



Фондация за
достъп до права

Foundation for
Access to Rights



ANNUAL REPORT

2025

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CONCLUSION

In 2025, the Foundation for Access to Rights (FAR) reaffirmed its steadfast commitment to protecting refugees, migrants, and stateless persons in Bulgaria. Guided by its mission to ensure equal access to justice, the team continued to advance its core operational areas in refugee and migration law.

Pro bono legal assistance remained central to the organization's operations. By combining direct in-person and online legal consultations with modern digital tools, FAR guaranteed safe and streamlined access to legal advice for a wide range of individuals. In parallel, the organization invested in building expert capacity nationally by conducting specialized training sessions for legal practitioners and attorneys-at-law specializing in the field.

Over the past year, FAR concluded key initiatives and launched new project partnerships. These efforts unlocked additional opportunities for advocacy and direct assistance, consolidating the organization's standing as an authoritative voice in safeguarding fundamental human rights and the rule of law. Simultaneously, FAR enhanced its specialized services, including employment mediation as a critical component of full-scale local integration.

The year was marked by severe operational challenges for the entire non-governmental sector, stemming from shrinking grant funding, heightened competition for project proposals, and an increasingly complex geopolitical and economic environment. Despite these adverse trends, the organization maintained its financial sustainability, preserved its core operational activities, and continued providing indispensable support to its beneficiaries.

This report outlines FAR's initiatives and activities implemented in 2025, the results achieved, and their overall community impact.

Provision of Legal Aid, Digital Services, and Information Outreach

In line with its strategic mission – to transform theoretical rights into effective protection mechanisms and prevent arbitrary restrictions – FAR consolidated its role in 2025 as a leading organization in providing legal aid and orientation to refugees [1], migrants, and stateless persons.

These activities were made possible through sustainable partnerships with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Fund for Women, the European Commission's Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Programme, and the "Europe" Programme of the Sofia Development Association / Sofia Municipality.

The organization's multidisciplinary team—comprising attorneys-at-law, interpreters, cultural mediators, digital communication specialists, and field caseworkers—ensured uninterrupted access to assistance through FAR's digital channels and direct field operations.

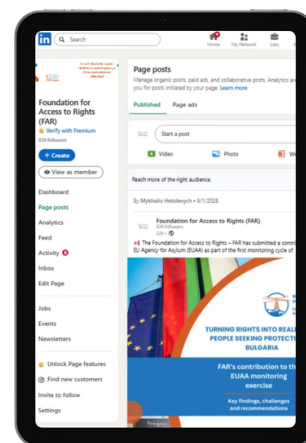
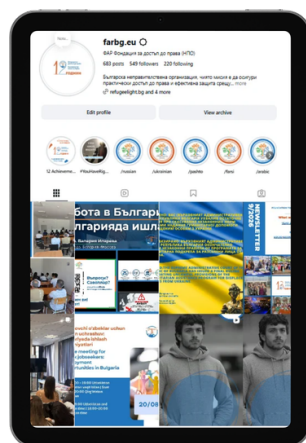
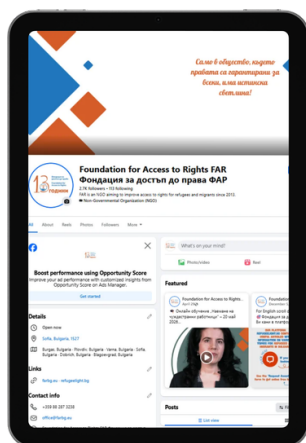
Consequently, in 2025, legal consultations were provided to 4,707 beneficiaries, with over 1,200 complex cases taken on for comprehensive, long-term legal representation. Across all interventions, the team applied an individualized approach tailored to cultural context and the specific protection needs of vulnerable groups.

[1] The term "refugees" in this report is used in a broad sense and encompasses asylum seekers, persons granted refugee or humanitarian status, as well as temporary protection beneficiaries.

