizen of a third country with a valid permanent residence permit in Ukraine.

If you meet one of the first two conditions above, your spouse, unmarried partner, children under 18, and other close relatives who were part of your household in Ukraine and are dependent on your support (e.g., parents) are entitled to receive temporary protection.

PART 2:
**REGISTRATION
FOR TEMPORARY
PROTECTION
AND
DOCUMENTS**


2. Registration for Temporary Protection and Documents

2.1 How to Obtain Temporary Protection?

Ukrainian citizens are entitled to a **90-day visa-free** stay in EU countries, including Bulgaria. You can decide whether to apply for temporary protection within this period.

You can obtain temporary protection:

- At the centers of the State Agency for Refugees (SAR);
- At border crossing points from officers of the "Border Police" Directorate General
- At the Regional Directorates of the Ministry of the Interior and individual police stations.

The full list of places where you can obtain temporary protection is [HERE](#). 

Registration takes a few minutes, during which officials will take your biometric data, and protection is granted immediately. You will need to present an identity document (e.g., international passport).

You may be asked to fill out an address card with the address where you will be staying in Bulgaria.

After registration, you will receive a so-called registration card of a foreigner granted temporary protection. This is the document that gives you access to all services in the country. It contains your unique Foreigner Identification Number.

2.2 Duration of Temporary Protection

The registration card is issued for the period until which, at the time of issue, the temporary protection in Bulgaria has been approved. As of February , 2026, this period is **March 4, 2027**. This is done by a decision of the Council of Ministers.

Renewal of a Registration Card

Since temporary protection is renewed every year, you must also renew your registration cards. The state usually organizes a campaign lasting about 45 days between February and April, during which you can renew your card at the registration centers of the **State Agency for Refugees (SAR) or at police stations**. Outside this campaign period, you can only do so at SAR centers.

Required documents:

- Application form;
- Identity document (e.g., international passport);
- Old registration card.



IMPORTANT

Check the State Agency for Refugees website or contact the non-governmental sector for up-to-date information on re-registration campaigns. (See section 11. Key Services and Organisations: Contacts and Addresses).

2.3 Travelling Abroad

Ukrainian citizens are entitled to a **90-day visa-free stay** in all EU Member States. This means that you can travel without any additional requirements within this period. After this period, you will need a **visa** for EU countries.

Tip: Contact the embassy of the country you plan to travel to for specific information on the requirements.

Temporary protection obtained in Bulgaria cannot be transferred to another country. If you decide to move to another country, you will need to contact the competent authorities there to obtain similar or other status.



IMPORTANT

A short-term return to Ukraine is not a reason for revoking your temporary protection. Even if you stay for a longer period of time and your registration card expires, you will be able to renew it upon your return.



IMPORTANT

At present, there is no legal procedure for voluntarily renouncing temporary protection when leaving Bulgaria.

Termination of Temporary Protection

Temporary protection may be terminated in only two cases

if there are **substantial grounds** to believe that a person has committed a **serious crime or poses a threat** to national security

upon **expiry** of its term or a decision to terminate it by the Council of the European Union.

For alternative options for legal residence in Bulgaria, see Part 10. Options for Residence beyond Temporary Protection.

2.4 Driving License

1) If you have a driver's license issued in Ukraine, it is valid in Bulgaria without the need for translation or recognition. If the validity of your license expires after December 31, 2021, it will continue to be considered valid (provided that Ukraine has extended the validity of these documents and notified EU countries of this).

2) If you do not have a driving license issued in Ukraine, you must **obtain one in Bulgaria** after completing a course and passing a state exam.



IMPORTANT: There are still problems with issuing driving licenses to persons under temporary protection due to the lack of a Bulgarian identity document. Before enrolling in a driving course and paying the fee, consult a lawyer.

What do I need to obtain a driver's license for a passenger car?

- You must have been granted **temporary protection**;
- Be at least **18 years old** (you can start driving lessons after you turn 17 years and 9 months old);
- Have a certificate confirming that you have completed **10th grade**;
- Have completed a driving course and passed the state exam;
- You must have completed a **first aid course** with the Bulgarian Red Cross.

How do I obtain a certificate confirming that I have completed 10th grade?

1. Translate your diploma into Bulgarian. No official legalization is required.
2. Submit an application to the Regional Education Administration in your city. In Sofia, it is located at 17 Antim I St., 4th floor, room 401. Attach the original diploma and translation to the application.
3. Attach the original diploma and the translation to the application. Pay the fee. As of 2025, it is BGN 50.
4. The certificate is issued within one month.

At the **Regional Education Administration**, you can obtain a certificate confirming that you have completed 10th grade. If you prefer, you can have your overall secondary education recognized, which will also be useful when applying for a driver's license. This can be done at the National Center for Information and Documentation. For the recognition procedure there, see section 4. Education, item 7.2.

How do I take a driving course?

1. Driving courses are organized by private licensed companies. Look for a company on the Internet.
2. To obtain the basic type of driver's license – **category B** (which allows you to drive a passenger car) – the course lasts between one and three months, depending on the intensity, and includes 40 hours of theoretical training and 31 hours of practical training (driving).
3. As of 2026, course prices range from €400 to €500 depending on the school's terms and conditions (most allow payment in several installments).
4. After completing the course, learner drivers take an **official state exam**, which also includes a theoretical part (a test on knowledge of traffic rules) and a practical part (driving a car). The exam can only be taken in Bulgarian or English.

How do I take a first aid course?

Before applying for a driver's license, you must complete a one-day first aid course organized by the **Bulgarian Red Cross** (BRC). You can apply online on the BRC website or in person. The address in Sofia is 61 Dondukov Blvd. The price in 2026 is around €100.

Как да подам документи за шофьорска книжка?

1. Go to the **Traffic Police Department** in your city. In Sofia, the address is 4 Lachezar Stanchev Street.
2. **You will need the following documents:**
 - Application form (provided on site, generated automatically by the system. You must carefully check the information);
 - A copy of your passport;
 - A document from your general practitioner (GP) stating that you are physically healthy and able to drive a car;
 - A document from the Bulgarian Red Cross stating that you have completed a first aid course;
 - A declaration that you live in Bulgaria (to be completed on site);
 - A copy of a document certifying that you have completed at least the tenth grade.
3. You pay a fee. The fee depends on how quickly you want the license to be issued:

Service Type	Time	Fee (2026)
Normal Service	30 days	12,78€
Fast Service	10 days	26,56€

2.5 Other Documents

Birth Certificate (for children born in Bulgaria)

- If your child is born in Bulgaria, they will receive a **birth certificate**.
- The medical facility is required to notify the municipality of your permanent address.
- You can collect the document from the municipality as early as **seven days after the birth**.
- The service is free and mandatory for every child born on Bulgarian territory.



IMPORTANT

Once you have obtained the birth certificate, you must apply for temporary protection if you want to take advantage of the support provided. For the procedure, see section 2.1 "How to Obtain Temporary Protection."

Your child can obtain Bulgarian citizenship if one of their parents is a Bulgarian citizen.

After receiving the birth certificate, you can contact the **Ukrainian Embassy** in Sofia to notify the Ukrainian authorities. You will need to bring an official translation of the birth certificate and the parents' identity documents. You will receive a certificate confirming Ukrainian citizenship. If you need to travel, you can apply for an international passport in the embassy.

Civil Marriage Certificate

Marriage in Bulgaria is

- a **secular**. Religious marriages have no legal value and do not change your marital status.
- Permitted only between **two persons**
- Must be entered into **voluntarily**
- Is strictly between **a man and a woman** (same-sex marriages are not allowed)
- Must be over **18 years of age**
- Persons aged **16-17** require permission from the District Court

Process to Get Married:

- Submit documents to the **municipality of your residence** at least **30 days** before the ceremony.
- You will need **medical certificates** for both partners, issued by your personal doctors.
- **Submission (In Sofia)**: Documents must be submitted to the Sofia House for Joyful Rites (2A Krakra St.).
- **Fees** may apply depending on the service.
- The ceremony is held in the municipality or in special ceremonial halls (Sofia has six such halls). A **Civil Marriage Certificate** is issued to certify your marital status.

Criminal Record Certificate

A criminal record certificate shows whether you have been convicted of a crime. You may need this for:

- Signing an **employment contract**.
- **Registering a company**.

Where to Obtain the Document:

- Issued by the Criminal Records Bureau at the **District Court** where you are registered.
- **In Sofia**: issued by the "**Central Criminal Records Bureau**" at the Ministry of Justice (5 Aksakov St.).
- **Office Hours**: open every working day between 9:00 AM and 5:30 PM.

Required Documents:

- **Application**: to be filled in on the spot.
- **Registration card** of a foreigner with temporary protection (ID)
- **Birth Certificate**.
- **Paid State Fee**: 2.56€.

PART 3: ACCOMMODATION

3. Accommodation

Upon arrival in Bulgaria, you have two options for housing: accommodation provided by the state under the **Program for Humanitarian Support and Integration of Displaced Persons from Ukraine**, or accommodation at a **private address**.

3.1 Humanitarian Support and Integration Program

The program provides for accommodation for up to **60 days**, on a **one-time basis**, within the period of validity of the temporary protection.

How Can I Benefit from Accommodation under the Program?

