

NEWSLETTER 9/2026

FOUNDATION FOR ACCESS TO RIGHTS - FAR
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What will you find inside?

YEAR 2025 IN NUMBERS **P.3**

EVENTS **P.4**

STRATEGIC CASES **P.5**

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION **P.7**

TRAININGS **P.11**

UPCOMING **P.15**



Esteemed friends and partners,

We are delighted to present the latest edition of the FAR Foundation's newsletter, which highlights the recent months of dedicated efforts in safeguarding the rights of refugees, migrants, and stateless individuals.

During this period, we maintained our focus on the priorities that have shaped our work from the outset: providing direct legal assistance to individuals seeking protection and support. In 2025, nearly 4,700 individuals received legal advice and consultations, and over 1,200 cases were accepted for long-term legal management.

Concurrently, our efforts in strategic case management progressed, encompassing the Supreme Administrative Court of Bulgaria's decision to annul unlawful provisions of the humanitarian program for individuals from Ukraine, the new preliminary reference to the Court of Justice of the EU in case C-761/25, and the personal narratives shared within the framework of the European FAiR project. The issue of labor migration has also become increasingly pivotal to our initiatives, as demonstrated by the FAR Labor Exchange, the Migrantlife.bg platform, our roles as moderators and mediators in the FUMI project, and our forthcoming online meeting for Uzbek job applicants in August. Equally significant is our dedication to training—targeting frontline specialists on gender-based violence, employers and HR professionals on the recruitment of foreign nationals, along with numerous other initiatives set to continue in the fall.

On July 26, 2026, FAR commemorated its 13th anniversary. The preceding years have presented numerous challenges, yet they have also provided ample reasons for gratitude—thanks to each of you: colleagues, partners, donors, and those who have believed in our mission. I extend my heartfelt gratitude for your trust and support over the years!

Sincerely,

Valeria Ilareva

Head Lawyer, Chairperson of the Board



YEAR 2025 EXPRESSED NUMERICALLY

http://



FARBG.EU
REFUGEEELIGHT.BG

Overview

333700

Internet users

Number of individuals who obtained information regarding access to rights on our portal refugeelight.bg

282500

Viewed publications

Number of individuals who viewed our posts on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, LinkedIn, and Telegram pages and groups.

12800

Followers

Total followers across social media platforms

4707

Beneficiaries



2958

Beneficiaries

Number of individuals who obtained legal assistance and support for socio-economic integration

726

Beneficiaries

Number of individuals who obtained legal assistance via the digital legal support tool.

1023

Beneficiaries

Number of individuals who obtained information regarding status determination via two-way digital communication on refugeelight.bg and FAR-moderated platforms.

This

encompasses:

Demographic distribution

We offered consultations in 13 languages.



To beneficiaries from more than 80 countries worldwide.

18–59 years of age

80.1%

5 to 17 years old

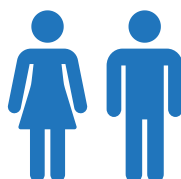
8.2%

Wife

48.5%

Man

42.6%



60+ years

11%

0–4 years

0.7%

Minor female

4.7%

Male under 18 years of age

4.2%

EVENTS

CONFERENCE "OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS INTO THE LABOR MARKET"

On November 13, 2025, the Foundation for Access to Rights - FAR convened the conference titled "Prospects for the Integration of Refugees and Migrants in the Labor Market," featuring representatives from institutions, trade unions, employers, municipalities, and civil society organizations.

The genuine challenges confronting businesses, administrative obstacles, and effective practices that are currently producing results in facilitating labor integration were examined.

The conference marked the concluding segment of the project "Address for Access: The Path to Social Inclusion in Sofia," which was executed with the financial backing of the Sofia Municipality under the FAR Europe 2025 Program, in collaboration with the Vrabnitsa, Krasno Selo, and Novi Iskar districts.

[Photo album](#)



FAR TOOK PART IN THE FORUM TITLED "UNLOCKING HIDDEN POTENTIAL: BUSINESS LEADERSHIP IN THE INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS."

FAR participated in the international forum "Unlocking Hidden Potential: Business Leadership in the Integration of Refugees and Migrants." This event occurred on December 2, 2025, in Sofia and was organized by UNHCR Bulgaria (the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). It convened representatives from the business sector, non-governmental organizations, and institutions to deliberate on the significant contributions of refugees and migrants to the labor market and the economy.

