

Input by civil society organisations to the Asylum Report 2024

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Dear Colleagues,

The production of the Asylum Report 2024 is currently underway. The [annual Asylum Report series](#) presents a comprehensive overview of developments in the field of asylum at the regional and national levels.

The report includes information and perspectives from various stakeholders, including experts from EU+ countries, civil society organisations, researchers and UNHCR. To this end, we invite you, our partners from civil society, academia and research institutions, to share with us your reporting on developments in asylum law, policies or practices in 2023 by topic as presented in the online survey (**'Part A' of the form**).

We also invite you to share with us any publications your organisation has produced throughout 2023 on issues related to asylum in EU+ countries. These may be reports, articles, recommendations to national authorities or EU institutions, open letters and analytical outputs (**'Part B' of the form**).

Your input can cover information for a specific EU+ country or the EU as a whole. You can complete all or only some of the sections.

Please note that the Asylum Report does not seek to describe national systems in detail but rather to present key developments of the past year, including improvements and challenges which remain.

All submissions are publicly accessible. For transparency, contributions will be published on the EUAA webpage. For reference, contributions to the 2023 Asylum Report by civil society organisations can be accessed [here](#), under 'Acknowledgements'. All contributions should be appropriately referenced. You may include links to supporting material, such as analytical studies, articles, reports, websites, press releases or position papers. If your organisation does not produce any publications, please make reference to other published materials, such as joint statements issued with other organisations. Some sources of information may be in a language other than English. In this case, please cite the original language and, if possible, provide one to two sentences describing the key messages in English.

The content of the Asylum Report is subject to terms of reference and volume limitations. Contributions from civil society organisations feed into EUAA's work in multiple ways and inform reports and analyses beyond the Asylum Report.

Your input matters to us and will be much appreciated!

Please submit your contribution to the Asylum Report 2024 by Thursday, 30 November 2023.

Instructions

Before completing the survey, please review the list of topics and types of information that should be included in your submission.

For each response, only include the following type of information:

Part A:

- New developments and improvements in 2023 and new or remaining challenges;
- Changes in policies or practices, transposition of legislation or institutional changes during 2023;
- Across the different thematic sections feel free to make reference to issues related to the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive at national level.

Part B:

- New publications your organisation produced in 2023

Please ensure that your responses remain within the scope of each section. Do not include information that goes beyond the thematic focus of each section or is not related to recent developments.

PART A: Contributions by topic

1. Access to territory and access to the asylum procedure (including first arrival to territory and registration, arrival at the border, application of the non-refoulement principle, the right to first response (shelter, food, medical treatment) and issues regarding border guards)

There is huge illegal trafficking through Bulgaria. There are incidents almost every week.

2. Access to information and legal assistance (including counselling and representation)

The lack of interpreters in police stations in Sofia leads to a lack of information and an inability to collect data and take measures. Often there is a wait for an interpreter for hours, or one interpreter translates for a group of 20 people.

3. Provision of interpretation services (e.g. introduction of innovative methods for interpretation, increase/decrease in the number of languages available, change in qualifications required for interpreters)

Generally in Sofia, there are not enough translators with the languages - Arabic and Farsi. The State Agency for Refugees in Bulgaria uses NGO interpreters to carry out its work.

4. Dublin procedures (including the organisational framework, practical developments, suspension of transfers to selected countries, detention in the framework of Dublin procedures)

5. Special procedures (including border procedures, procedures in transit zones, accelerated procedures, admissibility procedures, prioritised procedures or any special procedure for selected caseloads)

6. Reception of applicants for international protection (including information on reception capacities – increase/decrease/stable, material reception conditions - housing, food, clothing and financial support, contingency planning in reception, access to the labour market and vocational training, medical care, schooling and education, residence and freedom of movement)

The conditions in reception centres in Bulgaria are under criticism. Mattresses and beds are full of bedbugs. Scabies is present in half of the accommodated persons. Medical care is not provided even in cases of unaccompanied minors. NGOs continuously send alerts to international organisations such as UNICEF and UNHCR asking them to change the situation, but measures are extremely slow and cumbersome. While the state and the institutions are negligent, NGOs are looking for project money to provide paid medical care, to provide diapers and milk to children; to provide clothes and hygiene kits. In September, a report of violence by an employee of the State Agency for Refugees against a person in accommodation was filed, but no committee has been established to investigate the case. The problems in reception centres are terrible and as NGOs speak out and try to solve these problems the trend is to stop these organisations from accessing reception centres. If this happens, the rights of the persons accommodated are completely gone.

