

Overview of national measures regarding employment and social security of displaced persons coming from Ukraine

Country Fiche – Bulgaria
February 2023

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Information provided in this fiche considers legal and policy developments up to 31 January 2023.

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Contents

1.0	Legal and institutional framework.....	4
1.1	Legal framework	4
1.1.1	List of the legal framework	4
1.1.2	Beneficiaries (persons covered by temporary protection)	6
1.2	Institutional framework	9
2.0	Possibility of changing the status.....	11
3.0	Access to labour market (Article 12 of the Temporary Protection Directive).....	12
4.0	Social security, social welfare and means of subsistence assistance, as well as medical care (Article 13 of the Temporary Protection Directive).....	16
5.0	Public support instruments	21

1.0 Legal and institutional framework

1.1 Legal framework

1.1.1 List of the legal framework

- I. Legislation implementing the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD or the Directive)¹ and Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382²

- ▶ **Asylum and Refugees Act (ARA) of 2007**: The Act transposes the Directive 2001/55/EC; **last amendment**, State Gazette No. 32 of 26 April 2022, in force from 26 April 2022.
- ▶ **Decision No. 144 of 10 March 2022 (not promulgated)**: On 10 March 2022, the Council of Ministers adopted Decision No. 144, providing temporary protection to displaced persons from Ukraine in accordance with the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 establishing the existence of the mass entry of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of the Temporary Protection Directive and for the introduction of temporary protection.
- ▶ **Decision No. 180 of 30 March 2022 (not promulgated)**: On 30 March 2022, the Council of Ministers decided to extend until 15 April the possibility, for people with foreign citizenship or stateless persons, who left Ukraine as a result of hostilities and who entered and remained in Bulgaria, to receive temporary protection without their explicit will and registration of temporary protection.
- ▶ The **Health Act (HA)** and the **Health Insurance Act (HIA)** were amended in April 2022, promulgated in State Gazette No. 32 of 26 April 2022, in force from 26 April 2022. The purpose of these amendments was to reflect the need on regulating the health status of beneficiaries of temporary protection in Bulgaria (see below Section 4.0).
- ▶ **Decree No. 69 of 5 May 2022** of the Council of Ministers, promulgated in State Gazette No. 35 of 10 May 2022, in force from 10 May 2022. The purpose is to provide health insurance for the persons with temporary protection.
- ▶ **Decision No. 145 of 10 March 2022** adopting the '**Programme for the Use of Humanitarian Aid for Persons Seeking Temporary Protection in the Republic of Bulgaria as a Result of the Military Actions of the Republic of Bulgaria**'. This Programme is no longer in force.
- ▶ **Decision No. 317 of 22 May 2022** of the Council of Ministers (amended and supplemented by decisions No. 535, 665, 856, 909 and 963 of the Council of Ministers of 2022) adopting the '**Programme for Humanitarian Assistance to Displaced Persons from Ukraine Granted Temporary Protection in Bulgaria**' as a continuation of the '**Programme for the Use of Humanitarian Aid for Persons Seeking Temporary Protection in the Republic of Bulgaria as a Result of the Military Actions of the Republic of Bulgaria**'.
- ▶ **Decision No. 318**: On 20 May 2022, the Council of Ministers decided to place displaced persons from Ukraine in rest centres and in centres for the prevention and rehabilitation, in force as of 1 June 2022.

¹ Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001 on minimum standards for giving temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons and on measures promoting a balance of efforts between Member States in receiving such persons and bearing the consequences thereof, OJ L 212, 7 August 2001, p. 12-23, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32001L0055>.

² Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of introducing temporary protection, OJ L 71, 4 March 2022, p. 1-6, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32022D0382>.

- ▶ **Decision No. 909 (not promulgated):** On 16 November 2022, the Council of Ministers extended until 24 February 2023 the term of operation of the '[Programme for Humanitarian Assistance to Displaced Persons from Ukraine Granted Temporary Protection in Bulgaria](#)'. In the extended period of operation, new accommodation will be provided only in state and municipal bases.
- ▶ **Decision No. 1038:** On 20 December 2022, the Council of Ministers decided to amend the '[Programme for Humanitarian Assistance to Displaced Persons from Ukraine Granted Temporary Protection in Bulgaria](#)'. Only new arrivals under the conditions of the Updated Action Plan for temporary protection can be accommodated in categorized or registered places of accommodation entered in the National Tourist Register. An exception is made for persons granted temporary protection, for the purpose of reunification of family members within the meaning of the Temporary Protection Directive and the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 as of 4 March 2022 or to achieve another lawful purpose. Application of this rule is possible if there is a decision at National Operational Headquarters established by Order No. R-240 of 18 November 2022 of the Prime Minister.
- ▶ **Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria Act:** It provides the legal definitions of 'extraordinary circumstances', 'State interest' and 'Humanitarian reasons'. The Act entered into force on 5 July 1999.