The forum underscored the significance of employers in fostering decent work, equitable opportunities, and an inclusive workplace. FAR shared its expertise in offering legal assistance and educating migrants about their labor rights, highlighting the critical role of collaboration between businesses and civil society in achieving successful socio-economic integration.

[Learn more](#)



WE HAVE REVOKED UNLAWFUL PROVISIONS UNDER THE HUMANITARIAN PROGRAM FOR INDIVIDUALS FROM UKRAINE.

By Decision No. 6762 dated 26 June 2025, in a case supported legally by the Foundation for Access to Rights – FAR, the Supreme Administrative Court annulled unlawful provisions of the Program for Humanitarian Support and Integration of Displaced Persons from Ukraine with Temporary Protection. The court determined that certain criteria for identifying the so-called “risk groups” affecting children and families with children are in conflict with national, European, and international law. This decision marks a significant strategic victory that aids in the restoration of rights for the affected families and reinforces the principle that access to humanitarian support must align with the best interests of the child and the standards for the protection of vulnerable individuals. The decision is not final and awaits a ruling from a five-member panel of the Supreme Administrative Court. For further details regarding the case facts and the court's deliberations, please refer to the article on our website, farbg.eu.

[Learn more](#)



NEW REQUEST FOR A PRELIMINARY RULING TO THE COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE FAR CASE

In a case initiated with the legal support of the Foundation for Access to Rights – FAR, the Administrative Court of Varna has submitted a preliminary ruling to the Court of Justice of the European Union, which has opened case C-761/25. The request poses the question of whether European Union law permits individuals granted temporary protection to be excluded from access to family benefits for children, as well as how the guarantees for social assistance, the rights of the child, the right to education, and the principle of non-discrimination under Directive 2001/55/EC and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union should be interpreted. This case holds particular significance, as the Court of Justice of the EU will address these issues for the first time. Its ruling will be pertinent not only for individuals granted temporary protection in Bulgaria but also for the application of EU law across all Member States.

STRATEGIC CASES

REAL RIGHTS, NOT JUST THEORY: FIRST-PERSON NARRATIVES IN “INVISIBLE LIVES”

The European research initiative Finding Agreement in Return (FAiR), with the Foundation for Access to Rights (FAR) as a partner, has released “Unseen Lives” - firsthand narratives from migrants, medical professionals, legal experts, and activists throughout Europe who confront the systemic injustices of immigration detention and forced repatriation.

Among the narratives presented, the account of the chairperson of FAR – attorney Valeria Ilareva – holds a prominent position. Her story intertwines two emblematic legal battles, exemplifying the dual facets of the same coin:

The case of Mr. Changu from Tanzania: A man who resided for nearly three decades (29 years) in Bulgaria within a complete “legal vacuum” – devoid of documents, status, and the right to work. Following a protracted struggle that culminated in the Court of Justice of the EU, in April 2025, the Supreme Administrative Court of Bulgaria acknowledged that his human dignity had been infringed upon and mandated the provision of humanitarian status. Nevertheless, the administration persists in erecting barriers, and the pursuit of genuine justice endures.

The Ilareva and Others v. Bulgaria case before the ECHR: In 2025, the European Court of Human Rights found Bulgaria in violation of its obligations for not adequately investigating violent online assaults, death threats, and hate speech directed at lawyer Ilareva, which were incited by her advocacy for migrants. The ruling affirmed that states bear a positive responsibility to safeguard human rights in both offline and digital environments.

[Learn more](#)



ON-SITE ASSISTANCE FOR REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

In 2025, the Foundation for Access to Rights (FAR), with the assistance of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), conducted a series of informational sessions focused on the socio-economic inclusion and integration of foreigners in Bulgaria.

Forty-nine information sessions were conducted across various settlements in the districts of Sofia (16), Burgas (15), Varna (8), Plovdiv (6), and Dobrich (4), including locations such as Pomorie, Sveti Vlas, Primorsko, Kranevo, and Balchik. Several sessions were organized in collaboration with partner organizations at the UNHCR-funded Compass Community Centers. This initiative engaged nearly 1,000 refugees and asylum seekers.