Indicator	Value	Description
Total Beneficiaries Consulted	4 707	Individuals provided with legal advice and consultations during the year
Cases Managed Long-Term	1 200+	Complex cases taken on for procedural and legal representation
Legal Support & Socio-Economic Inclusion	2 958	Beneficiaries assisted with integration and access to rights
Digital Legal Aid Tool Users	726	Individuals who received legal support via the specialized platform
Information Provided on Status Determination	1 023	Two-way digital communications conducted via refugeelight.bg
Linguistic Reach	13	Languages in which legal consultations were provided
Geographic Origin	80+	Beneficiary countries of origin

In 2025, FAR continued actively developing and expanding content on its specialized information portal, Refugeelight.bg. To provide timely, current, and practical support, the platform features over 123 informational articles covering broad thematic categories—ranging from international protection procedures, legal aid, and residence in Bulgaria, to labor market access, healthcare, education, and social rights. Throughout the year, 333,700 individuals utilized FAR’s specialized online resources.

Digital Channel / Platform	Metric	Achieved Result
Refugeelight.bg Portal	Unique Users	333 700
Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, LinkedIn, Telegram)	Post Impressions	282 500
Social Media	Total Followers	12 800



Invalidation of Unlawful Provisions under the Humanitarian Scheme for Persons from Ukraine

By Decision No. 6762 of June 26, 2025, in a case litigated with FAR's legal assistance, the Supreme Administrative Court invalidated unlawful provisions of the Scheme for Humanitarian Support and Integration of Displaced Persons from Ukraine Granted Temporary Protection. The Court held that certain criteria defining "at-risk groups" affecting children and families with children violated national, EU, and international law.

This decision represents a major strategic victory, restoring rights to affected families and upholding the principle that access to humanitarian support must align with the best interests of the child and standards for protecting vulnerable persons. The ruling was upheld by a five-judge panel of the Supreme Administrative Court.



Strategic cases

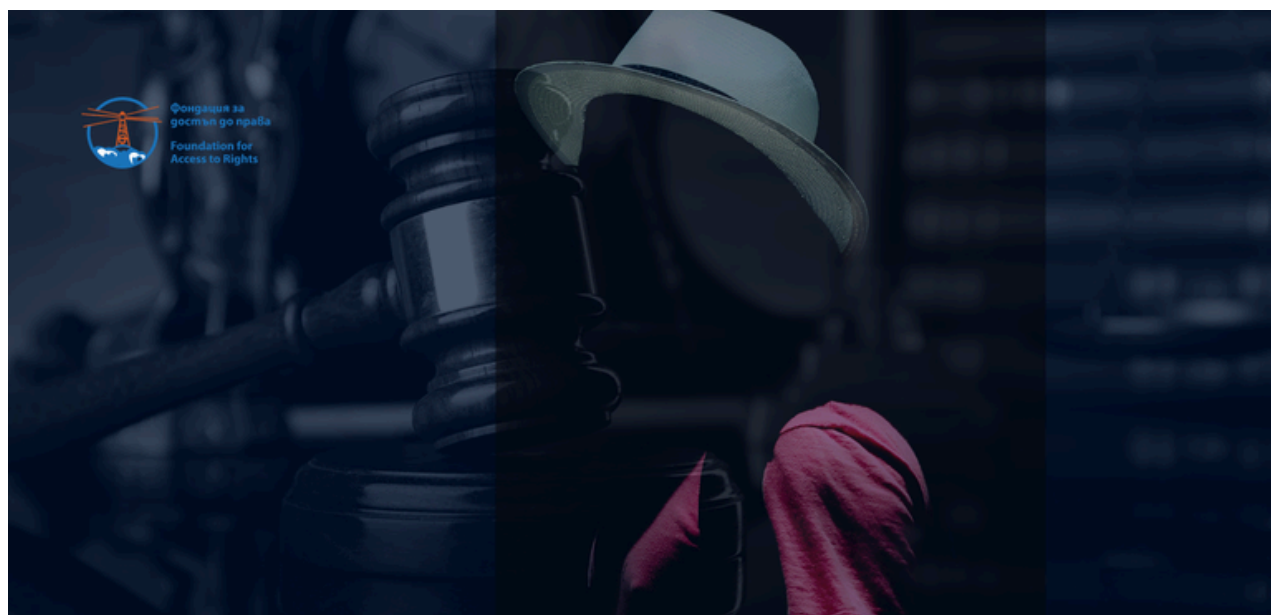
Preliminary Ruling Request to the Court of Justice of the European Union (Case C-761/25)