7. Detention of applicants for international protection (including detention capacity – increase /decrease/stable, practices regarding detention, grounds for detention, alternatives to detention, time limit for detention)

8. Procedures at first instance (including relevant changes in: the authority in charge, organisation of the process, interviews, evidence assessment, determination of international protection status, decisionmaking, timeframes, case management - including backlog management)

The State Agency for Refugees is delaying the issuance of white cards upon the arrival of asylum seekers in Bulgaria due to the lack of sufficient human resources in the institution and the increased number of asylum seekers arriving. Without a white card the person has no document, no access to medical services, and very often the persons are in urgent need of medical care. In general, the State Agency for Refugees does not even take care of unaccompanied minors.

9. Procedures at second instance (including organisation of the process, hearings, written procedures, timeframes, case management -including backlog management)

decisions and documents are delayed for months.

10. Availability and use of country of origin information (including organisation, methodology, products, databases, fact-finding missions, cooperation between stakeholders)

11. Issues of statelessness in the context of asylum (including identification and registration)

12. Vulnerable applicants (including definitions, special reception facilities, identification mechanisms/referrals, procedural standards, provision of information, age assessment, legal guardianship and foster care for unaccompanied and separated children)

There is no developed and working procedure for the reception, assessment and placement of vulnerable cases. We had a case of an unaccompanied minor who stood outside the refugee reception centre all day

because there was no one to register him over the weekend. An unaccompanied minor was expelled from a refugee reception centre because his friends were going to Germany and he was obliged to go with them - a second case. The transfer of unaccompanied minors to residential social services takes place without preparation of the children, from today to tomorrow.

13. Content of protection (including access to social security, social assistance, healthcare, housing and other basic services; integration into the labour market; measures to enhance language skills; measures to improve attainment in schooling and/or the education system and/or vocational training)

There are not enough Bulgarian language courses.

14. Return of former applicants for international protection

15. Resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes (including EU Joint Resettlement Programme, national resettlement programme (UNHCR), National Humanitarian Admission Programme, private sponsorship programmes/schemes and ad hoc special programmes)

16. Relocation (ad hoc, emergency relocation; developments in activities organised under national schemes or on a bilateral basis)

17. National jurisprudence on international protection in 2023 (please include a link to the relevant case law and/or submit cases to the [EUAA Case Law Database](#))

18. Other important developments in 2023

PART B: Publications

1. If available online, please provide links to relevant publications produced by your organisation in 2023

<https://nmd.bg/godishen-otchet-za-2022-na-nacziionalna-mrezha-za-deczata/>
Information on unaccompanied minors seeking protection in Bulgaria is developed and shared in the annual report of the National Network for Children.

2. If not available online, please share your publications with us at: Asylum.Report@euaa.europa.eu or upload your file using the functionality below (max. file size 1MB).

Please upload your file

The maximum file size is 1 MB

3. For publications that due to copyright issues cannot be easily shared, please provide references using the table below.

	Title of publication	Name of author	Publisher/Organisation	Date
1				
2				
3				
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Contact details

* Name of Organisation

Council of Refugee Women in Bulgaria

Name and title of contact person

Radostina Belcheva, Deputy Chairperson

* Email

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I accept the provisions of the EUAA [Legal and Privacy Statements](#)

Useful links

[EUAA Asylum Report 2023 \(https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2023\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2023)

[Executive Summary -Asylum Report 2023 \(https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2023/executive-summary\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-report-2023/executive-summary)

[Sources on Asylum 2023 \(https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/sources-asylum-2023\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/sources-asylum-2023)

[National asylum developments database \(https://euaa.europa.eu/national-asylum-developments-database\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/national-asylum-developments-database)

[Asylum in Europe in 2022: A Year in Review \(https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-europe-2022-year-review\)](https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-europe-2022-year-review)

Background Documents

[Word template to submit input](#)

Contact

[Contact Form](#)