The events engaged nearly 1,000 refugees and asylum seekers, equipping them with practical knowledge and legal guidance.

Key topics of the sessions included:

Legal status and documentation: Procedures for international and temporary protection, options for altering residence status, criteria for obtaining Bulgarian citizenship, registration of address at a business location, and issuance of personal documents.

Labor rights and economic activity: Access to the labor market, the rights and responsibilities of workers, along with legal frameworks governing business opportunities and property.

Social assistance: Access to social benefits (including those provided under the Social Assistance Act), submission of applications to the Social Assistance Directorates, and avenues for appealing against denials.

Through these sessions, FAR strengthened its dedication to assisting foreigners in their journey toward independence, awareness, and complete integration into Bulgarian society.



SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION

FAR JOB FAIR – A CONDUIT CONNECTING INDIVIDUALS WITH OPPORTUNITIES

On October 30, 2025, the Foundation for Access to Rights (far) conducted its inaugural specialized Job Fair for Refugees and Migrants at the Krasno Selo Regional Center in Sofia. This event was executed as part of the project "Address for Access: The Path to Social Inclusion in Sofia," in collaboration with the Krasno Selo, Vrabnitsa, and Novi Iskar districts, and with the backing of the Europe 2025 Program of the Sofia Municipality.

The job fair convened more than 100 job seekers from over 10 countries and 15 employers across various sectors, presenting over 150 job vacancies. The event addressed the legal considerations of employment for foreigners, with a team of lawyers, mediators, translators, and FAR volunteers offering personalized legal consultations and communication assistance.

As a result of the direct dialogue, several new contacts were established, leading to interviews and employment contracts. The beneficial impact of the exchange and the migrantlife.bg platform was extensively covered in the media, showcasing an inspiring success story of a foreign citizen's integration into the Bulgarian labor market, facilitated by the support of FAR.

[Learn more](#)



INTERACTIVE MAP OF SERVICES ASSISTING FOREIGN NATIONALS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES NATIONWIDE.

The Foundation for Access to Rights (FAR) is actively enhancing the interactive map of services on RefugeeLight.bg, which serves as a vital digital resource for obtaining support across Bulgaria. The platform consistently broadens its range of updated information regarding legal and humanitarian assistance, as well as social, health, and educational services, accommodation, and vocational training.

Available in multiple languages, the map serves as an essential resource for refugees, migrants, and local community members, as well as for experts and organizations operating in the field. The development and ongoing updates of the services are conducted with the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR Bulgaria) and the Bulgarian Fund for Women.

[Learn more](#)



EMPLOYMENT PLATFORM MIGRANTLIFE.BG

The Foundation for Access to Rights is enhancing its specialized platform, Migrantlife.bg, which effectively links job-seeking refugees and migrants with responsible employers nationwide. In response to the increasing demands of the labor market, the platform is solidifying its position as an essential resource for the economic independence and enduring social integration of foreigners in Bulgaria. Discover the platform and the current opportunities available on Migrantlife.bg.

[Learn more](#)



COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN "PROVIDING AN OPPORTUNITY"

Through the information campaign "GIVING A CHANCE," part of the project "Access to Employment for Refugees and Migrants," FAR has gathered and published success stories of employers and refugee workers on the Migrantlife.bg platform. This campaign seeks to enhance public awareness regarding the employment of refugees and migrants while promoting their inclusion and the recognition of their potential as new members of society. Videos featuring personal narratives of successfully integrated foreigners and the employers who provided them opportunities are available on the Migrantlife.bg platform, specifically in the Employer Stories and Worker Stories sections. The project is financed by the Bulgarian Fund for Women.

[Watch](#)



SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION

FAR'S EXPERTISE IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE LABOR MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION.

Since the commencement of 2026, the team from the Foundation for Access to Rights – FAR has offered essential external expertise as moderators, expert speakers, and mediators in a series of events focused on labor migration and the economic integration of third-country nationals. These initiatives were organized by the BCCI and CEED Bulgaria as part of the project “Functionally Sustainable Migration and Integration in Bulgaria” (FAMI), which is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund of the European Union.

The sequence of events encompassed:

National Roundtable in Sofia;

Two labor exchanges for employers and third-country nationals in Sofia and Varna.

Two hybrid meetings with businesses in Plovdiv and Sofia.