II. Legislation having an impact on the (access to) (self-)employment and social security/welfare for the displaced persons coming from Ukraine

Access to employment

- ▶ The [Asylum and Refugees Act \(ARA\)](#) introduces the requirement of Article 12 of the Temporary Protection Directive that foreigners enjoying temporary protection have the right to work and to vocational training. It follows that displaced persons from Ukraine enjoying temporary protection can work in Bulgaria without a work permit, register as jobseekers at an employment office at their permanent or current address and benefit from employment services and vocational training. ARA was amended in April 2022, promulgated in State Gazette No. 32 of 26 April 2022, in force from 26 April 2022.
- ▶ The [Employment Promotion Act](#) was amended by [Decree No. 139](#), promulgated in State Gazette No. 41 of 3 June 2022, in force from 3 June 2022. The purpose of these amendments is to ensure the possibility for persons with temporary protection to register with the Employment Agency and receive assistance in finding a job, means of transport and accommodation for the duration of the procedure for the validation of professional qualifications.
- ▶ The [Labour Migration and Labour Mobility Act](#) was amended by [Decree No. 139](#), promulgated in State Gazette No. 41 of 3 June 2022, in force from 3 June 2022. The purpose of these amendments is to ensure access to the labour market for displaced persons from Ukraine without a prior authorization procedure (Article 9, para. 5).

Social security

- ▶ [Law on Amendments and Supplements of the Health Insurance Act](#) was adopted in order to reflect the need on regulating the health status of beneficiaries of temporary protection in Bulgaria, promulgated in State Gazette No. 32 of 26 April 2022, in force from 26 April 2022. This law provides that foreigners granted temporary protection by Bulgarian authorities have the right to health insurance, affordable medical care and medical services under the terms and conditions for Bulgarian citizens, with the exception of medical

care provided in accordance with the rules for the coordination of social security systems within the meaning of Section 1, item 22 of the Additional provisions of the HIA (See Section 4 below).

- ▶ [Decree No 69 of 5 May 2022](#) for health insurance of persons under temporary protection under Article 1a, Paragraph 3 of the Asylum and Refugees Act and of the persons under Article 39, Paragraph 6, item 2 and Article 40a, para. 3a of the Health Insurance Act, promulgated in State Gazette No. 35 of 10 May 2022.
- ▶ [Social Insurance Code of 17 December 1999](#): The code entered into force on 1 January 2000.

Social welfare

- ▶ Foreigners who are beneficiaries of temporary protection have the right to social assistance (Article 39, Paragraph 1, item 4 of the ARA) and are included as a target group in the [Law on Social Assistance](#) (Article 2, para 1). [Decisions No 144](#) and [145](#) (not promulgated) of the Council of Ministers contain special provisions regarding social assistance and accommodation for displaced persons from Ukraine enjoying temporary protection.
- ▶ [Decision on taking measures in connection with the war in Ukraine](#) was adopted on 4 May 2022 by the National Assembly (Parliament), promulgated in State Gazette No. 35 of 10 May 2022. This Decision gives mandate to the Council of Ministers to discuss and implement a package of measures related to the war in Ukraine and its consequences in the following areas: providing assistance to Ukraine - humanitarian, financial and military-technical, according to the capabilities of Bulgaria - providing assistance to displaced persons from Ukraine fleeing the war (legislative and organizational measures to improve reception capacity and integration opportunities until conditions are in place for their lasting return to Ukraine); providing an opportunity for export of Ukrainian grain to Varna; continuing the delivery of humanitarian aid, in particular medicines, clothing and foodstuffs.
- ▶ [Decision No. 317 of 22 May 2022](#): A new '[Program for Humanitarian Assistance to Displaced Persons from Ukraine Granted Temporary Protection in Bulgaria](#)' was adopted. An Operational Coordination Group assists persons displaced from Ukraine to be accommodated in state, municipal and private rest centres, or in hotels at the expense of the state. The amount of funds has been reduced to BGN 15 (from BGN 40 until the end of May) per day for an overnight stay and three meals for each person accommodated. [Information](#) on the implementation of the program is available in Ukrainian, Russian and English languages.

All the possibilities having an impact on the employment and social security of displaced persons coming from Ukraine are pointed out in instructions of the Council of Ministers, the State Agency for Refugees, the General Labour Inspectorate, the Employment Agency and the Agency for Social Assistance. Most of them are published [here](#).