You need to go to the Transit Reception Center in **Elhovo**, where you will stay for a few days (up to 14 days) while a place for your accommodation is determined.

Within the framework of the Program, you can be accommodated in **hotels or facilities owned by state or municipal structures**. The largest number of such facilities are located in the municipalities of Nessebar and Varna.

IMPORTANT: You must check into your designated accommodation within 10 days. Transportation costs from Elhovo to the city where the accommodation facility is located are not covered unless you suffer from a severe physical or mental illness or disability, or are unable to arrange your own transportation due to advanced age or illness. In this case, transportation must be arranged by the regional governor where your accommodation is located.

Accommodation lasts up to **60 calendar days**, after which you can stay at the facility if you pay for your stay yourself, or you can move to a private address.

What if I Belong to a Risk Group?

Persons belonging to a risk group are entitled to accommodation under the Program for the **entire period of temporary protection**.

The designated risk groups are:

- children under the age of 12, accompanied by a single parent or other adult acting as a legal guardian;
- children aged 12 to 16 accompanied by a parent or other adult acting as a legal guardian, where the child has applied for school admission but has not yet been enrolled;
- a pregnant woman after the third month of pregnancy;
- a person with a permanent disability established by a competent authority in the Republic of Bulgaria – i.e. a person who has submitted documents for certification of disability to the Technical Expert Medical Commission (in Bulgarian – TELK) (for the certification procedure, see Part 7. Social Assistance), or persons with a TELK rating of over 50%;
- a person with a mental illness;
- a person caring for a seriously ill family member, including a person with a mental illness, when that person is dependent on care;
- persons aged 65 and over.

Along with people who belong to risk groups, the following may remain accommodated:

- All minors in the family of a single parent with a child under 12 years of age;
- All minor children in the family of a single parent with a child aged 12 to 16 years of age, where the child has applied for school admission but has not yet been enrolled ;
- The spouse of a person over 65 years of age, who is 60 years of age or older and has presented a retirement document in Ukraine.

Documents proving membership of a risk group shall be submitted to the respective Directorate "**Social Assistance**": if you are still in Elhovo - at the local directorate, or at the directorate where the facility in which you are accommodated is located. An eligibility assessment form is filled out on site.

All documents must be translated into Bulgarian.

The Social Assistance Directorates have up to **14 days** to evaluate your application. They communicate their decision to the accommodation facility and the National Operational Headquarters, not directly to you. At this stage, there is no possibility of appeal.

Required Documents

For children under 12 years of age: a certified copy of the child's birth certificate and a declaration from the parent/guardian that they live and care for the child/children alone in the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria

For children aged 12 to 16: the documents listed above + a copy of the application submitted to the school or the Regional Education Administration for the child's enrollment in school.

For pregnant women: a copy of a medical document from a specialist doctor (obstetrician-gynecologist) practicing in the Republic of Bulgaria;

For persons with permanent disabilities: for persons with a TELK certificate - a copy of the TELK expert decision; for persons awaiting a TELK decision - the incoming number, referral to the TELK from a GP, stage epicrisis, and other medical documents certifying incapacity for work.

For persons with mental illness: a copy of a medical document issued by a specialist doctor who monitors the illness (psychiatrist or neurologist), OR an expert decision of the TELK, OR a medical report from a medical institution

For persons caring for a seriously ill family member: a copy of the medical document for the person with the illness and a declaration from the person providing care that they accept and will perform this activity during the seriously ill person's stay in the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria;

For persons aged 65 and over: a copy of the birth certificate OR the temporary protection registration card.

3.2 Options for Accommodation

Rental Housing

First, you must sign a rental agreement. It is usually for one year and can be extended if both parties agree.

Details on the contract:


- It is advisable for the contract to be **bilingual**, in Bulgarian and in a language you understand.
- It is important that the **names of all family members are included in the contract**.
- Usually, when signing the contract, you must pay the rent for the first month and a deposit equal to your monthly rent, which will be returned to you when you leave the apartment. This means that you need to have the resources for **two months' rent when you sign the contract**.
- Keep in mind that you will also have to pay **monthly expenses** for electricity, water, heating (if provided centrally), and entrance fees, which can vary significantly depending on the property. Ask your landlord about the average monthly amount to cover all utility bills.

How to Find a Place to Rent?

- **Websites with Housing Ads** :Bulgarians often use specialized websites to publish and search for apartments for rent throughout the country. Usually, the ads contain information about the location of the apartment, its size, the number of rooms, photos of the property, monthly rent, and contact details for the owner. As a rule, once you contact the owner, a viewing of the property is arranged.

 **Popular websites:** www.imot.bg, www.imoti.net, www.alo.bg ✨

- **Real Estate Agencies:** Real estate agencies can help you find an apartment that meets your requirements and needs. Usually, a representative of the agency accompanies you on viewings of properties that the agency itself has found for you. As some agencies charge for viewings, ask in advance about the conditions of the viewing. The agency will charge you a commission for the service if a rental contract is signed. The commission is usually equal to half of the monthly rent, but this practice may vary.
- **Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs):** Sometimes, some international and non-governmental organizations have projects through which they provide housing. Be sure to check what support is currently available at the International Organization for Migration, the Bulgarian Red Cross, and Caritas. Visit the Compass community centers for more information. (All contacts can be found in Section 11. Key Services and Organizations: Contacts and Addresses)

 **Tip:** Visit the “Compass” community centers for more information. (You can find all contact information in Part 11.)

Accommodation in social services (centers for homeless people)

- *There are two types of services for people who find themselves homeless*

a. **Temporary accommodation centers:** provide shelter for three months within a calendar year with the possibility of extending the stay for another three months.

- There are three such centers in Sofia, in the neighborhoods of Zaharna Fabrika, Krasna Polyana, and Lyulin. In Burgas, the centre is located at Akatsii neighbourhood.
- To apply, you need to visit the Social Assistance Directorate in the municipality where you are registered. You will need your personal documents when applying.

b. **Shelters:** provide shelter only during the winter (usually between December and March) and only at night (from 5 p.m. to 10 a.m. the next morning).

- You may also be accommodated in other types of centers depending on your individual situation (e.g., those that provide support to women with young children, survivors of trafficking or violence, people with disabilities). The staff at the Social Assistance Directorate will explain all the options to you.

A third option is to apply for **municipal housing:** these are housing units owned by municipalities which are rented at symbolic prices to residents with housing needs. The municipalities have different application criteria, some of which might prevent you for applying, e.g. a requirement for a certain period of residence. Inquire on the conditions in your municipality.

Part 4: EDUCATION



4.1 Why Enroll Your Child in School?

Benefits for the Child:

- A dynamic daily routine and structure.
- The opportunity to create new friendships and have diverse experiences.
- My child will be part of the **European education system and will receive a diploma that is recognized throughout the European Union.**
- Learning a new language (Bulgarian).
- A chance to participate in a variety of extracurricular cultural and sporting activities.

Education in Bulgaria is **compulsory** for children between 4 and 16 and is **free** in municipal and state schools.

Parents **who do not enroll** their children in the education system are subject to **fines** and **are not entitled to the full amount of family benefits for children.**

4.2 General Information on the Education System

Education in Bulgaria is divided into several stages:

- **Pre-school education** (for children aged between 4 and 7 years), which takes place mainly in kindergartens.
- **School education**, which is divided into:
 - Basic (grades 1-4)
 - Middle school (grades 5-7): upon completion of seventh grade, children receive a diploma of primary education.
 - Lower secondary – first stage (grades 8-10)
 - Higher secondary – second stage (grades 11-12): upon completion of grade 12, children receive a secondary school diploma.
- **Higher education**, which takes place in higher education institutions (universities), where the degrees are:
 - Bachelor (duration 3 or 4 years)
 - Master (duration 1 or 2 years)
 - PhD (minimum duration 3 years)

Grading Scale

Regardless of the stage, the grading scale is as follows:

- 6 (excellent)
- 5 (very good)
- 4 (good)
- 3 (medium)
- 2 (weak)



The school year begins on **15 September** and, depending on the stage, runs until **24 May–30 June.**

4.3 Nurseries and Kindergartens

- **Nurseries** are for children from ten months to three years old.
- **Kindergartens** are for children from three to seven years old.

At these facilities, they are cared for by health professionals, teachers, and caregivers; are provided with appropriate food, and follow a healthy regime of play, learning, feeding, and recreation (including afternoon naps).

Municipal nurseries and kindergartens are free, with parents paying small amounts for extra activities.

How to Enroll My Child in Nursery and Kindergarten?

Each municipality has its own enrolment procedure. In larger municipalities, this is usually done via an online platform.

- **In Sofia:** The application is done through the so-called “**Information System for Administrating Childcare Facilities, Preparatory Groups and First Grades at Schools**”—it is an internet platform at: www.kg.sofia.bg.
- In Burgas the electronic system is at the following address: <https://www.dzburgas.org/>, in Varna - <https://dg.uslugi.io/>.
- The application usually takes place between **March and May** before the child starts attending the nursery/kindergarten from 15 September. It is possible to apply at any other time of the year, but the chance of vacancies being available then is small.

Required Documents (Vary by Municipality)

To enroll a child in nursery or kindergarten, parents must provide a few documents which differ in different municipalities. Usually, the required documents include:

- Birth certificate of the child.
- A note from the employer that parents are legally employed (if such information is declared during the application process).