In a case brought with FAR's legal assistance, the Administrative Court of Varna referred a request for a preliminary ruling to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), registered as Case C-761/25. The reference asks whether EU law permits the exclusion of temporary protection holders from child allowance benefits, and how guarantees regarding social assistance, children's rights, the right to education, and the principle of non-discrimination under Directive 2001/55/EC and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights should be interpreted.

This case is of paramount significance as the CJEU will rule on these specific issues for the first time. Its judgment will impact temporary protection holders in Bulgaria and the application of EU law across all Member States.

The "Changu" Case

A Tanzanian national resided in Bulgaria for nearly three decades (29 years) in a total "legal limbo"—without identity documents, legal status, or the right to work. Following years of strategic litigation by FAR that reached the CJEU, the Supreme Administrative Court of Bulgaria recognized in April 2025 that his human dignity had been breached and ordered that he be granted humanitarian status.



Case of Ilareva and Others v. Bulgaria before the ECtHR

In 2025, the European Court of Human Rights ruled against Bulgaria for failing to effectively investigate severe online attacks, death threats, and hate speech directed at attorney-at-law Valeria Ilareva due to her legal defense of migrants. The judgment affirmed that States bear a positive obligation to protect human rights both offline and in digital spaces.

Within the EU-funded research [project FAiR, the booklet "Unseen Lives"](#) was published, bringing together rare testimonies on immigration detention, forced return, and the struggle against legal precarity. The publication highlights two landmark cases from FAR's practice: the "Changu" case and Ilareva and Others v. Bulgaria.



Socio-Economic Inclusion and Labor Integration

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In 2025, FAR actively facilitated refugee and migrant empowerment through direct field operations and targeted support for labor market access.

Information Sessions

FAR legal counsel conducted over 50 information sessions across 5 regions in Bulgaria: Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas, and Dobrich. These events reached nearly 1,000 refugees and asylum seekers, providing practical knowledge and legal orientation.

Topics covered key aspects of legal, social, and economic integration, organized into core thematic areas: legal status, residence regimes, naturalization, administrative procedures, practical rights, labor rights, entrepreneurship, social assistance, and access to education.

Refugeelight.bg Platform

FAR continued enriching the interactive service map on Refugeelight.bg—a key digital resource for accessing support across Bulgaria.

The platform continuously expands its directory of up-to-date information on legal and humanitarian assistance, social, healthcare, and educational services, accommodation, and vocational training.

Available in multiple languages, it serves as an indispensable tool for refugees, migrants, community members, and field practitioners.

Socio-Economic Inclusion and Labor Integration

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Employment Mediation

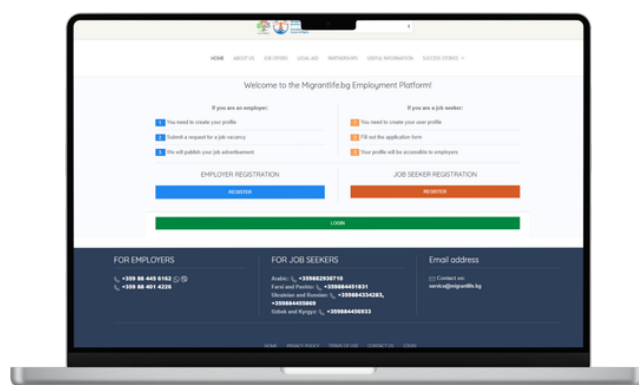
As a licensed employment intermediary, FAR provided specialized placement support to refugees and migrants while assisting employers in sourcing qualified candidates for open positions.

