

Danish National ID Centre

Bulgaria: The Bulgarian refugee card and humanitarian status card

The following note describes the application and issuance procedure for the Bulgarian refugee card and the Bulgarian humanitarian status card.

The note is based on interviews conducted in Bulgaria in May 2022 as well as open source material.

Refugee and humanitarian status

In Bulgaria, there are two types of international protection: refugee status and humanitarian status. If a third-country national is given status in Bulgaria, the person will get an identity document issued.¹

If the applicant is granted refugee status, the applicant is entitled to receive a refugee card. If the applicant is granted humanitarian status, the applicant is entitled to a humanitarian status card.²

ID cards for either refugee status or humanitarian status are issued to persons who are 14 years old or above. If the applicant applying is underage, the application has to be submitted in person in the presence of a parent or a guardian.³

Temporary and permanent civil registration number

When a third-country national applies for asylum in Bulgaria, the person will get a temporary civil number issued. The temporary civil number is randomly generated. The temporary civil number is valid for six months.⁴

If the application is approved and the person is granted either refugee or humanitarian status, he or she will have a permanent civil number issued. The number is a personal number. If the application for protection is rejected, only the temporary civil number is issued.⁵

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Danish National ID Centre

Birkerød Kongevej 2 DK-3460 Birkerød Denmark

Phone +45 61 98 39 00 Email nidc@nidc.dk Website www.nidc.dk

¹ AIDA, 2022.

² AIDA, 2022.

³ UNHCR, 2022.

⁴ The Regional Police Directorate of the Ministry of Interior, Haskovo, June 2022.

⁵ The Regional Police Directorate of the Ministry of Interior, Haskovo, June 2022.

Validity

Refugee status card has a validity of five years and humanitarian status card is granted for three years. If the status is renewed, a new ID card is issued with the same permanent civil number. The validity of a renewed ID card is less than five years, if it is a refugee card, or less than three years, if it is humanitarian status card.⁶

Procedures for lost and stolen ID cards

If the ID card is stolen, lost or damaged the person can have a new document issued, however, the documents will be valid for a shorter period. The sanctions differ between fines of 40 or 150 Bulgarian lev. The fine gets bigger for every time the ID card is lost, stolen or damaged.⁷

Procedures for accommodation

Refugees with refugee- or humanitarian status, often have difficulty finding accommodation in Bulgaria. The reason is that finding accommodation presupposes that one have a valid ID card, but in order to get an ID card an address is a requirement. Hotel addresses are not valid in this regard. 8

With the current war between Russia and Ukraine, there are many Ukrainian refugees in Bulgaria. Many of them stay in hotels with the consequence that they cannot have an ID card issued because they do not have a registered address.⁹

The applicant can however, get someone to confirm that he or she are going to have an address at the presumed place. The Regional Directorate then checks the applicant's identity and address to ensure they do not issue a document to an illegal person. To confirm the address the authorities need to see either an ID document or a signed declaration.¹⁰



Image 1: Example of refugee card – front (Edison TD)



Image 2: Example of refugee card – back (Edison TD)

⁶ The Regional Police Directorate of the Ministry of Interior, Haskovo, June 2022.

⁷ The Regional Police Directorate of the Ministry of Interior, Haskovo, June 2022.

⁸ The Regional Police Directorate of the Ministry of Interior, Haskovo, June 2022.

⁹ The Regional Police Directorate of the Ministry of Interior, Haskovo, June 2022.

¹⁰ The Regional Police Directorate of the Ministry of Interior, Haskovo, June 2022.

Technical specifications for the residence permit card are accessible in: "Vejledning til undersøgelse af bulgarske opholdskort" (in Danish).

References

Oral sources

The Regional Police Directorate of the Ministry of Interior (June 2022): Interviewed in Haskovo, Bulgaria.

Written sources

AIDA: <u>Travel documents - Asylum Information Database | European Council on Refugees and Exiles (asylumineurope.org)</u> retrieved 24 August 2022.

UNHCR: https://refugee.bg/en/civil-registration-and-id-documents/ retrieved 24 August 2022.