- A personal health card, issued by the general practitioner of the child.
- A document proving all obligatory vaccinations, issued by the general practitioner of the child. He/she must be vaccinated according to all the requirements of the **Bulgarian Immunization Calendar**. (For more information about vaccination, see Part 9: Health).
- A doctor’s note confirming the child is healthy and has not had contact with contagious illnesses in the past three days.
- Negative test results for pathogenic intestinal bacteria and intestinal parasites.



*Places in municipal nurseries and kindergartens in the big cities are limited. If you apply and your child is **not accepted**, you are entitled to **financial compensation**. Compensation is only paid if your child is enrolled in a private nursery/preschool licensed by the Ministry of Education. Seek assistance in the process from NGO staff (For contacts, see Part 11:Key services and organisations).*

4.4 Preschool Education

Pre-school education is **compulsory for children aged 4 or higher** and continues until they enter first grade (usually at age 7). It takes place in kindergartens (or schools that offer such classes or pre-school groups). About kindergarten applications—see the previous point.

Help with Enrolment

If your child is between 4 and 7 years old and is subject to compulsory pre-school education, but is not enrolled in kindergarten or school, you can apply to the municipality of your current address to get help in searching for available places. If no such places are available, you may enroll your child as a private student with a kindergarten.



*When enrolling in **first grade**, it is necessary for the child to present **a certificate of completion of preschool education**, which is issued by the respective kindergarten or school where it was held.*

4.5 Enrolment at School

The procedure for enrolling a child with temporary protection in school depends on whether your child has a diploma of previous education (from Ukraine or another country).

1 Option One: If the Child Does Not Have a Diploma

1. **Apply for enrolment** at the **Regional Education Administration** in your regional city.
2. The management must refer your child to a specific school according to your residence address and preferences **within 7 working days**.
3. The school to which your child is referred **must arrange an interview with your child** within 14 days to determine which grade your child should be enrolled in.
 - a. Children in grades **1 through 4** are enrolled in the grades that correspond to their age (i.e., children seven years old in first grade).
 - b. Children in grades **5 through 10** are enrolled in a grade at the discretion of the school based on the interview process. Note that it is not permitted to enroll the child in a grade that is **more than three years below** the grade corresponding to the child's age.
4. The child must be enrolled **within 10 working days** of the interview in a specific class by order of the school principal.



Enrolment of children in the first grade in Sofia is done through the “**Information System for Administrating Childcare Facilities, Preparatory Groups and First Grades at Schools**”—this is an Internet platform at: www.kg.sofia.bg ✨

School enrolment is possible throughout the school year **except for the last 45 school days** before the end of the school year.

2 Option Two: If the Child Has a Diploma

1. If your child is between 1st and 6th grade (excluding 5th grade)

- **Step 1:** Translate your child's diploma through a sworn translator into Bulgarian.
 - The **Bulgarian Red Cross (BRC)** can help you translate the document. (For contacts, see Part 11: Key Services and Organisations.)
 - The diploma **does not need to be legalized or apostilled**. The Bulgarian translation is sufficient.
- **Step 2:** Go to the **school of your choice**. Bring the original diploma and the translation. You will fill in an application form on the spot.
 - The school may **refuse** to enroll your child if there are no free places. In such a case, look for another school or ask for help at the Regional Education Administration.
- **Step 3:** The principal recognizes the diploma and issues an **enrolment order** within 10 days.

2. If your child is in 5th grade or between 7th and 12th grade

- **Step 1:** Translate your child's diploma through a sworn translator into Bulgarian.
- **Step 2:** Go to the **Regional Education Administration** and apply for enrolment in the school of your choice and for your child's diploma to be recognised. Documents required:
 - An application form that you will complete on the spot.
 - Original diploma and translation into Bulgarian.
 - A reference note of the subjects studied with the number of hours and the grades given, if not included in the diploma.
 - You will also pay a recognition fee on the spot (as of 2026: **17,90€**), if the child is **older than 16**.
- **Step 3:** The Regional Education Administration will issue a **decision** on the recognition of the diploma **within one month**, as well as an **order** to enroll the child in the school according to your place of residence and preferences, and available places.
- **Step 4:** After enrolling in school, children in **7th grade** will have to pass an exam in **Bulgarian language**, and children from **8th to 12th grade** will have to pass **equivalency exams** in subjects they have not studied in Ukraine. These exams take place gradually, not straight after enrollment.

4.6 Support for Children at School

Special Language Support

Children with refugee or humanitarian status are entitled to extra Bulgarian language classes at school. The number varies according to the educational stage (between 60 and 120 hours).

Application for Language Classes

It is **necessary** for the parent to write an application for the child's inclusion in such Bulgarian language training to the school principal. If you are not informed of this possibility, ask the school yourself.

Additional Support

- Additional hours in academic subjects, if there is a need.
- **Free textbooks:** all textbooks for children in grades 1 to 12 are distributed to students free of charge.
- Free breakfast, fruit, fresh milk.
- Participation in extracurricular sports and cultural activities.
- Health care.
- Psychological support, if needed.
- Specialized support for children who have any disabilities.



4.7 Higher Education

As of 2026, there are 38 state universities in Bulgaria.

The most famous state universities in Sofia are:

- Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"
- University of National and World Economy
- Technical University, Sofia
- University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy

Other universities in various cities across the country include:


- Technical University - Varna
- Burgas State University "Asen Zlatarov"
- Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"
- Veliko Tarnovo University "St. St. Cyril and Methodius"
- Trakia University - Stara Zagora
- South-West University "Neofit Rilski"

There are also specialised academies related to the arts:

- National Academy of Arts, Sofia
- National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts, "Krastyo Sarafov," Sofia
- National Music Academy "Prof. Pancho Vladigerov"

There are also seven universities in Bulgaria where medical specialties are studied:

- Medical University, Sofia
- Faculty of Medicine at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"
- Medical University "Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov," Varna
- Faculty of Medicine at Burgas State University "Asen Zlatarov"
- Medical University, Plovdiv
- Medical University, Pleven
- Faculty of Medicine at Trakia University, Stara Zagora

You can compare all programs and rankings of Bulgarian universities on a special platform: www.rsvu.mon.bg. 



Application and Studies

There are two options for enrolling in a Bulgarian state university: under a **special decree for candidates with temporary protection** or under the **general procedure for foreigners**.

Admission under Decree 264 of 2024 on the Enrollment of Students with Temporary Protection

This special decree allows you to study at Bulgarian state universities by applying under simplified conditions (only in competition with other candidates with temporary protection, but not with Bulgarian citizens), but at the same time paying fees as Bulgarian citizens.

Every year in May or June, the Council of Ministers approves up to **400 places under this decree**. These places are pre-allocated to universities and majors. Education is only available in full-time form for bachelor's or master's degrees.



IMPORTANT

Information about all open positions under the Decree, as well as the application procedures, is not published in a summary form. UNHCR collects this information from all universities. Please contact UNHCR or the Compass Protection and Inclusion Centers to obtain it (for contacts, see section 11).

If you have a preference for a particular university, you can contact the student department or the international student department to find out about the majors, application requirements, and deadlines under Decree 264.



IMPORTANT

There is another decree that facilitates access for Ukrainian citizens to Bulgarian state universities – **Decree 103 of 1993**. It provides for facilitated admission and scholarships for **Ukrainian citizens of Bulgarian origin**.

If you meet this condition, you can apply under Decree 103 through a special platform – [the Unified System for Entrance Exams](#). Keep an eye on the news on the platform, because the schedules and requirements for the exams are posted there.

You need to create a profile, which includes uploading educational documents, as well as a document proving Bulgarian origin. The application is made through an online test, which includes questions on the Bulgarian language, literature, and history of Bulgaria. If you are applying for medical or arts majors, there are additional online exams.

Admission under the Terms of Foreigners

If you apply as a foreigner, the fees are much higher, but admission is based on documents or after exams in English, and the training itself is conducted in English.

Fees for Bulgarian citizens range from **€100 to €450** per semester, while those for foreigners range from **€1,500 to €3,000**.

Scholarships are offered for high academic achievement and/or fulfillment of social criteria, but they vary at each university. They are available only for students enrolled under the **264 or 103 Decree**, but not for foreigners.

Before Applying (regardless of the terms):

To study at Bulgarian state universities, you must have an original secondary education diploma that is recognised in Bulgaria.



IMPORTANT

The recognition of secondary education diplomas (school education) is done at the National Center for Information and Documentation (NACID), located at 52A G.M. Dimitrov Blvd in Sofia.

You will need:

- An application form, which you will fill out on site;
- Original diploma and translation into Bulgarian (no legalization required, only translation by a sworn translator);
- Transcript of the subjects studied with the number of teaching hours and grades, if not included in the diploma;
- You will pay a recognition fee on site (as of 2026: €25.56)

You will pay a recognition fee on site (as of 2026: €25.56)

It is also possible to submit an application online on the [NACID website](#) and send the original documents by post if you do not live in Sofia.

You will receive a response within one month.



IMPORTANT

Have your diploma recognized as soon as possible after receiving it so that you do not miss the deadlines for applying to universities.