In October 2025, FAR organized its first specialized Job Fair for Refugees and Migrants. The event brought together over 100 job seekers from more than 10 countries and 15 employers offering over 150 job vacancies, serving as a vital venue for direct networking and practical integration steps.

Migrantlife.bg Employment Platform

FAR advanced the development of Migrantlife.bg, its dedicated platform connecting job-seeking refugees and migrants with inclusive employers nationwide.

Addressing labor shortages in Bulgaria, the platform facilitates access to employment opportunities, fostering economic self-reliance and sustainable socio-economic integration.

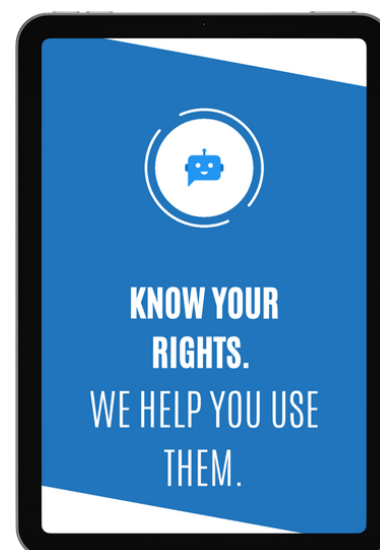


Information Campaigns and Civic Engagement Initiatives

#KnowYourRights Campaign

In early 2025, FAR launched a campaign focused on preventing and protecting children from immigration detention under the project "RELEASE: Protecting Child Migrants from Detention via the EU Charter".

Multilingual audiovisual materials (translated into 7 languages) providing key legal information for migrant children were made available on Refugeelight.bg.



#YouHaveRights Campaign

In June 2025, FAR's #YouHaveRights campaign marked World Refugee Day (June 20), supported by UNHCR Bulgaria.

The campaign raised awareness on key topics, including rights to Bulgarian citizenship, education, and labor market access for refugees, beneficiaries of humanitarian status, stateless persons, permanent/long-term residents, and persons of Bulgarian origin.



Information Campaigns and Civic Engagement Initiatives

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"Democratic Mosaic" Festival

On September 26–27, 2025, FAR participated in the "Democratic Mosaic" festival in Sofia, organized by the Bulgarian Center for Not-for-Profit Law (BCNL) alongside the Citizen Participation Forum and the National Youth Forum.

FAR presented refugeelight.bg and migrantlife.bg to the public, engaging audiences on social inclusion, solidarity, and fundamental rights protection.

#GivingAChance & #TurnOpportunityIntoSuccess Campaigns

FAR conducted the "Giving a Chance" public awareness campaign to highlight the labor integration of refugees and migrants and promote social inclusion by demonstrating their professional capabilities.

Personal success stories of integrated foreign nationals and inclusive employers were filmed and published on [Migrantlife.bg](https://migrantlife.bg) to dispel labor market prejudices.



Project SUN: Safeguarding Unaccompanied and Separated Children's Rights through the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Concluded)

In March 2025, FAR successfully concluded the 24-month international SUN project (launched April 1, 2023). FAR served as the lead coordinating organization alongside partners ARSIS (Greece), Tdh (Romania), NIDOS (Netherlands), Sirius Network (Belgium), Volontarius (Italy), and CCAR (Spain), co-funded by the EU's CERV Programme.

- Exchange Visit & Partner Meeting (March 12, 2025): FAR hosted European partners in Sofia for peer learning and visits to the Safe Zones for unaccompanied children at the State Agency for Refugees (SAR) Registration and Reception Center in Sofia.
- Final International Conference (March 13, 2025): Held at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski," bringing together over 70 experts from state institutions, academia, and international organizations. Key deliverables presented included the analytical report "Training Needs Analysis and Best Practices for Protecting the Rights of Unaccompanied and Separated Refugee and Migrant Children" and the project-developed Practitioner Handbook.



Project "Access to Employment for Refugees and Migrants" (Concluded)(Funded by the Bulgarian Fund for Women and the European Union)

Concluded in 2025, this project raised awareness regarding fundamental labor rights for asylum seekers, refugees, temporary protection holders, subsidiary protection beneficiaries, and migrants.