Through its involvement in these forums, FAR enabled direct communication between employers and job seekers, offering legal guidance and fostering the development of sustainable integration models.

[Learn more](#)



TRAINING ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF REFUGEES WHO ARE VICTIMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

As part of the project "From 'Victim' to 'Winner': Support for Refugees, Victims of Gender-Based Violence," funded by the Bulgarian Fund for Women, FAR conducted the inaugural training session for frontline specialists in Sofia on September 18, 2025. This event focused on the methodology for identifying and safeguarding refugees who have encountered gender-based violence.

To meet the demands of practice and to support industry experts, FAR has developed and disseminated methodological materials and practical tools for general use:

- Victim identification
- Assessing requirements
- Personalized case management plan
- Sample Service Feedback Form

All developed resources and the comprehensive methodology are freely available and can be accessed on the project website.

[Learn more](#)



TRAININGS

SPECIALIZED SEMINAR: GENDER-SENSITIVE STRATEGIES IN REFUGEE RECEPTION AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION PROTOCOLS

On February 27, 2026, the second training seminar was conducted as part of the project "Gender-Sensitive Approaches in the Reception of Refugees and the International Protection Procedure." Esteemed lecturers Adv. Dr. Valeria Ilareva and Adv. Yanka Kosarova emphasized refugee law through the lens of human rights and the new standards established in the EU Pact on Asylum and Migration.

Key highlights of the event:

- **Practical simulation:** participants participated in a role-play to conduct personal interviews aimed at identifying vulnerabilities and specific needs of protection applicants.
- **FAR methodology:** the established methodology for identifying and safeguarding refugees who have encountered gender-based violence was presented (see above).



TRAINING TO SAFEGUARD REFUGEES AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

On June 9–10, 2026, in Varna, the third training session under the project “Protecting Refugees from Gender-Based Violence through the Provision of International Protection” was conducted, led by Adv. Dr. Valeria Ilareva.

The training concentrated on essential topics within international refugee law, including the assessment of applications for international protection submitted by victims of domestic violence; the landmark rulings of the Court of Justice of the European Union from 2024 concerning female refugees from Turkey, Iraq, and Afghanistan; the safeguarding of LGBTI+ individuals facing persecution due to their sexual orientation; and alternatives to internal displacement.

Additionally, significant emphasis was placed on the new legislative instruments introduced by the EU Pact on Asylum and Migration, namely the Qualification Regulation, the Procedural Regulation, and the Reception Directive.

The training was attended by 35 representatives from institutions and organizations across Northern and Eastern Bulgaria, including: SOS Families at Risk Foundation (Varna), NAYA Association (Targovishte), Caritas Ruse/Varna, NGO Energy - NRG (Varna), Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Interior - Varna, Regional Directorate for Social Assistance - Varna, Social Welfare Association - Varna, Bulgarian Red Cross - Varna, Regional Directorate for Social Assistance - Dobrich, Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Interior - Ruse, Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Interior - Burgas, and Regional Directorate for Social Assistance - Ruse.



TRAININGS

ONLINE TRAINING: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGN NATIONALS – LEGISLATION, PRACTICES, AND NEW ELECTRONIC SERVICES

On May 20, 2026, the Access to Rights Foundation organized and facilitated a specialized online training session centered on the recent legislative changes and practical challenges associated with the employment of foreign nationals in Bulgaria. Participants included employers, HR professionals, and legal experts. The session was led by Dr. Adv. Valeria Ilareva.

The primary highlights of the program included the legislative amendments to the Law on the Migration of Persons with Disabilities, the Law on the Migration of Persons with Disabilities, and the new Directive (EU) 2024/1233 concerning the Single Work and Residence Procedure, along with the platform migrantlife.bg. An expert from the Employment Agency also served as a guest speaker at the event, addressing practical matters related to seasonal employment and engagement with the state digital platform workinbulgaria.egov.bg.

In continuation of the discussion and in response to practical challenges, FAR established and oversees the expert Facebook group: "Labor Migration in Bulgaria: Practice and Law."