Coursera for Refugees Programme in Bulgaria

The Coursera for Refugees program, developed in conjunction with the U.S. Department of State and launched on World Refugee Day in 2016, is a global initiative by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, to provide transformative learning experiences and advance careers for displaced people.

Asylum seekers, refugees, beneficiaries of temporary protection, and stateless persons can access the majority of the courses and training programs as well as certificates upon completion at no cost!

Learners can choose from various fields such as Computer Science, Business, Health, and Language Learning, accessing the material through a dedicated mobile app or the web.

How to Register and Enroll



Step 1: Register for the Program

To register, scan the QR code below and complete the registration form.



Step 3: Set Up Your Account

- Once you receive the invitation email, click on the provided link. This will take you directly to the Coursera home page.
- To set up your account, click the **"SIGN UP"** button.
- You will be prompted to enter your full name, a valid email address, and a password.

Step 2: Receive Your Invitation

Within one week of registering, UNHCR will send you an individual invitation to join the program via email.

- Please do not share this invitation.
- If you do not receive the email, please check your spam or junk folder.

Step 4: Log In and Start Learning

- To get started, enter the email address and password you used during your registration.
- Then, click the blue **"LOG IN"** button.
- Once you have successfully logged in, you will be inside the Coursera for Refugee platform.
- From there, you can choose the course or courses you prefer.
- Click the **"GO TO COURSE"** button to start your learning journey

PART 5:
**BULGARIAN
LANGUAGE
LEARNING**

5.1 Training for Children

Children enrolled in Bulgarian schools have the right to **additional instruction in Bulgarian** (see Section 5: Education). Schools also organise various activities to support children. **Ask on the spot** what other options are available at your child's school.

Additional Support Centers (Sofia)

You can also contact the **Personal Development Support Centres** (often referred to as 'ЦПДП' in Bulgarian). They organise **free extra activities** for students and may offer similar supportive activities.

There are two such centers in Sofia:

- **Sofia Centre for Arts, Culture and Education:** They have six branches. (Tel. 02 9360402).
- **National Palace of Children:** Located on 191 Alexandar Stamboliyski Blvd.

In Plovdiv:

Center for Personal Development Support: 193 Shesti Septemvri Blvd.

In **Burgas**, the center has extensive experience working with children from Ukraine, including a separate building where classes are taught mainly by Ukrainian teachers. The address of the headquarters is 11 Raina Knyaginya Blvd.

In **Varna**, the center is located at 3A Petko Karavelov Street

NGO Educational Support

If your child is having difficulty learning the language, there are **NGOs that provide free educational support**. In Sofia, such an organization is the **Reach Out Foundation** (address: 5 Bacho Kiro St.). For their contacts and other organizations, see **Part 12: Key Services and Organisations: Contacts and Addresses.**

5.2 Training for Adults

Free Courses

There is **no state institution** that currently provides free Bulgarian language courses for adults.

However:

- **Labour Bureau:** You can still contact the **Labour Bureau** at your current address to see if such an opportunity is currently available.
- **International & Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs):** There are international and non-governmental organisations that provide such support. As of 2025, these are the **International Organisation for Migration (IOM)** and the **Bulgarian Red Cross (BRC)**.
 - **Courses Available:** you can find courses for levels **A1, A2, B1, and B2**—both **face-to-face and online**.
 - **Enrolment:** to enroll, you need to go and request to be placed on the list, and you will be contacted when a suitable group starts.

UNHCR Bulgaria offers free, dedicated language learning resources. These materials are specifically designed for refugees and include textbooks, audio files, and annexes with translations. You can access these vital resources directly on the UNHCR Bulgaria website here: <https://www.unhcr.org/bg/resources/learning-materials>. ✎

Paid Courses

Paid Bulgarian language courses are also organised at universities and private language schools.

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" ✦

Language Teaching Department: offers Bulgarian language courses for foreigners for all levels and issues diplomas that are recognised by the official authorities when applying for Bulgarian citizenship.

- Email: office@deo.uni-sofia.bg
- Address: Sofia, 27 Kosta Lulchev St.
- Phone: +359 2 8723 481

Department of Bulgarian as a Foreign Language: also offers such training.

- Email: katedra.be.chujd@gmail.com
- Address: 15 Tsar Osvoboditel St., Rector's Office, Room 118
- Phone: +359 2 930 8573

New Bulgarian University (NBU) ✦

NBU also offers training for levels **A1** and **A2** in both individual and group forms.

- Address: Sofia, NBU, 21 Montevideo Str., Building 2, Office 108
- E-mail: uppo@nbu.bg
- Tel: +359 2 8110 110 (option 6), +359 2 8110 108



© New Bulgarian University



© Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski

PART 6:
RECOGNITION OF
UNIVERSITY DEGREES
AND PROFESSIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS

6. Recognition of University Degrees and Professional Qualifications

6.1 General Information on Recognition of University Diplomas

To have your university diploma officially recognised in Bulgaria, you generally need the original of the diploma itself and the academic transcript, which lists the subjects you have studied.

When is Recognition Needed?

The procedure for official recognition of university diplomas issued in the country of origin depends on the purposes for which you will use it.

Purpose	Institutions Responsible for Recognition
Continuing Higher Education	The university where you apply will itself recognise your diploma.
Starting Work	The National Centre for Information and Documentation (NACID) . The address is 52 Dr. G.M. Dimitrov St. Sofia.



For most professions, having a recognised diploma is not a condition for starting work, but it could make it easier to get hired. You should check with your potential employer whether such recognition is necessary.

If you are a lawyer, architect, welder, engineer, doctor, nurse, pharmacist (and a few other rarer professions), the recognition procedure is more complicated and requires specific steps. Seek help from the non-governmental sector (For contacts see Part 11: Key services and institutions).

Alternative Procedure (If Original Diploma is Missing)

If you do not have the original of your diploma, you can make use of a special administrative procedure of the **National Centre for Information and Documentation (NACID)**. This procedure issues a **Recommendation for Recognition of Higher Education Obtained in Foreign Higher Education Institutions**. This recommendation cannot replace an official document, but it can be used with employers, for inclusion in vocational training, etc.

Official Recognition Procedure

Step 1: Translate Your Documents

- Translate your diploma and academic transcript into **Bulgarian**.
- This needs to be done by a **certified translator**.



Tip: The **Bulgarian Red Cross** can help you translate the document.

Step 2: Submit Your Application

- Submit the translation along with the **original diploma and transcript to the university of your choice** or to the **National Centre for Information and Documentation (NACID)**.
- You will complete an application on the spot, as well as a declaration of personal data. (You can download these in advance from the NACID website: www.nacid.bg.)
- When submitting to NACID, you will also need your **identity card/passport**.

Step 3: Await Decision

- The legal procedure lasts **two months** from the submission of all required documents.

6.2 Validation and Recognition of Professional Qualifications



Validation of Professional Skills

Validation is a procedure that determines whether your skills in a particular occupation meet the state's educational requirements. The aim is to facilitate access to vocational training and the labour market.

- **Eligibility:** validation is possible for a range of professions included in an official list of professions adopted each year.
- **More Information:** you can find more information on the website of the **National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET)**: <https://www.navet.government.bg/en> *g.
- **Where to Validate:** validation can take place in vocational schools, high schools, art schools, sports schools, vocational colleges, or vocational training centres that offer training in the relevant profession you will validate.

Tip: Seek help from the non-governmental sector to identify an institution to carry out the validation.



Educational Requirement: applicants need to have at least a fourth-grade diploma or a certificate of successful completion of a literacy course.

Recognition of Professional Skills

Recognition of professional skills is the official acknowledgment of your right to practice a specific profession on the territory of Bulgaria.

- **Requirement:** this is **only required for regulated professions** such as lawyer, architect, welder, engineer, doctor, nurse, pharmacist (and a few other rarer professions).
- **Responsible Institution:** the **National Centre for Information and Documentation (NACID)** will inform you of the responsible institution for recognition, as this depends on the specific profession.

PART 7:
**ACCESS TO THE
LABOUR MARKET
AND EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITIES**

7. Access to the Labour Market and Employment Opportunities

Once you are granted status (whether refugee or humanitarian), you are entitled to work under the **same conditions as Bulgarian nationals**, without the need for special permission.

- **Standard Working Hours:** 40 hours per week (8 hours, Monday to Friday), not including a lunch break.
- **Standard Annual Paid Leave:** 20 days.
- **Minimum Wage (as of 2026):** 630,20€ gross. If you work full-time (eight hours, five days a week), your salary cannot be lower. (You will receive 481,27€ net after all social security contributions).

7.1 Types of Employment Contracts

Contract Type	Key Features	Worker Protection & Flexibility
Employment Contract	Usually open-ended (may be fixed-term). Has fixed working hours and location.	Guarantees a set of social rights: fixed monthly salary, automatic payment of social and health insurance, paid annual leave, and unemployment benefit.
Civil Contract	Concluded for the performance of a specific task. Payment may be monthly or upon successful completion of the task. Working hours are not fixed.	Offers more limited protection (no annual leave, no health/social security contributions) but more flexibility (no fixed place or time).