Activities included information sessions, individual legal and social counseling, expanding the Refugeelight.bg service directory, and public awareness campaigns. On February 27, 2025, FAR and the Dobrich Labour Office Directorate hosted a hybrid info-session on labor rights and employment opportunities.

Project "From 'Victim' to 'Victor': Support for Refugee Victims of Gender-Based Violence" (Ongoing)

(Funded by the Bulgarian Fund for Women and the European Union) This initiative establishes protective mechanisms, early identification tools, and specialized assistance for gender-based violence (GBV) survivors seeking or granted international protection. FAR developed a comprehensive expert toolkit, including:

- Identification guidelines for GBV survivors;
- Individual needs assessment tools;
- Individualized case management model protocols;
- Service quality feedback frameworks.

On September 18, 2025, FAR delivered the first specialized training session for frontline practitioners on implementing this methodology.



**ПРОЕКТ:
„АДРЕС ЗА ДОСТЪП: ПЪТЯТ КЪМ СОЦИАЛНО
ВКЛЮЧВАНЕ В СОФИЯ“**

ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯТА-БЕНЕФИЦИЕНТ :
ФОНДАЦИЯТА ЗА ДОСТЪП ДО ПРАВА - ФАР
ПАРТНЬОРИ:
• РАЙОН „ВРЪБНИЦА“
• РАЙОН „КРАСНО СЕЛО“
• РАЙОН „НОВИ ИСКЪР“



Project "Address for Access: The Pathway to Social Inclusion in Sofia" (Concluded)

(Executed with support from the Sofia Municipality "Europe" 2025 Programme)
Implemented from July to December 2025 in partnership with the district administrations of Vrabnitsa, Krasno Selo, and Novi Iskar.

- Developed Resources: Produced a specialized Information Booklet on address registration and official administrative address registration in Bulgaria in 6 languages.
- Events Organized: Conducted info-sessions for refugees, a job fair, a round table, and an expert conference addressing systemic administrative hurdles to official residence registration.

RELEASE Project pRotEcting migrant chiLdrEn AgainSt detention through the EU Charter



Project RELEASE: Protecting Child Migrants from Detention via the EU Charter (Ongoing)

(Co-funded by the EU CERV Programme) Implemented by FAR in partnership with the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ-EI) and organizations across 5 EU Member States (Belgium, Greece, Malta, Poland, and the Czech Republic). The project aims to end child immigration detention by promoting alternatives to detention (ATDs) and strategic litigation.

- Training & Mentorship: Workshops for attorneys-at-law and legal experts on strategic litigation.
- Legal Resources: Published a practical Guide on Strategic Litigation focusing on international remedies against child detention.
- Campaigns & Advocacy: Produced multilingual audiovisual materials for children on Refugeelight.bg and engaged in EU-level advocacy regarding the EU New Pact on Migration and Asylum.

The year 2025 consolidated the Foundation for Access to Rights (FAR) as a benchmark organization protecting refugees, migrants, and stateless persons in Bulgaria. From strategic litigation victories and thousands of legal consultations to digital service expansions and employment mediation, these achievements stem from dedicated advocacy within a complex operational environment.

FAR expresses its sincere gratitude to its donors and strategic partners—UNHCR, the Bulgarian Fund for Women, the European Commission (CERV Programme), Sofia Municipality ("Europe" Programme), as well as national and international civil society organizations, institutions, volunteers, interns, and staff. Most importantly, we thank the individuals who placed their trust in FAR's legal services.

Looking ahead to 2026, FAR sets ambitious objectives: strengthening strategic advocacy before national and EU authorities, expanding digital access-to-rights tools, scaling up employment mediation, and initiating new partnerships supported by the EEA and Norway Grants and other key donors. Amid shrinking funding landscape and evolving protection challenges, FAR remains steadfast in its mission: transforming legal rights from abstract guarantees into practical, effective safeguards for the most vulnerable.

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