[Learn more](#)



**ОНЛАЙН ОБУЧЕНИЕ:
АКТУАЛНИ ПРОМЕНИ ПРИ
НАЕМАНЕТО НА
ЧУЖДЕСТРАННИ ГРАЖДАНИ
– ЗАКОНОДАТЕЛСТВО,
ПРАКТИКА И НОВИ
ЕЛЕКТРОННИ УСЛУГИ**

20.05.2026

**9:30-12:45
On-line**

ЛЕКТОРИ

**АДВ. Д-Р ВАЛЕРИЯ
ИЛАРЕВА**

основател и главен адвокат
на Фондация за достъп до
права (ФАР).

МАРИЯ НЕЦОВА

координатор на
платформата за заетост на
бежанци и мигранти
migrantlife.bg, Фондация за
достъп до права (ФАР).

ЮЛИЯНА СТЕФАНОВА

главен експерт, дирекция
„Разрешителни и трудова
миграция“ към Агенция по
заетостта.

13 години
Фондация за
достъп до права
Foundation for
Access to Rights

ON AUGUST 20, 2026, FAR WILL CONDUCT A VIRTUAL MEETING FOR UZBEK JOB SEEKERS REGARDING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN BULGARIA.

The event is organized in response to the numerous inquiries received via the Migrantlife.bg platform from Uzbek citizens seeking employment opportunities in our nation.

During the meeting, participants will obtain practical guidance on job searching, the requisite documents for legal residency and employment, as well as information regarding their labor rights in Bulgaria.

[Discover more](#)



AT THE CONCLUSION OF SEPTEMBER, THE FINAL TRAINING SESSION IN THE SERIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROJECT "FROM 'VICTIM' TO 'WINNER': SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES, VICTIMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE," FUNDED BY THE BULGARIAN FUND FOR WOMEN, WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE CITY OF PLOVDIV.

The training focuses on "Effective Documentation of Signs of Violence: Psychological Aspects of Trauma and Assessment of the Credibility of Applications for International Protection."



UPCOMING

PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FAIR RESEARCH PROJECT

The FAiR final event will take place on the 8th and 9th of October 2026 in Geneva. During this two half-day event, we will present and discuss our key findings from our 3.5 year project. We will cover return migration governance, with a focus on legitimacy, human rights, and policy implications and seeks to foster dialogue among different stakeholders from EU and non-EU countries.

Format: The event will feature short presentations of key findings and participatory panel discussions. Each session will review the project's key outcomes and jointly explore ways to translate them into actionable policy.

Target audience: Researchers, public servants, practitioners and civil society representatives

A promotional banner for the FAiR final event. It features a blue and white color scheme. On the right side, there is a graphic of a wooden signpost with four directional signs (blue, teal, light blue, and white) pointing in different directions. A white path leads from the bottom left towards the signpost. On the left side, there is a dark blue banner with a white calendar icon and the text 'FAiR final event'. Below this, the main title 'Return policy at a crossroads, perspectives from the FAiR research project' is written in a large, bold, dark blue font. At the bottom left, there are two circular icons: a calendar icon and a location pin icon. To the right of the calendar icon, the dates '8-9 October 2026' are listed. To the right of the location pin icon, the text 'Graduate Institute, IHEID Geneva, Switzerland' is displayed.

FAiR final event

Return policy at a crossroads, perspectives from the FAiR research project

 **8-9**
October 2026

 Graduate Institute, IHEID
Geneva, Switzerland

[Register here](#)



The FAR team wishes to extend its sincere appreciation to all our partners, donors, benefactors, and supporters, including UNHCR in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Fund for Women, the International Rescue Committee, the European Commission, the European Network for Stateless Persons, the Europe Programme of the Sofia Municipality, and others. It is through their support and assistance that FAR can fulfill its core mission and activities, ensuring practical access to rights and providing effective protection against arbitrary deprivation of rights.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all individual donors who contribute to our efforts through their generous donations. Your trust and generosity inspire us, enabling us to reach an increasing number of individuals in need. We would like to remind you that you can support FAR's initiatives through our three campaigns on GlobalGiving:

Legal assistance for refugees and migrants in Bulgaria

The FAR hotline

Hygiene supplies and bedding for refugees

Your support enables transformation. Thank you!



БЪЛГАРСКИ
ФОНД ЗА
ЖЕНИТЕ



unicef 
for every child

ПРОГРАМА
Европа
СТОЛИЧНА ОБЩИНА



European
Network on
Statelessness