1.1.2 Beneficiaries (persons covered by temporary protection)

Type of beneficiary	National regime of temporary protection for displaced persons coming from Ukraine
Ukrainian nationals	Yes
▶ Residing in Ukraine	

Type of beneficiary	National regime of temporary protection for displaced persons coming from Ukraine
displaced from 24 February 2022	
<p>Family members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ of a Ukrainian national present or residing in Ukraine before 24 February 2022 and displaced from Ukraine on or after 24 February 2022 <p>of third-country nationals and stateless persons, who benefited from international protection or equivalent national protection in Ukraine before 24 February 2022 and were displaced from Ukraine on or after 24 February 2022</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Under Article 1, item 3 of the Additional Provisions of the 'family members' are: spouses, wife or persons with whom they are in a proven stable and long-term relationship and their under-aged children who are unmarried; aged children who are not married and who are unable to provide their own maintenance for serious health reasons; the parents of each of the spouses who are unable to take care of themselves because of an advanced age or serious illness and have to live in the same household; the parents or guardian of the minor who is not married and to whom an international protection has been provided.</p> <p>Pursuant to an explicit provision in the 'Program for Humanitarian Assistance to Displaced Persons from Ukraine Granted Temporary Protection in Bulgaria' adopted by the Council of Ministers, members of the same family are considered to be persons under Article 15, Paragraph 1 of the Temporary Protection Directive.</p>
Third-country nationals and stateless persons beneficiaries of international or equivalent national protection in Ukraine until 24 February 2022	Yes
Stateless persons and nationals of third countries, legally residing in Ukraine before 24 February 2022 on the basis of a valid permanent resident permit and unable to return in safe and durable conditions to their country or region of origin	<p>Yes</p> <p>By Decision No. 144 of 10 March 2022 of the Council of Ministers (see item 3), Bulgaria agreed to grant temporary protection to foreigners who are not Ukrainian citizens and to stateless persons who resided legally in Ukraine until the outbreak of the war if they cannot return safely to their home countries. In order to receive temporary protection, these categories of persons must be registered by 31 March 2022 in Bulgaria and declare a wish to use temporary protection. By Decision No. 180 of 30 March 2022, the Council of Ministers extended this period until 15 April 2021.</p> <p>By Decision No. 241 of 15 April 2022, the Council of Ministers amended and supplemented the 'Programme for the Use of Humanitarian Aid for Persons Seeking Temporary Protection in the Republic of Bulgaria as a Result of the Military Actions of the Republic of Bulgaria' to be applied to Bulgarian citizens in Ukraine and who were permanently established and residing on</p>

Type of beneficiary	National regime of temporary protection for displaced persons coming from Ukraine
	the territory of Ukraine before 24 February 2022 and do not have residential property on the territory of Bulgaria.
<p>Other persons who are displaced for the same reasons and from the same country of region of origin (Article 7(1) of TPD), including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ stateless persons and ▶ nationals of third countries other than Ukraine, <p>who are residing legally in Ukraine and who are unable to return in safe and durable conditions to their country or region of origin (Article 2(3) Council Decision).</p>	Yes
Any additional category of beneficiaries (i.e. persons who arrived from Ukraine before 24 February 2022)	<p>No</p> <p>However, based on the EU agreement with Ukraine on visa-free travel and more specifically on the Regulation 2018/1806/EU, Ukrainian citizens who are holders of biometric passports can enter Bulgaria and stay there for up to 90 days within 180 days. In addition, the Law on Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria, in its Article 27, Paragraph 2, stipulates that the length of stay of persons who have entered the country under the visa waiver regime may be extended once by the services of administrative control of foreigners on humanitarian grounds related to exceptional circumstances or where public interest is present. Foreigners may submit in person an application before the expiry of the permitted term of stay, to which they shall attach: their passport or replacing travelling document; documents, evidencing present of extraordinary circumstances or humanitarian reasons; stable, valid, invisible and sufficient funds for maintenance, residence home; compulsory medical insurance for the term of the applied extension of the visa and the stay in the country.</p> <p>The legal definitions concerning 'extraordinary circumstances', 'State interest' and 'Humanitarian reasons' are enshrined in Article 1 of the Additional provisions of the Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (AP FRBA).</p>

1.2 Institutional framework

- a) National competent authority(ies) providing assistance to the persons enjoying temporary (or adequate) protection coming from Ukraine.

Scope of work	Name of the authority (in EN)	Name of the authority (in national language)	Hyperlink
General (including status change in Section 2)	Council of Ministers	Министерски съвет	https://www.government.bg
	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Министерство на външните работи	https://www.mfa.bg/en
	Ministry of Interior	Министерство на вътрешните работи	https://www.mvr.bg/en/home
	State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministers	Държавна агенция за бежанците при Министерския съвет	https://www.aref.government.bg/en
Employment rights	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy	Министерство на труда и социалната политика	https://www.mlsp.government.bg
	General Labour Inspectorate at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy	Главна инспекция по труда при Министерството на труда и социалната политика	https://www.gli.government.bg
	Employment Agency at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy	Агенция по заетостта при Министерството на труда и социалната политика	https://ukraine.gov.bg/access-to-the-labour-market-in-bulgaria-for-citizens-of-ukraine/
Social welfare and social security rights	Ministry of Health	Министерство на здравеопазването	https://www.mh.government.bg
	National Social Insurance Institute	Национален осигурителен институт	https://www.nssi.bg
	National Health Insurance Fund	Национална здравноосигурителна каса	https://www.nhif.bg
	Agency for Social Assistance at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy	Агенция за социално подпомагане	https://asp.government.bg

- b) Existence of a mechanism in place to coordinate the work of these national authorities with respect to persons enjoying temporary (or adequate) protection coming from Ukraine.

