



4. What rules should I follow? - Your responsibilities

The UN CRC also refers to some rules what you have to follow; in particular, you should respect the rights of others:

- ! If you, regardless of your sex, ethnic origin, language, age, nationality or religion have rights, then you also have a responsibility to respect the rights of others in a humane way.
- ! If you have the right to be protected from cruelty, exploitation and neglect, then you also have a responsibility not to harm others.
- ! If you have the right to a clean environment, then you also have a responsibility to keep your environment clean.
- ! If you have the right to be educated, then you have the obligation to learn as much as your capabilities allow you.



International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The UN Migration Agency

About us

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is there to assist you. We can also help you in Italy, Greece, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, and Hungary! Find us on Facebook and on our websites!

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Protecting children in the context of the refugee and migrant crisis in Europe

Hello! سلام!

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES



Where am I now?

Hello! You are in **Bulgaria**. Bulgaria is a country in Europe and a member state of the European Union (EU). The capital is Sofia. The official language is Bulgarian. The Bulgarian-Turkish border is partially closed with a border fence. There are several border check points along this border – in Malko Tarnovo, Kapitan Andreevo and Lesovo, where you can ask for asylum.



Who can I ask for help?

All adults should do what is the best for you in all decisions and actions that affect you. You can always ask adults for help and support! It is advisable to seek help from trusted persons, such as authorities or representatives of organizations. You can recognize them by their clothing or badges. Don't forget, you don't have to pay or give anything in return for this help!

Should others respect my views/opinions?

You have the right to express your views in all decisions and actions that affect you, and all individuals, institutions or organizations have to take them seriously.

Do I have the right to express myself?

You have the right to express your thoughts and opinions, and to receive any information you may want or need.

Can other children or I be treated differently?

All children have the same rights no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what their abilities are or whether they are boys or girls.

Can others hurt me or treat me badly?

You have the right to life and to be protected from being hurt and/or mistreated, in body and/or mind. If this happens to you, you can tell someone you trust (an individual, organization or the authorities).

Can I be detained?

Being a refugee or an asylum seeker is not a crime. You should not be detained just because you've asked for asylum.

Can I get in touch with my family?

You have the right to be in the same country as your parents, if you have been separated. You can ask the authorities/organizations to help you get in touch with your parents and/or other relatives. Also, you have the right to special care and support if you are not living with your parents or other relatives/persons responsible for you.



Can I visit a doctor if I am sick?

You have the right to the best healthcare possible, safe water to drink, nutritious food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well.



Can I go to school?

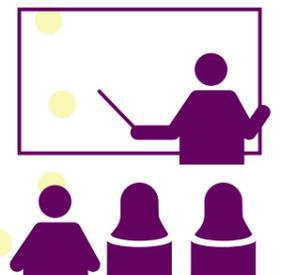
You can start going to school or you can continue your studies. All children have the right to education – in Bulgaria primary and secondary education is free.

Can I work?

In Bulgaria, you cannot work if you are under the age of 15. If you are over 15 you can find a job that fits your age and capacities, and that would not endanger your health and development. As an asylum seeker, you can work 3 months after you have applied for asylum. Ask a social worker for help on how to find a job.

Do I have to speak Bulgarian?

You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion - or any other that you choose. When you start school, you will also learn Bulgarian, which will make your everyday life easier.



1. Your rights

Who is a child?

Every person below the age of 18 is a child and has special rights, including to receive extra protection.

Do I have rights?

In Bulgaria (and in Europe), all children have the same human rights as listed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) and in national laws.





2. Services available

Do I have to be alone during all procedures/meetings?

A representative will be appointed by the Bulgarian authorities immediately after your asylum claim has been registered by the State Agency for Refugees (SAR). The representative is legally responsible for your overall care, property management and is obliged to represent and accompany you before Bulgarian institutions/authorities. You can always get in touch with him/her. Adults working where you are can also help you.

What if I need a lawyer to support my case?

If you think that something went wrong with your case or you were somehow harmed, you should first contact your representative or a social worker. Your representative is the person who has to take care of you and support you during legal procedures.



If you still think you need a lawyer, you can receive legal support from the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC) for free. BHC lawyers are regularly present in reception centres in Sofia (Vrazhdebna, Voenna Rampa and Ovcha Koupel), Harmanli, Banya and Pastrogor, and detention centres in Sofia (Busmantsi) and Lyubimets. Ask a social worker about the exact days.

Contact information for the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC):

- ☎ 00 359 (0)2 98 13 318
- @ refunit@bghelsinki.org
- 🌐 <http://www.bghelsinki.org/bg>
- 📘 www.facebook.com/BulgarianHelsinkiCommittee



What if I need advice or to talk to someone who I really trust?

If you need advice on any matters (legal, education, language learning, social or medical issues) ask IOM's mobile protection teams and other fieldworkers who are present on a daily basis at all reception and detention centres in Sofia, Banya (Nova Zagora), Harmanli, Lyubimets and Pastrogor. You will receive advice and/or be referred if you need any additional help.

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- 📘 <https://www.facebook.com/IOMBulgaria>



3. Asylum procedure – step by step

Who is a refugee?

- ✓ If you had to leave your country because of fear for your life due to danger, such as armed conflict, violence and/or persecution, and live somewhere else, you can submit an asylum application, which means asking for international protection.
- ✓ When you submit your application and before you receive a response on your application, you are considered an asylum seeker.
- ✓ You have the right to special protection and help, if you are an asylum seeker or a refugee, in addition to the rights in the UN CRC.



What will border authorities and asylum officers do?

For the asylum application, if you are 14 years old or older, your fingerprints will be taken by the Bulgarian authorities. Fingerprints are managed confidentially. In addition to fingerprints, a photo will be taken, which will be handled confidentially as well. Don't be scared! The authorities will also ask you questions.

What types of questions will be asked?

In order to understand your situation better, they will ask questions such as:

- ? Where are you from?
- ? How old are you?
- ? Which countries did you travel through?
- ? Are you travelling alone?
- ? Do you have any family members in Europe?

Please answer all questions as best as you can. If you can't answer, say that you can't or don't know. If you need to, you can ask for a break. What you say will be recorded in writing. Sign the record after it is read back to you only if it is correct. If there is a mistake or something is missing, let the authorities know. You have the right to have a copy of the record.



Why is my age important?

People under 18 years of age are "children" and have all the rights described in this leaflet. Persons older than 18 years of age are „adults" and they have different rights. Please tell the truth about your age. If you cannot prove your age with an official document (passport, ID card), your age can be assessed. This means that a doctor will examine you to check how old you are. Your body will be examined; your hand, fingers and wrist

can be X-rayed. If you don't want to take off your clothes in front of the doctor, just say so. There shouldn't be any negative consequences from the examination. If you think the assessed age is wrong, you can ask for another examination.

Where will I be taken to?

If you are travelling alone and you are under 18 years of age, you will be transferred to an open reception facility.

What shall I do first?

You have to declare your wish to request international protection as soon as you enter Bulgaria. This declaration (application) has to be submitted to the State Agency for Refugees (SAR). You have the right to have assistance during this procedure. You can speak in your own language and the SAR has to provide an interpreter who speaks your language. Interpreters help you to better understand everything.