7.2 Workers' Rights

- **Annual Leave (Paid Vacation):** you are entitled to paid annual leave if you have worked in Bulgaria for at least **eight months**. Other types of leave (e.g., parental, unpaid) are also available depending on your personal circumstances.
- **Contributions:** these funds are automatically deducted from your monthly salary (just over 13%) to support you in risky situations (sickness, disability, unemployment, retirement, etc.). An additional **10% is paid in tax** to the state.
- **Paid Sick Leave:** Employees with at least 6 months of work history are entitled to paid sick leave in case of sickness.
 1. **Payment:** Sick leave pays **70% of the average gross daily wage**. The first 2 days are covered by the employer, and the rest by the National Health Insurance Institute.
 2. **Procedure:** A medical certificate, signed and stamped by your personal doctor (GP) or other specialist, must be submitted to the employer upon return.

Employee Rights for Pregnant Women

- **Protection:** right to a safe work environment; no night shifts or work beyond legally allowed hours.
- **Refusal:** you may refuse tasks that could pose a risk to your health or your baby's health.

Maternity Leave

Women are entitled to **410 days of maternity leave**, starting 45 days before the due date. When the baby is 6 months old, the remaining leave can be transferred to the father.

- **Benefit (First Year):** if you have worked at least **12 months** in Bulgaria, you are entitled to monthly instalments equaling **90% of your gross salary**.
- **Benefit (Second Year):** for the second year, you are entitled to **398,81€ per month** (as per 2026).
- **Action:** follow up with your employers' accountant on the specific documents that need to be submitted during this period.

7.3 Employer Requirements

Bulgaria faces a serious shortage of workers in all sectors, and many companies are open to hiring employees from abroad.

Language

Most employers require basic knowledge of Bulgarian. Look for opportunities to enroll in at least a basic level course (for Bulgarian language courses see Section 6: Bulgarian Language).

Attitude

The main requirement from companies to their employees is punctuality, serious attitude, and motivation to develop new skills.

Qualifications

Companies demonstrate **flexibility** regarding educational degrees and certificates from your home country. Often, instead of requiring such documents, employers check your skills through practical tasks. Many employers also provide training in the first weeks after signing a contract.

7.4 Job Search

You can look for a job through different channels: Labour Bureaus, internet platforms, private recruitment agencies, and NGOs.

Labour Bureaus (Employment Agency)

The state provides support through the Labour Bureaus, which connect unemployed people with companies.

Registration: to register as unemployed, visit the relevant Labour Bureau in the municipality of your address registration. Registration is **free and not compulsory**, but it is a prerequisite if you want to apply for different types of financial assistance or training opportunities provided by the Employment Agency (see Section 9: Social Assistance).

Process: the registration is done in person. The expert will prepare an individual employment plan, and you can receive job offers. You are entitled to be included in free vocational training and receive psychological support.

Schedule: you need to visit the Bureau on a schedule (indicated on your card)) to confirm your unemployment status (usually once per month). If you are offered a suitable job, you must be ready to start within 14 days; otherwise, your registration is terminated (you can renew it after 6 months).



Tip: Look for someone who speaks Bulgarian well to help you apply and discuss your background and preferences with the expert. If you have any educational or professional certificates, bring them.



The Labour Bureaus have other programs that support specific groups: young people up to 29, people with disabilities, and parents of children up to 5 years old. You may also find information about existing programmes at the website of the Employment Agency – az.government.bg.

Internet Platforms

Dedicated Platform: www.migrantlife.bg^{*} is an online platform specifically designed to support your job search. It is available in your mother tongue and enlists job opportunities.

Popular Bulgarian Sites (in Bulgarian): 

www.jobs.bg
www.karieri.bg
www.rabota.bg
www.zaplata.bg
www.jobtiger.bg
www.bg.jooble.org
www.ngobg.info

Application: you need to register, prepare your CV, choose a position, and apply (you may also need to write a cover letter).

Private Recruitment Agencies

Agency Name	Website 	Notes
Catro Bulgaria	www.catrobg.com	Experienced in working with refugees.
Manpower	www.manpower.bg	Popular, assists in finding a job for a fee.
Hermes	www.hr-hermes.com	Popular, assists in finding a job for a fee.
Adecco Bulgaria	www.adeccobulgaria.com	Popular, assists in finding a job for a fee.
Horizons	www.horizons.bg	Popular, assists in finding a job for a fee.
Synetica	www.synecticaconsult.com/bg/	Popular, assists in finding a job for a fee.



Caritas Sofia and **Caritas Vitaniya** support refugees to access the labour market in Bulgaria and run a dedicated **Career Centre** for refugees where you can get help with:

- CV preparation and job interview tips.
- Specific job offers (the Centre maintains a network of employers experienced in hiring refugees).
- Regularly organized **job fairs**.
- Support for enrolling in vocational training, opening bank accounts, and starting your own business.

As of September 2026, such career centers are available in Sofia, Plovdiv, Burgas.

Location	Sofia	Plovdiv	Burgas
Address	227 Slivnitsa Blvd, Sofia	3 Stefan Verkovich Stre, fl.3, office 6	2 Ivan Vazov Blvd, Burgas
Telephone number	00359 886 317 176	00359 888 819 230	00359 882 594 041
Email	career.center@cari tas-sofia.org	plovdiv.caritas@gm ail.com	migration.burgas@ caritas-sofia.org



UNHCR's funded partner Caritas regularly organizes job fairs, where opportunities & companies are presented. ©UNHCR/Silvia Desheva

You can get similar support in "**Compass**" community centers or at other NGOs. You may check for current support availability from the International Organization for Migration (**IOM**) (For all contacts, see section 11: Key Services and Organisations: Contacts and Addresses).

7.5 Conclusion of an Employment contract

You need the following documents to conclude an employment contract:

- ID
- Educational diplomas and professional training certificates, if available
- A medical examination document from your personal doctor (GP) proving that your health allows you to take up the position (if requested)
- Criminal record, if requested (for the procedure for obtaining this, see Part 2: Registration for Temporary Protection and Other Documents, section 2.5)

The employer is obligated to inform the National Revenue Agency that you are employed within three days of signing the contract. **It is important that you get a signed copy of the contract.**

- **Future Feature (June 1, 2026):** every employee will be able to check their single electronic employment record on the National Revenue Agency website, where information on all your employment records and contracts will be available.

7.6 Opening a Bank Account

Most employers choose to pay monthly salaries via bank transfers.

Opening a bank account can sometimes be difficult, as banks have additional requirements for foreign citizens.



Tip: When you go to the bank, specifically request a **“Payment Account with Basic Features”** to be opened. The bank is required to respond to you in writing within 10 business days. You can appeal the decision with the help of an attorney in case of refusal. (For contacts of organizations that provide free legal assistance, see Part 12: Non-governmental organisations).

Bring your employment contract and rental agreement to the bank if you have them as these may increase the chance of success.

7.7 Unemployment Benefit

You can get unemployment benefit if you have accumulated work experience (had an employment contract) **of 12 months in the last 18 months**. The amount and duration depend on your previous salary and employment duration. By 2026, the minimum **benefit is 9,21€ a day**, and the minimum duration is four months.

How to File for unemployment benefits:

1. You must **register as unemployed** with the Labour Bureau (see Section 7.4).
2. Apply to the relevant territorial branch of the **National Social Insurance Institute** in your town. (For Sofia, the address is 62-64 Aleksandar Stamboliyski Blvd.)

During the period you receive unemployment benefits, the state will pay your health insurance, and your employment experience will continue to accumulate (which is important when you retire).

7.8 Pension

There are two types of pensions in Bulgaria:

Retirement Pension: received after a certain age and a minimum of **15 years of work** in Bulgaria.

Social Pension: you are entitled to a social pension if you are **over 70** and your family income is less than **390.63€** per person (as of 2026). The amount of the social pension in 2026 is **170.51€**.

How to get a Social Pension:

1. Apply at the territorial office of the **National Social Insurance Institute** in your city. (For Sofia, the address is 62-64 Aleksandar Stamboliyski Blvd.)
2. You will receive a reply **within 4 months** after submitting your application.

You can receive your pension by bank transfer or at a post office of your choice.

Important: *You have a right to receive a social pension only if you do not receive another pension, e.g. a pension from Ukraine.*

PART 8:
**SOCIAL
ASSISTANCE**

8. Social Assistance

Once you have been granted temporary protection, you have the same rights to social assistance and social services as **Bulgarian citizens**.

Assistance is provided through the Agency for Social Assistance and its local Directorates. There are several types of benefits: social assistance for people in financial difficulty, family allowances for children, and disability allowances.

8.1 Social Assistance for People in Financial Difficulties

One-off Allowances (Given Once a Year)

For Incident Needs: One-off help for unforeseen expenses due to an accident or other event. The 2026 amount is: **Max. 1171,89€**.

Monthly Allowances

These benefits are paid each month to people in financial hardship.

- **Amount:** determined by individual circumstances (income, household size, housing, health, age, savings, etc.).
- **Maximum** (as of 2026): **193.89€**.



To receive the full amount of these monthly benefits, your child must be enrolled in pre-school or school education in Bulgaria.

Targeted Heating Assistance

- Granted over **five months** during the winter season.
- Monthly Rate, as of 2026: **62.04€**
- Applications are accepted between **1 July and 31 October**.