In connection with the planning and organization of the actions of the state authorities for the evacuation and accommodation of persons arriving in Bulgaria from Ukraine an [Operational Coordination Group](#) was established on 10 March 2022 (Prime Minister's Order). It consists of six working subgroups. In implementation of the state response plan, regional crisis centres have been established, where coordinated institutions and various civil and non-governmental organizations support the citizens of Ukraine.

By Order No. R-240 of 18 November 2022, the Prime Minister entrusted the Deputy Prime Minister for Public Order and Security and the Minister of Internal Affairs with the leadership of the **National Operational Headquarters (NOH)** and the '[Programme for Humanitarian Assistance to Displaced Persons from Ukraine Granted Temporary Protection in Bulgaria](#)'. The NOH of the National Council for Migration, Borders, Asylum and Integration includes the Deputy Ministers of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the heads of the State Agency for Child Protection and the State Agency for Refugees, as well as representatives of allied state bodies and the National Association of Municipalities.

The NOH provides specific guidelines for the implementation of the '[Programme for Humanitarian Assistance to Displaced Persons from Ukraine Granted Temporary Protection in Bulgaria](#)'. The Programme was adopted by the [Decision No. 317](#) of 22 May 2022 of the Council of Ministers (amended and supplemented by decisions No. 535, 665, 856, 909 and 963 of the Council of Ministers of 2022) as a continuation of the old '[Programme for the Use of Humanitarian Aid for Persons Seeking Temporary Protection in the Republic of Bulgaria as a Result of the Military Actions of the Republic of Bulgaria](#)', approved by the Council of Ministers with [Decision No. 145](#) of 10 March 2022, amended and supplemented. It aims to provide humanitarian assistance for shelter and food to persons from Ukraine who received temporary protection in the Republic of Bulgaria and were displaced after 24 February 2022. For the fulfilment of the requirements under the Programme, planned and incidental inspections are carried out by the competent state and municipal bodies - the Consumer Protection Commission, the Regional Health Inspections, the Ministry of the Interior, the State Agency for Refugees, the National Revenue Agency, the State Agency for National security and others according to their functional competence.

In regional cities and in most municipalities, operational working groups have been created to coordinate and synchronize actions. The groups include representatives of all competent institutions and non-governmental organizations.

Municipal and regional administrations take initiatives and participate in the creation of working mechanisms to support the social inclusion and integration of those displaced from Ukraine. Numerous meetings of local administrations are held with representatives of the Council of Ministers and individual ministries, the State Agency for Refugees, the Regional Administration and non-governmental organizations. At these meetings, the challenges in working with persons displaced from Ukraine are discussed, as well as possible solutions such as creating day care centres for children, organising Bulgarian language courses, supporting employment, housing, etc.

2.0 Possibility of changing the status

- a) Difference between temporary protection status and other forms of adequate protection³ under national law, in respect of third country nationals and stateless persons coming from Ukraine.

There is no specific status of 'adequate protection' under Bulgarian legislation. People who are beneficiaries of international protection (humanitarian or refugee status) and those granted temporary protection in Bulgaria within the meaning of TPD enjoy the same rights as it comes to employment, social assistance and health care.

- b) Possibility to file status change inside the territory without the requirement for the person to first leave the country or return to Ukraine from temporary protection or other forms of adequate protection to employment-based residence permit during the temporary protection regime and at the end of this regime (e.g. single permit for work, EU Blue Card for highly-qualified workers, seasonal workers, family reunification).

There are no specific issues or salient points identified for this question.

- c) Relevant national legislation on changing the status (including the procedure to be followed).

There are no specific issues or salient points identified for this question.

- d) Measures aiming to preclude registration of displaced persons in more than one Member State/EEA-EFTA country (see Article 26 of the Temporary Protection Directive).

Article 26 of the Temporary Protection Directive was transposed through Articles 39 and 39a of the Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria Act. It was not possible to find through desk research how the procedures are carried out in practice.

³ 'Adequate protection' under national law is referred to in Article 2(2) of the Council Decision as a possible alternative that may be offered by Member States to temporary protection and therefore does not have to entail benefits identical to those attached to temporary protection as provided for in Directive 2001/55/EC. Nevertheless, when implementing the Council Decision, Member States must respect the Charter of fundamental rights of the European Union and the spirit of Directive 2001/55/EC. The respect for human dignity and therefore a dignified standard of living (such as residency rights, access to means of subsistence and accommodation, emergency care and adequate care for minors) has to be ensured in respect of everyone.

3.0 Access to labour market (Article 12 of the Temporary Protection Directive)

- a) Overview on how equal treatment on the labour market as regards working conditions is ensured for persons enjoying temporary (or adequate) protection from Ukraine.

