



Bulgaria

National developments in 2025



For the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, a proposal was submitted for a new law on international protection, which gives more independence to SAR.¹ The European Commission determined the country to be at risk of migratory pressure and facing a significant migratory situation, due to the high number of applications relative to its GDP and population, especially the high number of applications by unaccompanied minors.² A new cooperation agreement was signed with the Bulgarian Red Cross in the context of the operationalisation of the Pact measures, covering areas of humanitarian aid, psychosocial support, promotion of social integration, provision of information on health, and joint actions in case of emergency situations related to migratory pressure and crisis.³

Bulgaria received funding from Switzerland to strengthen migration management, including the digitalisation of the asylum procedure, the creation of an initial reception unit, improvement of the safe zones for unaccompanied children and enhanced protection for applicants, especially children.⁴ In addition, SAR received EU funds through the TSI for the development of a modular case management system.⁵ Discussions were ongoing with the Norwegian UDI on potential areas of cooperation, with a focus on the role of interpreters in the asylum procedure.⁶ An ongoing project aimed to create an internal electronic COI platform, allowing case officers to send COI queries and store internal COI documents.

Work on a reception strategy continued with support from the EUAA. Following the establishment of the safe zone for unaccompanied children in the Harmanli Reception and Registration Centre in 2024 with support from UNICEF and the Swiss SEM, the IOM took over the management of this child-friendly space as part of an AMIF project running until 2029.⁷ A new pilot project was launched with EU funding to create alternative social services for unaccompanied children, in partnership with the IOM, UNICEF and four municipalities.⁸ As part of the national implementation plan for the Pact, discussions started with several actors (such as the EUAA, UNHCR, UNICEF Council of Europe, FRA and the European Guardianship Network) to strengthen the guardianship system.⁹ For the first time in 10 years, SAR placed an unaccompanied minor applicant with a foster home.¹⁰ Nonetheless, civil society organisations and UNHCR observed a continued need for significant improvements in reception conditions.¹¹

CPT published its findings following an ad hoc visit to border police detention facilities and SAR's closed units, appreciating the cooperative approach of Bulgarian authorities but noting that conditions in detention had not improved since the last visit.¹² Following the end of the contract with the Migration Directorate to provide premises for the operation of SAR's closed units, these units were moved to the transit centre in Pastrogor at the end of 2025.

UNHCR published the results of a participatory assessment conducted in 2024 among people with temporary protection and beneficiaries of international protection, which gathered feedback on their experiences with reception and procedures. The report underlines the need for improved communication about existing services, such as the Compass Centres, and the need to further enhance the availability of support services and their physical accessibility.¹³

SAR continued its resettlement project launched in September 2024 with AMIF funding¹⁴ and completed a selection mission in Istanbul for the resettlement of up to 25 refugees.¹⁵

For people with temporary protection, the Council of Ministers adopted a programme for humanitarian support and integration, focusing on support for long-term integration of displaced persons from Ukraine.¹⁶

More input from civil society:

- [Centre for Legal Aid - Voice in Bulgaria](#) | [Център за правна помощ – Глас в България](#)

Bulgaria

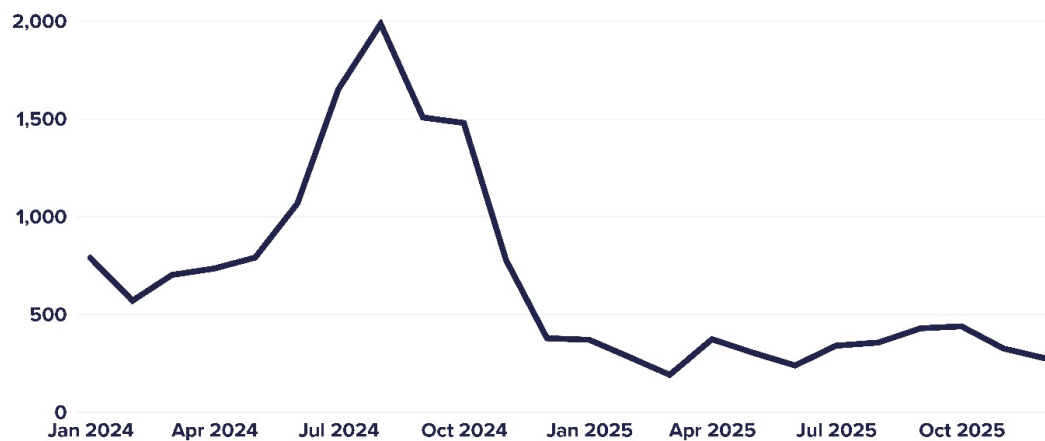
Key indicators for 2025



Rank by number of asylum applications 15	Rank per capita (applications per 1M inhabitants) 18	Share of applications in EU+ 0.5%	Recognition rate 21%
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Indicator	2025	2024	% change	Top 3 countries of origin
Asylum applications	3,895	12,412 ↓	-69%	Morocco (25%), Afghanistan (24%), Syria (21%)
Pending cases (Dec '25)	1,632	6,051 ↓	-73%	Syria (38%), Afghanistan (30%), Iran (6%)
First instance decisions	4,606	8,090 ↓	-43%	Syria (54%), Morocco (20%), Iraq (9%)
Refugee status	63	56 ↑	13%	Syria (68%), Stateless (8%), Russia (8%)
Subsidiary protection	919	4,894 ↓	-81%	Syria (94%), Afghanistan (2%), Stateless (1%)
Negative	3,624	3,140 ↑	15%	Syria (44%), Morocco (25%), Iraq (11%)

Evolution of asylum applications, 2024-2025



For more developments, please consult the [Asylum Report 2026](#) and the [National Asylum Developments Database](#).