How to Apply for Social Assistance

Step	Action	IMPORTANT
Step 1: Application	Go to the Social Assistance Directorate in your municipality. Fill in the application form and enclose documents proving your income and a copy of your ID.	Other documents may be required.
Step 2: Social Enquiry	A social worker will visit your home within 20 days to check living conditions and clarify information.	The social worker will visit your officially registered current address . If you are not there, your application will be refused. Social interviews are in Bulgarian; find a translator if necessary.
Step 3: Decision	You will be informed of the decision on your application within 41 days of submission.	Appeal: If refused, you can appeal. Seek legal assistance immediately from the NGO sector (see Section 11:Key Services and Organisations: Contacts and Addresses).

8.2 Family Benefits for Children

One-off Allowances (Given Once)

Situation	Income Requirement	2026 Amount	Additional Requirements
During Pregnancy	Family income in the last year must be below 436,71€ (in 2026).	115,04€	None.
At Birth/Adoption	No income requirement; all are eligible.	1st child: 191,74€ ; 2 nd : 460,17€ 3rd: 230,09€ ; 4th+: 153,39€	None.
Enrolling in Grade	No income requirement. For children enrolling in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 8th grade.	153,39€ (Paid in two installments: beginning of 1st and 2nd term).	Child must be enrolled in the Bulgarian education system.



IMPORTANT

The grant for enrolling in a grade will be refunded to the state if the child has more than five unexcused absences from school in one month.

Monthly Allowances (Child Benefits)

- Raising a Child** (up to 18/20 if studying): Family income in the last year must be **below 388,58€** (in 2026). Amount as of 2026: 1 child: **25,57€**; 2 children: **56,25€**; 3 children: **84,37€**; 4 children: **89,48€** (+**10,23€** for each additional child).
- Child up to 1 Year:** Family income in the last year must be **below 388,58€** (in 2026). Amount as of 2026: **102,26€**.

How to Apply for Child Benefits



Step 1: Application

Go to the **Social Assistance Directorate** in your municipality. Fill in the form and attach **income documents** (if required) and a copy of your temporary protection registration card. Other documents may also be required.

To avoid refusal, you can also submit your application by **post** or through the **online platform egov.bg**. (This requires a **PIC code** from **NRA/NSII** or a qualified electronic signature.)



Step 2: Decision




You will receive a response **within 14 days** (may be extended for checks/documents).

Appeal: If refused, seek legal advice immediately (see Section 11) as refusals are often ruled unlawful by courts. Appeals must be lodged **within 14 days** of receiving the decision.

8.3 Assistance for People with Disabilities

People with disabilities in Bulgaria are entitled to health, social, and financial support from the state. The most important condition for this is that the disability must be established in accordance with Bulgarian law by the Bulgarian authorities.

Procedure for Establishing Disability (TEMC)

Step 	Action 	IMPORTANT 
Step 1: Preparation	<p>Your General Practitioner (GP) prepares your documents for the Territorial Expert Medical Commission (TEMC, or TELK, the abbreviation in Bulgarian) - the body responsible for establishing disability in Bulgaria.</p> <p>If you do not have a personal doctor, this can be done by another doctor who treats you. (For the procedure for choosing a personal doctor, see Section 9: Health.)</p>	<p>The doctor will determine what test results, medical examinations and procedures should be included in the documentation. He or she can refer you for further examinations and tests before you go to the TEMC.</p> <p>You must pay for all required tests yourself.</p> <p>All medical records must be taken within the last year prior to the TEMC appointment.</p> <p>Health insurance is NOT required for TEMC.</p>
Step 2: Submission	<p>Submit documents to the Regional Medical Expertise Registry at your address. In Sofia, it is located at 2 Dimitar Grekov St., in Burgas – at 73 Stefan Stambolov Blvd., in Varna – at 3 Bregalnitsa St., in Plovdiv – at 1 Perushtitsa Str.</p>	<p>You must be registered for at least three months at the address where you file in order to submit documents for establishing disability.</p>
Step 3: Assessment	<p>The TEMC will decide within three months. Assessment is usually based on documents only; a clinical exam is rare.</p>	<p>TEMC Decision Term: The decision is typically for one to three years, though some diseases qualify for a lifelong term. Your GP will let you know at the start of the procedure.</p>

When submitting the documents you will need to prepare:

- Application form (to be filled in on the spot);
- The referral from your GP;
- Any medical records you have prepared with your doctor;
- Birth certificate if you want to establish a disability of a child under 16

You can also submit documents by post or online if you have a qualified electronic signature.

The decision of the TEMC will contain:

- Degree of disability in percentage;
- Need for help by another person;
- Period of disability certification and date on which the disability certification expires and other information.



Benefits Available After TEMC Certification

Once you receive the official TEMC document, you can apply for the following benefits at the Social Assistance Directorate in your current municipality:

Monthly Financial Support (Adults 18+)

Disability Degree (TEMC)	2026 Monthly Amount
50% to 70.99%	27,34€
71% to 90%	58,59€
Over 90%	97,66€
Over 90% + need for assistance	117,19€

Monthly Financial Support (Children under 18/20 if studying)

Disability Degree (TEMC)	2026 Monthly Amount
50% to 70%	230,09€
70% to 90%	291,44€
90% and above	603,33€



Targeted Benefits

You can get financial help for things like **buying a personal car, adapting your home, rehabilitation, or municipal housing rent.** Inquire about specific requirements at the Social Assistance Directorates.



Personal Assistant

If the TEMC decision states a need for assistance by another person (or for any child with a disability), you can receive a "**personal assistant.**"

- **Hours:** range from **15 to 168 per month**, determined by an individual assessment from social workers at the Social Assistant Directorate. It then issues a referral.
- **Application:** once referred, apply at the municipality where you live.
- **Choice:** you choose your assistant (relative, acquaintance you trust, etc.). The chosen person enters into an employment contract with the municipality.
- **2026 Salary:** The personal assistants receive 5,24 euros per hour.



Disability Pensions

If your disability rate is 50% or more, you can also receive a disability pension, provided you meet certain work experience requirements:

Age Group and Required Work Experience in Bulgaria

- **30 or over:** 5 years
- **25 to 30:** 3 years
- **20 to 25:** 1 year
- **Under 20 or blind by birth:** No work experience requirement



If you **do not** have the required work experience, you can still receive a **social disability pension**, but only if your TEMC-determined disability percentage is **71% or more.**

- **Application:** submit an application and a copy of the TEMC decision to the **National Social Insurance Institute (NSII)** office in your regional town. You need a copy of the TEMC decision.

8.4 Social Pension for People Over 70

You are entitled to a social pension regardless of your work experience in Bulgaria if you meet the following conditions:

- **Age:** 70 or over.
- **Income:** income per family member is **below 390,63€** (for 2026).
- **If you receive a pension from Ukraine, you will not be able to receive a social pension in Bulgaria.**

Monthly Amount: 170,51€ (in 2026)

Application: submit an application to the **National Social Insurance Institute (NSII)** office in your regional city (Sofia address: 62-64 Aleksandar Stamboliyski Blvd.).

- **Decision:** you will receive a decision within **4 months.**
- **Appeal:** in case of refusal, you can appeal to the Director of the NSII office where you submitted your documents. **Seek legal assistance from legal aid from NGOs.**
- **Payment:** Pension can be received in a **bank account**, at a **post office**, or at **your personal address**

PART 9: HEALTH

9.1 Health Insurance Requirements and Coverage

The healthcare system in Bulgaria requires you to pay a monthly fee, known as health insurance, in exchange for which you receive a package of healthcare services (medical and dental care, medical examinations, medicines) when you need them. If you do not pay health insurance, you are still entitled to medical care, but at much higher prices.

The state **covers health insurance for persons under 18 years of age** with temporary protection, as well as for **women over 63 and men over 65**.

In addition, the state also covers health insurance for:

- Children up to the age of 18 (or until they complete their education or turn 22, if they are still in school).
- Students enrolled in full-time education until they reach the age of 26;
- Unemployed persons registered as job seekers with the Labor Bureau;
- People who receive monthly social assistance or are placed in social services;
- Spouses/parents/grandparents of persons with a disability of over 50% and established need of assistance from another person;
- Pensioners who receive a pension in Bulgaria.

If you are between 18 and 63/65 years of age and do not fall into the above categories, the state will cover your insurance contributions only for the **first 90 days** after receiving temporary protection. After this period expires, **you will have to cover these contributions yourself**.

The amount and method of payment of **health insurance contributions** depend on whether you have an official employment contract and what salary you receive

<p>Employed under an employment contract</p>	<p>8% of your salary. Your employer pays 60%, and the remaining 40% is automatically deducted from your salary.</p>	<p>The monthly amount depends on your salary.</p>	<p>Automatically deducted from your salary</p>
<p>Unemployed</p>	<p>You must pay your monthly contributions yourself. To pay your contributions, you must first fill out a special declaration and submit it to the regional office of the National Revenue Agency at your address.</p>	<p>Monthly amount: 22.03€</p>	<p>You must pay the amount by the 25th of the month.</p>

Loss of Rights: If you fail to pay your health insurance contributions for more than **three months** within a three-year period, you will lose the rights they entitle you to, i.e. access to medical care at much lower prices. These rights are restored when you pay the missing contributions. You must not have any outstanding debts for the previous five years.