Bulgarian employers who want to hire persons enjoying temporary protection from Ukraine should provide them with the same working conditions as those applying to local nationals. Working conditions cannot be less favourable than the minimum set in the labour legislation (Article 8 Paragraph 3 of the [Labour Code](#) (LC)).

- b) Conditions applicable to persons enjoying temporary (or adequate) protection from Ukraine, (including the procedure to be followed):

- I. The conditions regulating work permits/work authorisation, if required

The [Asylum and Refugees Act \(ARA\)](#) introduced the requirement of Article 12 of the Temporary Protection Directive that persons enjoying temporary protection have the right to work and to vocational training. Displaced persons from Ukraine enjoying temporary protection can work in Bulgaria without a work permit, can register as jobseekers at an employment office at their permanent or current address and benefit from employment services and vocational training. According to the specific rules, persons displaced from Ukraine can gain **access to the Bulgarian labour market** in order to work under the following simplified procedures.

- ▶ Displaced persons from Ukraine **who have the necessary documents proving Bulgarian origin** (i.e. people of Bulgarian origin living in Ukraine whose ancestors are Bulgarian) can start working immediately (even before they have received a residence permit) simply by registering with the Employment Agency. For this purpose, they must have an employment contract with a local employer for a period of at least six months. Additional information about the procedure can be found [here](#).
- ▶ Displaced persons from Ukraine have the **right to seasonal work of up to 90 days in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, hotels and restaurants in Bulgaria without interruption for 12 months**. For this purpose, registration with the Employment Agency is required on the basis of a declaration submitted by the employer. Additional information about the procedure can be found [here](#).
- ▶ Displaced persons from Ukraine **who have applied for international protection but whose applications have not been processed within three months** of the date of the application for reasons beyond their control have the right to work in Bulgaria without a work permit until the procedure is completed. The declaration of employment of such citizens to the [local directorates 'Labour Office'](#) shall be done by the local employer, who hired them under an employment contract. The information must be submitted within seven days. Additional information can be found [here](#).
- ▶ **Displaced persons from Ukraine and members of their families granted asylum or international protection** in Bulgaria have the right to work in Bulgaria without a permit to access the labour market. People who have refugee or humanitarian status can register as jobseekers with the Labour Office at their permanent or current address.

A hotline of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy at 0800 88 001 provides free consultations in Bulgarian, Russian and English to Ukrainian citizens on access to the labour market in Bulgaria and opportunities for social support for children and families.

Displaced persons from Ukraine who have acquired 'temporary protection' (with ID) can be employed on fixed-term and permanent employment contracts. There is no legal obstacle to concluding with them also civil contracts. The list of vacancies can be found on the [website](#) of the Employment Agency as well as in its [territorial divisions](#).

Necessary documents for persons enjoying temporary protection to be presented to the employer:

- ▶ **Identity document** (temporary protection card and personal document from the country of origin)

An identity document is mandatory to start a job. After checking the identity data, the document must be returned.

- ▶ **Medical examination document** (issued by a doctor, payment might be required)

Only if the person has the opportunity to present such a document and the employer requires it.

- ▶ **Occupational license**

If this is the first job, the employment record is provided by the employer, at his expense, within five days after the request is submitted by the person. But it is not enough to make a request. A declaration must be made - in writing. The person must declare that this is the first job they started.

If the person has an employment record book (document containing information about where the person has worked, in what position and the period of work) and it has been translated, the proven length of service for the position brings additional payment.

- ▶ **Document of completed education**

Higher education diploma, qualification document, legal capacity or other certificate, if they are a condition for holding that position. Some documents should be recognised by Bulgarian institutions (regulated professions). Information can be found on the [webpage](#).

- ▶ **Criminal record certificate**

If required by law for the position held. An application for a document replacing the criminal record certificate shall be submitted to the State Agency for Refugees. Information is available in Ukrainian, English and Russian, is available [here](#).

The employer is obliged to notify the General Labour Inspectorate (notification under Article 10 Paragraph 1 of the Labour Migration and Labour Mobility Act) within seven days of the start of work. The form of notification can be found on the General Labour Inspectorate [website](#) in Bulgarian and English.

There are no special rules on **self-employment** in Bulgaria for displaced persons from Ukraine.

II. Recognition of qualifications/diplomas

Concerning the recognition of vocational qualifications there is a distinction between occupations that are regulated in terms of necessary education and those who are not regulated.

Regulated professions are those whose exercise explicitly requires the possession of a diploma or other educational certification. Examples of regulated professions in the healthcare sector are: doctor, dentist, etc.; for the maritime transport sector are: navigator, ship mechanic, ship electrician, etc. The full list of regulated professions in Bulgaria by categories, as well as the contacts of the competent authorities for each profession

can be found on the National Centre for Information and Documentation (NACID) [website](#). There are specific requirements on the procedure of acknowledgment of such professions according to the EU rules.

