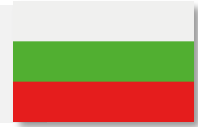




Bulgaria

National developments in 2024



While applications significantly decreased in 2024 in Bulgaria, national authorities continued to improve frontline elements of its asylum and reception systems and implemented structural changes to its central management.

SAR under the Council of Ministers implemented an operational support project financed by AMIF, which aimed to strengthen the administrative capacity of the organisation with additional staff and technical maintenance of reception facilities.¹ For example, a concept note on digitalisation was approved and started to be implemented in this framework. The agency continued to receive operational support from the EUAA, focusing on asylum processing at first instance and first- and second-line reception.² SAR also completed a project funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism that focused on capacity-building through training, staff exchanges and the development of guidance material.³ The agency noted that feedback for example from the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee was taken into account when updating some internal rules for asylum interview invitations.⁴

A safe country of origin list and a safe third country list were adopted in 2024, for the first time since the country's accession to the EU. The previous list, which was adopted before accession, was not applied in practice.⁵ Following the re-start of the practical implementation of these rules, the Administrative Court in Sofia referred questions for a preliminary ruling by the CJEU on the connection between the applicant and the safe third country.⁶

Courts noted a rise in appeals from Russian applicants and had to deliberate on persecution due to military conscription or political opinion.⁷

SAR launched the process to develop a comprehensive reception strategy, with support from the EUAA. The strategy focuses on enhanced cooperation with various stakeholders and aims to provide integration perspectives for beneficiaries of international protection.⁸ In 2024, the rules for reception facilities were amended with new curfew hours and a monitoring protocol when a resident does not comply with the rules. The agency faced an increasing number of incidents outside of the reception facilities, and outside of its scope of action, and requested the Ministry of the Interior for additional support in ensuring security in reception facilities and beyond.⁹

The agency opened a third safe zone for unaccompanied children in the Harmanli registration and reception centre, with a capacity of 98 that may be further increased in case of a crisis situation.¹⁰

Some of the projects delivered by civil society organisations focused on strengthening strategic litigation for children's immigration detention¹¹ and the development of a practitioners' guide on the rights of unaccompanied minors and separated children under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.¹²

A legislative proposal was presented, anticipating the eventual expiry of temporary protection, which would help beneficiaries of this status to apply for a humanitarian status. It also simplifies the rules for the examination of these cases to ensure that SAR's workload remains manageable.

More input from civil society:

- [Centre for Legal Aid - Voice in Bulgaria | Център за правна помощ – Глас в България](#)
- [European Council on Refugees and Exiles](#)
- [European Network on Statelessness](#)

Bulgaria

Key indicators for 2024

Rank by number of
asylum applications

12

Rank per capita (applications
per 1M inhabitants)

13

Share of applications
in EU+

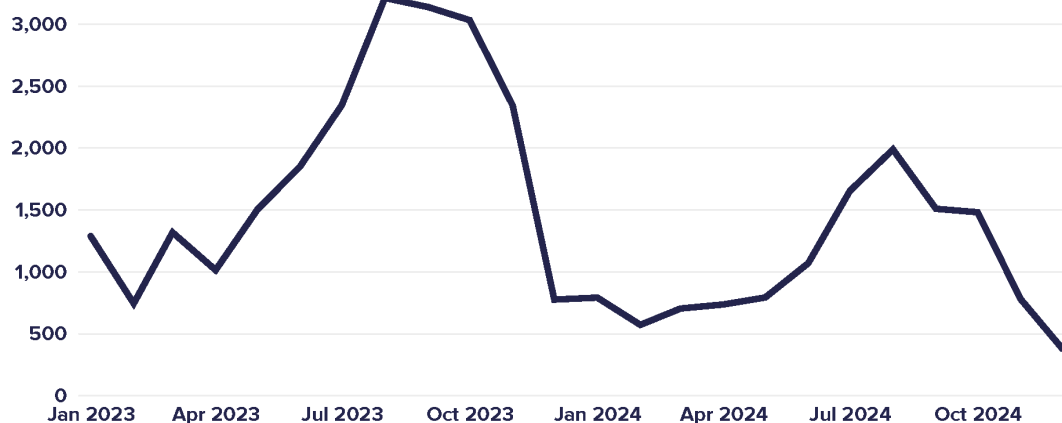
1.2%

Recognition
rate

61%

Indicator	2024	2023	% change	Top 3 countries of origin
Asylum applications	12,412	22,519 ↓	-45%	Syria (62%), Afghanistan (16%), Morocco (7%)
Pending cases (Dec '24)	6,051	11,951 ↓	-49%	Syria (67%), Afghanistan (21%), Egypt (3%)
First instance decisions	8,090	8,739 ↓	-7%	Syria (73%), Morocco (10%), Iraq (5%)
Refugee status	56	107 ↓	-48%	Syria (43%), Russia (32%), Stateless (9%)
Subsidiary protection	4,894	5,682 ↓	-14%	Syria (97%), Stateless (1%), Afghanistan (1%)
Negative	3,140	2,950 ↑	6%	Syria (36%), Morocco (26%), Iraq (12%)

Evolution of asylum applications, 2023-2024



For more developments, please consult the [Asylum Report 2025](#) and the [National Asylum Developments Database](#).





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