Restoration of health insurance rights

1. Submit Form 7 to the National Revenue Agency (NRA) office in your area;
2. Step 2: Pay the amount for the missing health insurance contributions by going to a bank and transferring the money to the National Revenue Agency's account (they will advise you on the account number) or by visiting a National Revenue Agency office.

9.2 Accessing Medical Services


General Practitioner (GP)

Your **General Practitioner (GP)**, or personal doctor, is your primary medical contact for overall health monitoring. If you pay your health insurance regularly, you will be able to choose one for you and all your family members. The GP is the first professional you go to if you need medical help (unless the situation is an emergency and requires calling an ambulance)

How to Register with a GP:

If you are choosing a personal doctor for the first time, you can do so at any time of the year.

- **When to Change:** If you wish to change your doctor, this can only be done in June and December (or if you have changed your address - at any time of the year).
- **Procedure:**
 1. **Choose a GP:** it is advised to choose a doctor close to your home. (Parents/guardians choose for children under 18). If you cannot find a doctor, the **Regional Health Insurance Fund (RHIF)** in the city where you reside is obliged to help you. In Sofia it is located at 10 Enos Str., entrance B (there are also territorial divisions by neighborhood).
 2. **Apply:** visit the chosen doctor's office or the RHIF office to fill out an application form.
 3. **Receive Documents:** when you register, you should be issued a **Health Insurance Booklet**, which certifies your registration with a GP and dentist.

GP Service	 Details
Consultation Fee (2026)	1.48€ per visit. Pensioners pay a reduced fee of 0.51€.
When Visits are FREE	For children, pregnant women, mothers in the first 45 days after childbirth, people receiving social or unemployment benefits, and people with malignant diseases
Key Functionalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treats minor conditions such as colds and flu • Prescribes medication • Carries out mandatory vaccinations (documents for completion required for school/kindergarten enrollment) • Provides necessary health documentation (sick leave note, health insurance book, documents for kindergarten and school enrollment, fit for work certificate, digital profile of each patient with a history of illnesses) • Supports chronically ill patients (prescription booklets for discounted medicine) • Prepares the paperwork and refers people with disabilities to the commission which certifies disability, the TEMC committee.
Referrals	<p>The GP issues a referral document for free examinations or consultation with a specialist doctor (for example, gynecologist, surgeon, orthopedic surgeon, etc.). Going to a specialist without a GP referral requires paying the full, unsubsidized fee.</p> <p>A medical referral issued by your GP for consultation or joint treatment can be used for up to 30 calendar days from the date of its issuance.</p>

Treatment in Hospital

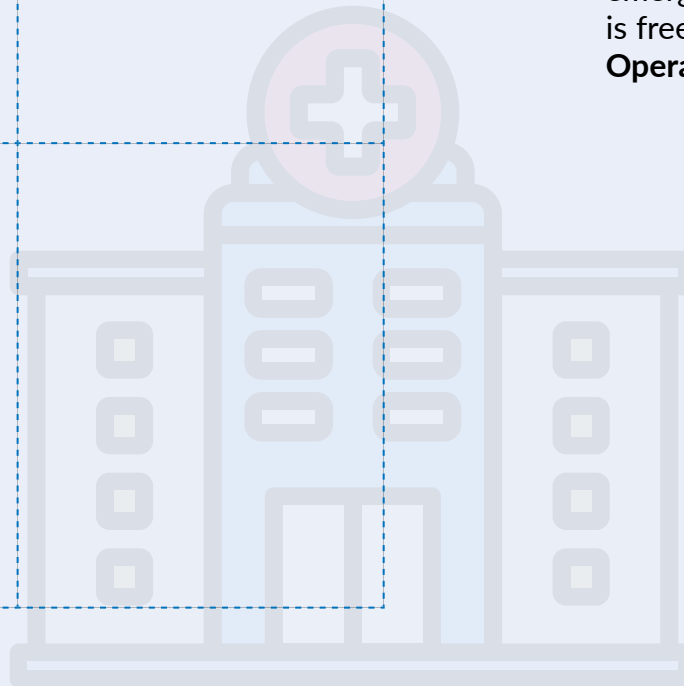
Condition	Fee/Cost	Note
Insured Patient	2.97€ per day for a hospital stay (as of 2026).	You may pay extra for optional services (better room, specific doctor, additional medication).
Uninsured & Pregnant	Entitled to a range of free tests and medical services related to childbirth.	
Uninsured & Indigent	If you have no income or personal assets, the Social Assistance Directorate may cover your hospital treatment costs. The hospital director must submit an application to the Directorate, which will conduct a social enquiry within seven days to approve the payment	



Emergency Assistance

You have the right to **free emergency medical care** in all life-threatening situations, **regardless of your health insurance status**.

Emergency Number: dial **112** for health emergencies, traffic accidents, or fires. The call is free and the number is uniform across Europe. **Operators speak Bulgarian and English.**



9.3 Medicines

- Medicines are sold in pharmacies and licensed drugstores.
- Most medicines (e.g., antibiotics) require a prescription from a doctor. Milder medicines (e.g., Paracetamol, Nurofen, Aspirin, Analgin) can be obtained without a prescription.


In general, patients pay for medicines. Chronically ill patients receive a **Prescription Booklet** from their GP, which allows them to get needed medicines from pharmacies free of charge or with a significant discount.

9.4 Dental Services

- Health-insured persons may choose a dentist of their choice who works with the National Health Insurance Fund.
- You are entitled to a **limited number of free procedures each year**, typically a comprehensive examination and three dental interventions (including treatment for tooth decay and tooth extraction).
- All other services are paid for by the patient.
- The patient pays an identical fee for each dental visit as for a GP visit (**1.48€** by 2026).

9.5 Making an Appointment with a Specialist

Once you have a referral from your GP:

1. **Select a Facility:** choose any specialist or medical facility that works with the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) and confirms they accept GP referrals.
2. **Book the Appointment:** contact the clinic or hospital directly (by phone, online, or in person) to schedule your visit.
3. **Online Option:** you can also use the website www.superdoc.bg  to book an appointment (either with a free referral or a paid consultation).
 - Search by specialty, city, or doctor's name.
 - Select the reason for your visit (e.g. first-time, follow-up).
 - Choose a date and time.
 - Select the payment method (free with GP referral, paid, or private insurance).
 - Log in or register to confirm the booking.
 - **Always bring all your documents and previous test results to the examination.**
4. If you see a specialist after a referral from your GP, you also pay a **fee of 1.48€**.

PART 10:
STAYING IN BULGARIA
BEYOND
TEMPORARY
PROTECTION

Alternative Legal mechanisms;

10.1 International Protection

International protection (which includes refugee or humanitarian status) allows for the issuance of a **unified civil number** (instead of a foreigner's personal number) and an identity card, which is recognized as an official personal document (unlike the temporary protection registration card). In addition, persons with refugee status are entitled to apply for **Bulgarian citizenship** after three years, and those with humanitarian status after five years.

At present, if you have temporary protection, you can apply for international protection to the State Agency for Refugees. Your application will be registered but will not be considered before the expiry of your temporary protection.

Temporary protection is extended every year, and at this stage, the Council of the European Union has agreed that it will remain in effect until **March 3, 2027**.



To obtain refugee or humanitarian status, you must meet **specific criteria**. The procedure is conducted by the State Agency for Refugees and lasts up to six months (in case of appeal against a negative decision, the period may be longer).



While you are still seeking international protection and have not received a final decision, you can work legally, but only **after the third month** following the submission of your application. This means that if you currently have an employment contract, it will have to be terminated.

10.2 Residence of Persons of Bulgarian Origin

1. Permanent Residence

You are entitled to apply for **permanent residence** (i.e. residence for an unlimited period) if one of your ascendant relatives (parents, grandparents, great-grandparents) is **Bulgarian**. In this case, you do not need a "D" visa, which you would have to obtain **outside** the territory of Bulgaria.

Documents are submitted to the Migration Directorate in Sofia (91 Maria Luisa Blvd.) or to the Regional Directorates of the Ministry of Interior.

Required documents:

- Copy of valid passport;
- Proof of secure housing (e.g., rental agreement);
- Certificate of criminal record (*for the procedure for issuance, see Part 2., item 2.5 Other Documents.*)
- Birth certificate or certificate from the Executive Agency for Bulgarians Abroad proving Bulgarian origin;
- Employment contract concluded for a minimum period of six months;
- Paid state fee.

The deadline for issuing a permanent residence permit is two months.

2. Bulgarian Citizenship

You can apply for **Bulgarian citizenship** by submitting the following documents to the Ministry of Justice:

- A document certifying Bulgarian origin;
- Birth certificate
- Certificate of criminal record from Ukraine and Bulgaria;
- A document from the prosecutor's office certifying that no criminal proceedings have been brought against you for an intentional crime;
- Medical document issued by a medical advisory commission (MAC) certifying that you do not suffer from acute contagious and infectious diseases;
- Curriculum vitae;
- Current passport photo;
- A photocopy of a document proving your identity.
- A state fee of **€153.39**.

You will be interviewed. The Ministry of Justice issues a proposal for a decree within 12 months of the submission of the documents.

The decree is promulgated by the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, and there is **no set deadline** for its issuance.

10.3 Residence after Issuance of a "D" Visa

If you have no other grounds for residence in Bulgaria, you must apply for a "D" visa at a Bulgarian consulate outside the country and then obtain a residence permit.