Holders of foreign professional qualifications in **non-regulated professions** in Bulgaria have direct access to the labour market. The recognition of such professional qualifications is within the competence as an employer in compliance with the relevant Bulgarian legislation.

As many displaced persons from Ukraine do not have all the necessary documents to prove their qualifications, it was decided on a declarative basis to accept their qualifications. Exceptions to this are regulated professions. This was stated at a press conference on 11 May by the Minister of Innovation after a meeting with employers' organizations, the Agency for Small and Medium Enterprises, the Employment Agency and the Coordination Centre for refugees from Ukraine.

Ukrainian citizens who have a professional qualification from Ukraine as a medical doctor or nurse may work in Bulgaria as medical assistants. However, to work in medical establishments in Bulgaria, they have to take an exam on Bulgarian language and on Bulgarian medical terminology ([Decree No. 15 of 2005](#) on establishing proficiency of the Bulgarian language and the professional terminology of the Bulgarian language for foreigners to exercise the medical profession in Bulgaria). The exam is free of charge. Information about the documents needed, self-study materials, exemplary tests for the different specialities together with the correct answers are available on the website of the [Ministry for Education and Science](#).

III. Eligibility to receive assistance for job seekers (e.g., career counselling, skills assessment, locating appropriate job openings, etc.)

According to Bulgarian legislation, the matching and mediation services provided either by public or private bodies are free of charge for the job seekers. Information about the job vacancies, announced by the local labour offices, is available on the official [website of the Employment Agency of Bulgaria](#). As a public mediator on the Bulgarian labour market, the Employment Agency offers a wide range of services to help people who want to work, as well as those who want or need to be prepared for work through various forms of training. That is why the Employment Agency through an electronic form conducts a study of the needs and attitudes of citizens arriving from Ukraine to work in Bulgaria. The electronic form can be completed in any language using Google's toolkit. For convenience, a brief guide has been [published](#). Jobseekers can find their job and assistance for work in the [electronic form](#). Information on simplified procedures to access the labour market in Bulgaria for displaced persons from Ukraine is [published here](#).

As of 6 June 2022, the Employment Agency started the implementation of the project '[Solidarity](#)', financed through the Operational Programme 'Development of Human Resources' 2014-2020. Support will be provided for the rapid labour integration of displaced persons from Ukraine with guaranteed access to the labour market, who arrived in Bulgaria after 24 February 2022. The grant for the project is in the amount of BGN 46 594 860.

Displaced persons coming from Ukraine are provided with the opportunity to:

- ▶ receive psychological support, professional guidance, labour counselling and motivation to start working;
- ▶ be included in full-time or part-time subsidized employment based on minimum wage for a period of up to three months;
- ▶ receive support at the workplace through a mentor appointed by the employer;
- ▶ receive an integration supplement including rent, overheads and internet in the amount of BGN 356.00 per month for a period of up to three months.

To receive these services, displaced persons from Ukraine should register with the 'Labour Office' Directorates. Employers wishing to join the 'Solidarity' project and hire persons from the target group can submit an application for inclusion in the project only through an electronic [Platform](#). During the period of subsidized employment, employers will receive funds to cover the remuneration of employed persons displaced from Ukraine in the amount of the minimum wage (BGN 710.00) and insurance at the expense of the employers, as well as incentives covering the costs of all due contributions at the expense of the employer, according to the requirements of the Labour Code and the [Social Insurance Code](#).

On 12 December 2022, the Employment Agency launched an inter-institutional survey among displaced persons coming from Ukraine residing in Bulgaria in order to give the state institutions up-to-date information about their job possibilities in Bulgaria in the coming months. Their concerns, intentions, attitudes and future needs regarding the provision of suitable living, working and educational conditions will also be explored. The data will serve ministries and agencies to undertake adequate and timely actions and measures to support displaced persons coming from Ukraine. The survey is carried out through an on-line [form](#), which can also be accessed via a QR code for mobile devices. The survey is available through the section 'Job opportunities for Ukrainian citizens' on the [website of the Employment Agency](#) (in Ukrainian).

IV. Availability of vocational training/educational opportunities for adults/practical workplace experience.

There are opportunities for professional training and to gain practical experience at the workplace. General education and training opportunities are available for all jobseekers.

The Employment Agency assists jobseekers (unemployed and employed) in their professional choices and related vocational training, which enables them to increase their chances of employment. Adult education is provided to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to fill vacancies, to meet future labour market needs for skilled labour and to maintain the employment of employees. Adult education includes: literacy training, training for acquiring professional qualification, training for acquisition and improvement of key competencies.

Free [Bulgarian language courses](#) are provided for persons enjoying temporary protection.

Children enrolled in state and municipal schools have the right to additional classes in Bulgarian language at school. The parent needs to write an application to the director of the school. The committee, which assesses the school grade, decides on the necessity for additional language support. If there are enough applicants, a group can be formed within the school, if not – the children can receive training in another nearby school. The number of additional hours for learning varies depending on the grade:

- ▶ 60 school hours (or twice per week): for children in pre-school education
- ▶ 90 school hours (or three times per week): for 1st-4th grades
- ▶ 120 school hours (or four times per week): for 5th-7th grades
- ▶ 180 school hours (or five times per week): for 8th-10th grades.