Sources

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- ³ State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministers | Държавната агенция за бежанците при Министерския съвет (SAR). (27 May 2025). [ДАБ и БЧК подписаха Споразумение за сътрудничество в подкрепа на търсещите закрила в България](#) [SAR and BRC signed a Cooperation Agreement in support of asylum seekers in Bulgaria].
- ⁴ State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministers | Държавната агенция за бежанците при Министерския съвет (SAR). (25 October 2025). [Ръководството на ДАБ при МС и представители на швейцарска делегация обсъдиха мерките по компонента, който Агенцията ще изпълнява по Швейцарско-българска програма в областта на миграцията](#) [The management of the SAR at the Council of Ministers and representatives of a Swiss delegation discussed the measures under the component that the Agency will implement under the Swiss-Bulgarian Migration Program]; State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministers | Държавната агенция за бежанците при Министерския съвет (SAR). (25 October 2025). [Представители на Държавната агенция за бежанците присъстваха на подписването на Рамковото споразумение между България и Швейцария](#) [Representatives of the State Agency for Refugees attended the signing of the Framework Agreement between Bulgaria and Switzerland].
- ⁵ State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministers | Държавната агенция за бежанците при Министерския съвет (SAR). (2025). [Digitalisation of the procedure for granting international protection in Bulgaria](#).
- ⁶ State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministers | Държавната агенция за бежанците при Министерския съвет (SAR). (26 February 2025). [Потенциални области на сътрудничество между България и Норвегия](#) [Potential areas of cooperation between Bulgaria and Norway].
- ⁷ International Organization for Migration (IOM). (13 August 2025). [IOM Bulgaria Takes Over Management of Harmanli Safe Zone and Launches New EU-Funded Project for Asylum Seekers](#).
- ⁸ State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministers | Държавната агенция за бежанците при Министерския съвет (SAR). (1 July 2025). [За първи път у нас: Държавната агенция за бежанците с пилотен европейски проект за деца бежанци](#) [For the first time in Bulgaria: The State Agency for Refugees with a pilot European project for refugee children]; State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministers | Държавната агенция за бежанците при Министерския съвет (SAR). (28 October 2025). [Председателите на Държавната агенция за бежанците Иван Иванов и на Държавната агенция за закрила на детето Теодора Иванова обсъдиха партньорството си по ключови дейности за децата бежанци](#) [The chairpersons of the State Agency for Refugees Ivan Ivanov and the State Agency for Child Protection Teodora Ivanova discussed their partnership on key activities for refugee children]; State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministers | Държавната агенция за бежанците при Министерския съвет (SAR). (29 October 2025). [В Ивайловград: Председателят Иван Иванов и кметът Диана Овчарова отчетоха напредък в пилотния проект за социална грижа към непридружени деца бежанци](#) [In Ivaylovgrad: President Ivan Ivanov and Mayor Diana Ovcharova reported progress in the pilot project for social care for unaccompanied refugee children]; State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministers | Държавната агенция за бежанците при Министерския съвет (SAR), (5 November 2025). [Държавните агенции за бежанците и социално подпомагане обсъдиха мерките по изпълнението на пилотния проект за алтернативни социални услуги на непридружени деца бежанци](#) [The state agencies for refugees and social assistance discussed the measures for the implementation of the pilot project for alternative social services for unaccompanied refugee children].
- ⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (30 May 2025). [UNHCR Hosts High-level Roundtable on Strengthening Guardianship for Unaccompanied Children in Bulgaria](#).
- ¹⁰ State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministers | Държавната агенция за бежанците при Министерския съвет (SAR). (23 April 2025). [Приемно семейство ще се грижи за непридружено дете, търсецо международна закрила в България](#) [A foster family will take care of an unaccompanied child seeking international protection in Bulgaria].
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¹³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (15 October 2025). [Bulgaria - UNHCR Participatory Assessment Report 2024](#).

¹⁴ State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministers | Държавната агенция за бежанците при Министерския съвет (SAR). (26 August 2025). [Солидарност: Държавната агенция за бежанците продължава работа по проекта за презаселване на граждани от трети страни](#) [Solidarity: The State Agency for Refugees Continues Work on the Resettlement Project for Third-Country Nationals]; State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministers | Държавната агенция за бежанците при Министерския съвет (SAR). (17 October 2025). [В Брюксел отчетоха: България изпълнява ангажиментите си по програмата за презаселване на бежанци](#) [Brussels reports: Bulgaria is fulfilling its commitments under the refugee resettlement programme].

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