In addition to the Bulgarian consulate in Kiev, Ukraine, you can also apply at other consular offices. The nearest ones are in Thessaloniki (Greece), Skopje (North Macedonia), Bucharest (Romania), and Istanbul (Turkey).

To obtain a type "D" visa, you must meet certain conditions (have a work permit from the Employment Agency, carry out commercial activities and provide employment to Bulgarian citizens, be accepted as a student at a higher education institution in Bulgaria, be admitted for treatment at a Bulgarian medical facility, etc.).



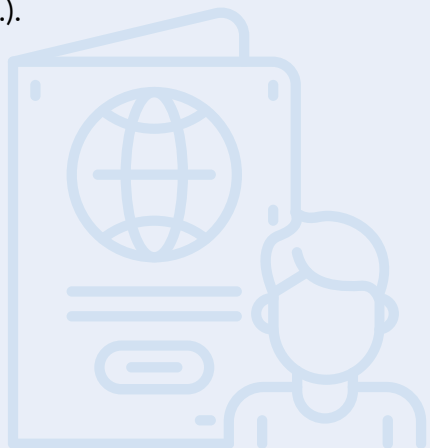
IMPORTANT

Although there is no specific procedure for your stay after the expiry of temporary protection at this stage, the Council of the European Union has issued a recommendation to all member states to establish such procedures. UNHCR is working with the Bulgarian government on specific legislative initiatives in this direction.



IMPORANT

Seek legal assistance to obtain advice on the most appropriate procedure for continuing your stay. For contacts: see part 11. *Key Services and Organisations: Contacts and Addresses.*



PART 11:

KEY SERVICES AND ORGANISATIONS: CONTACTS AND ADDRESSES

Information, advocacy for access to rights and referral to services

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Address. 77 Tsar Asen Str., Sofia

Tel.: +359 2 939 47 74

Website: <http://www.iom.bg>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/IOMBulgaria

Email: iomsofia@iom.int

Information and Service Bureau for Third-Country Nationals

Address. 111 Hristo Botev Str., Sofia

Tel.: + 359 879 651 046; +359 88 2 66 00
56

Email: office@sofia-da-eu.

Opening hours: Monday – Friday, 10:00 –
17:30

IOM's Migrant Resource Centres

Burgas

Address: 43 Stefan Stambolov Blvd, Office 3,
Burgas, 8001
Tel.: +359 886 177 295

Varna

Address: Targovska street, pavilion 118, g.k.
Chaika,
Varna, 9010
Tel.: +359 886 177 329

For more information and contacts:

[https://bulgaria.iom.int/contact-us.](https://bulgaria.iom.int/contact-us) 

UNHCR Inquiry, Feedback and Complaint Form

If you want to ask questions, raise concern, provide feedback and suggestions, scan the QR Code below:



You can also write to us at: bulsoprt@unhcr.org.

For any complaint related to misconduct committed by UNHCR personnel, partners, and other parties with whom UNHCR has a contractual link, reach out to the Inspector General's Office (IGO) by confidential email: inspector@unhcr.org. Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, sexual misconduct, harassment, discrimination, abuse of authority and retaliation, unlawful acts, and fraud and corruption. Misconduct may also include assisting in, or contributing to, the commission of misconduct.

If you are thinking of reporting misconduct formally but are not quite sure, you can talk to us in confidence at bulsosea@unhcr.org.

For information about rights, obligations, and services available to refugees and asylum-seekers in Bulgaria, visit: <https://help.unhcr.org/bulgaria>.

To learn more about UNHCR Bulgaria, visit: <https://www.unhcr.org/bg/>.

Compass Protection and Inclusion Centres

These are centres where you can get individual social support, legal assistance, help with access to education and employment, and when available, Bulgarian language courses. Staff members of the *Bulgarian Red Cross*, *Caritas*, *the Foundation for Access to Rights (FAR)* and other NGOs work in these centres.

Plovdiv

Address. 47 Princess Maria Louisa Blvd

Tel.: (+359) 882 977 523 (mobile, Viber, Telegram)

Opening hours: Monday - Friday, 09:00 - 17:00,
Saturday, 10:00 -16:00

Varna

Address. 15 Gabrovo Str.

Tel.: (+359) 884 553 494

(<https://t.me/communitycentrevarna>)

Opening hours: Monday – Friday, 09:00 -12:00,
13:00-16:00

Harmanli

Address: 5 Baucher Str.

Tel.: (+359) 887 290 487

Opening hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30-16:30

Legal Assistance

Bulgarian Helsinki Committee ✦

Tel: (+359-2) 981 3318, (+359-2) 980 2049

Email: refunit@bghelsinki.org

Foundation for Access to Rights (FAR) ✦

You can make an appointment for a consultation at the following numbers:

Tel.: +359 882873238, or +359 884334283 (they have Viber and WhatsApp);

Legal Aid Centre "Voice in Bulgaria" ✦

Address. 5B Triaditsa Str., Floor 2, Office 226., Sofia

Tel: +359 887470742

Email: voiceinbulgaria@gmail.com

Consultations take place every Tuesday, you need to book an appointment by calling the number above.

Humanitarian assistance, accompaniment and translation

Council of Refugee Women in Bulgaria ✦

Address. 37 Iskar Str., Sofia

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/CRWBG>

Email: office@crw-bg.org

Bulgarian Red Cross (Headquarters) ✦

Address. 76 James Bowsher Str., Sofia

Tel: +359 2 81 64 709

Mission Wings Foundation ✦

Address. 205 Hristo Botev Str., Stara Zagora

Educational and Social Support

Reachout Foundation ✦

Address. 5 Bacho Kiro Str., Sofia

Request to join classes by phone: +359888770297

or

by email: info@reachout.bg or

kristina@reachout.bg

Aid for Ukraine Foundation ✦

Address: 150 Tsar Simeon I Primary School, 11

Deliska Vodnitsa Street

Tel.:+359879286391

Email: info@uaid.org.ua

Arms Wide Open Association ✦

Address: 18 Knyaz Alexander Stamboliyski Blvd.

Tel.:+359888339769

Email: info@armswideopen.bg

Dreamhouse Association ✦

Address: 3 Hernik Ibsen St.

Tel.: +359 876 884

Email: o.irzhytskaya@dreamhouse.org

Varna ✦

Energy Association (manages the Compass Center – Varna)

Address: 15 Gabrovo St.

ADRA Bulgaria ✦

Address: 31 Stefan Karadja Street, 3rd floor

Tel.: +359887757835

Email: krila.za.detsa@gmail.com

Burgas Region

Personal Development Support Center ✦

Headquarters address: 11 Raina Knyaginya St.

Address of the center for children from Ukraine: Raina Knyaginya Kindergarten, Slaveykov Residential Complex, Block 55

Tel.: (+359) 56 825 809; +359885985433


Dobro Fund ✦

Address: 8240, Sunny Beach resort, main road Burgas-Varna, Nessebar Fort Club Complex

Tel.: +359 87 7445643, +380 66 1667149

Email info.dobro.bg@gmail.com

Aid for employment and entrepreneurship (in all Compass Centres)

Employment assistance is available at all Compass centers and at **Caritas**  career centers:

Career Center, Sofia

Address: 227 Slivnitsa Blvd. Tel: +359 882 315 736

Career Center, Burgas

Address: 2 Ivan Vazov Blvd. Tel.: +359 898 594 744

Psychological support

Animus Association Foundation

Address: Sofia, 85 Exarch Yosif St.

Tel.: +359 2 983 5205

Email: animus@animusassociation.org

Useful resources on the internet

WWW.REFUGEELIGHT.BG

Information in your language about all areas of life in Bulgaria. Online consultation with a lawyer.

WWW.REFUGEE.BG

Information in your language about all areas of life in Bulgaria


WWW.HELP.UNHCR.ORG/BULGARIA

Information in Bulgarian and English on procedures and existing support.

WWW.ASYLUM.BG

Information in your language about the procedures related to your refugee claim.

Key institutions


State Agency for Refugees (SAR) 
Address: 114B Maria Luiza Blvd, Sofia
Phone: 02/421 52 05 ; 02/421 52 06
Email: sar@saref.government.bg


Migration Directorate of the Ministry of Interior 
Address: 48 Maria Luisa Blvd., Sofia
Phone: 02 982 4808
Email: migration@mvr.bg


Link to websites:

Sofia Municipality 


Plovdiv Municipality 


Varna Municipality 


Burgas Municipality 


Nesebar Municipality 


Employment Agency 

Ministry of Education and Science 

Ministry of Health 


Ministry of Interior 


National Agency for Vocational Education and Training 

National Centre for Information and Documentation (NACID) 


National Revenue Agency (NRA) 

National Social Insurance Institute (NSII) 

Prosecutor's Office 

Regional Health Insurance Fund (RHIF) 

Social Assistance Directorate 

Territorial Expert Medical Commission (TEMC) 

INTEGRATION HANDBOOK

A Starter Pack : Information for Persons Under
Temporary Protection in Bulgaria



Bulgaria

© 2026 United Nations
High Commissioner for Refugees

UNHCR Representation in Bulgaria
bulso@unhcr.org
Pozitano Square 2
1000 Sofia
www.unhcr.org/bg

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