V. Any exceptions to the general law in force in the country applicable to remuneration and other conditions of (self-) employment

There are no specific issues or salient points identified for this question.

4.0 Social security, social welfare and means of subsistence assistance, as well as medical care (Article 13 of the Temporary Protection Directive)

I. Types of benefits with description and coverage

Social security

[Decree No. 69 of 5 May 2022](#) on the health insurance of persons under temporary protection include as follows:

► The obligation to health insurance:

- ▷ for persons with temporary protection, from the date of granting temporary protection;
- ▷ for persons under Article 39, Paragraph 6, item 2 and Article 40a, Paragraph 3a of the [Health Insurance Act \(HIA\)](#), from the date of their arrival in Bulgaria;
- ▷ for persons under Article 40a, Paragraph 3a of the [Health Insurance Act \(HIA\)](#), the provisions of Article 40a, Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the [Health Insurance Act \(HIA\)](#).

► Health insurance rights:

- ▷ for persons with temporary protection, from the date of granting temporary protection;
- ▷ for persons under Article 39, Paragraph 6, item 2 and Article 40a, Paragraph 3a of the [Health Insurance Act \(HIA\)](#), from the date of their arrival in Bulgaria.

► The health insurance contributions are:

- ▷ for persons with temporary protection up to 18 years of age and aged 63 and over for women and over 65 for men, at the expense of the state budget for the period of temporary protection, unless they are subject to health insurance on other grounds under Article 40, Paragraph 1 of the [Health Insurance Act \(HIA\)](#);
 - ▷ for persons with temporary protection aged 18 and over and under 63 for women and under 65 for men, at the expense of the state budget for a period of 90 days from the date of granting temporary protection, unless subject to health insurance on other grounds under Article 40, Paragraph 1 of the [Health Insurance Act \(HIA\)](#) and according to Article 40 of the HIA, after the expiration of this term;
 - ▷ shall be paid at the expense of the state budget by the 10th day of the month following the month to which they refer;
 - ▷ for persons under Article 39, Paragraph 6, item 2 and Article 40a, Paragraph 3a of the [Health Insurance Act \(HIA\)](#), according to Article 40 of the HIA for the period of their stay in Bulgaria.
- The amount of the health insurance contributions of persons under temporary protection, which shall be paid from the state budget, shall be determined according to Article 40, Paragraph 4a of the [Health Insurance Act \(HIA\)](#), and to persons under Article 39, Paragraph 6, item 2 and Article 40a, Paragraph 3a of the [Health Insurance Act \(HIA\)](#), according to Article 40 of the [Health Insurance Act \(HIA\)](#).

- ▶ The health insurance contribution of the persons under temporary protection and of the persons under Article 39, Paragraph 6, item 2 and Article 40a, Paragraph 3a of the [Health Insurance Act \(HIA\)](#) shall be submitted according to the Health Insurance Act and the by-laws on its implementation.
- ▶ The State Agency for Refugees shall submit data to the National Revenue Agency for the health insurance of the persons with temporary protection, who shall be insured at the expense of the state budget. The data shall be submitted in the manner, order and within the terms provided for the persons under Article 40, Paragraph 3, item 7 of the HIA in the [Ordinance No H-13](#) on the content, deadlines, manner and procedure for submission and storage of data by employers, insurers for their insured persons, as well as by self-insured persons.
- ▶ The medical aid to the persons granted temporary protection and to persons under Article 39, Paragraph 6, item 2 and Article 40a, Paragraph 3a of the [Health Insurance Act \(HIA\)](#), provided until the entry into force of the Law for amendment and supplement of the Health Insurance Act of 2022, shall be paid under the conditions and by the order applicable to Bulgarian citizens, unless it was not paid or is not subject to payment by another order determined by law or another act of the Council of Ministers. The funds for the medical aid, which shall be paid by the National Health Insurance Fund, shall be provided by transfer from the state budget through the budget of the Ministry of Health by an order determined between the Minister of Health and the manager of the National Health Insurance Fund.

For people with temporary protection from Ukraine according to the [Decision No. 144](#) on granting temporary protection to displaced persons from Ukraine and amending the National Action Plan for Temporary Protection in the Republic of Bulgaria (amended by the [Decision No. 180 of 2022](#)), who arrived in Bulgaria before the entry into force of the [Law on Amendments and Supplements of the Health Insurance Act](#) of 2022, the obligation for health insurance arises from the date of entry into force of the Law for the amendment and supplement of the [Health Insurance Act \(HIA\)](#). This rule applies to all categories of persons under temporary protection who were not previously part of the health insurance system of Bulgaria.

Since November, the Bulgarian Joint Oncology National Network (BJSN) launched the project 'Psychological assistance to Ukrainian refugees with oncological diseases'. The project involves experts from the Bulgarian Psycho-Oncology Association (BAPO), the National Patient Organization (NPO), Junior Achievement Bulgaria and others. The main goal of the project is to create a National Mental Health Centre for displaced persons from Ukraine with cancer, their family members and/or their caregivers. The centre will plan and manage community action with their support for mental health problems through an expert resource of BAPO, as a member of SONM. The initiative was developed in cooperation with the Bulgarian technological institutions for electronic healthcare. The main task of the project is to provide professional psychological support to displaced persons from Ukraine with malignant diseases and their families. The [project](#) was financed by the UICC Solidarity Fund.

Social insurance rights

There are no special rules on social insurance rights of the displaced persons coming from Ukraine. The general rules of the [Social Insurance Code](#) are applicable.

Social welfare

Foreigners who are beneficiaries of temporary protection have **the right to social assistance** (Article 39, Paragraph 1, item 4 of the [Asylum and Refugees Act \(ARA\)](#) and are included as a target group in the **Law on Social Assistance**. Decisions No. 144 and 145 of the Council of Ministers contains special provisions regarding social assistance and accommodation for displaced persons from Ukraine enjoying temporary protection.

Social benefits, to which displaced people from Ukraine are entitled to include (Decisions No. 144 and 145 of the Council of Ministers):

- ▶ one-time social assistance in the amount of up to BGN 375 (EUR 192) to meet urgent needs, including the costs of food, clothing, footwear, personal hygiene products and housing taxes. The Social Assistance Directorate organises the preparation for an individual assessment of the support needs of the persons who wish to benefit from this measure;
- ▶ monthly social assistance;
- ▶ targeted heating aid.

Social services include:

- ▶ temporary shelter; Bulgaria provides accommodation in hotels as well as in state-owned facilities;
- ▶ Tourist Register or the Register of places for accommodation which was created based on the '[Programme for the Use of Humanitarian Aid for Persons Seeking Temporary Protection in the Republic of Bulgaria as a Result of the Military Actions of the Republic of Bulgaria](#)' (Decision No. 145 of 10 March 2022).
- ▶ information and consultation;
- ▶ advocacy and mediation;
- ▶ therapy and rehabilitation;
- ▶ day and resident care.

Suitable social services within the meaning of the Bulgarian legislation are organized by Crisis Centres, Day Care Centres, Centres for Social Rehabilitation and Integration, Centres for Public Support, Mother and Baby Unit and Homes for the Elderly. Detailed information can be [here](#).

On-call information in Bulgarian, Russian, Ukrainian and English about the opportunities for social protection of children and families can be received every day 09:00—17:30 by telephone at 0800 88 001. Information can be found at the special [webpage](#) of the Social Assistance Agency.

A Decision of the Council of Ministers (not promulgated) has provided for the payment of a one-time aid to students and post-graduate students, namely Ukrainian citizens, admitted to Bulgarian state universities under the conditions and procedure regulated in the Governmental [Decree No. 103](#) of 1993. The sum of this aid is BGN 300, approximately EUR 153.

A draft act of the Council of Ministers aims at establishing rules for the access of Ukrainian citizens to Bulgarian high schools in order to receive information about the education of the candidate.

The [Foundation for Access to Rights \(FAR\)](#) provides access to rights in practice and effective protection against arbitrary deprivation of rights. Interdisciplinary teams of experts support individuals and families with various challenges, including: access to health services, access to social and financial assistance for various vulnerable groups, access to education and childcare, support in finding housing and work. From September 2022 FAR, also maintains a hotline, open every working day 09:00 – 6:00, which can be reached at 02 879 32 80.

II. Eligibility conditions

Social security

Health insurance

Persons granted temporary protection by the Bulgarian authorities have the right to health insurance, affordable medical care and medical services under the terms and conditions for Bulgarian citizens, with the exception of medical care provided in accordance with the rules on the coordination of social security systems within the meaning of Article 1, item 22 of the Additional Provisions of the [Health Insurance Act \(HIA\)](#).

For the **health insurance** of persons granted temporary protection who shall be insured at the expense of the state budget, the State Agency for Refugees shall submit data to the National Revenue Agency. The data shall be submitted in the manner, order and within the terms provided for the persons under Article 40, Paragraph 3, item 7 of the [Health Insurance Act \(HIA\)](#) of the [Ordinance No. H-13](#) of 2019 on the content, deadlines, manner and procedure for the submission and storage of data by employers, insured persons, as well as by self-insured persons.

The **medical aid** to persons granted temporary protection and to the persons under Article 39, Paragraph 6, item 2 and Article 40a, Paragraph 3a of the [Health Insurance Act \(HIA\)](#), provided until the entry into force of the [Law on Amendments and Supplements of the Health Insurance Act](#) of 2022, shall be paid under the conditions and by the order applicable to Bulgarian citizens. The funds for the medical aid, which shall be paid by the National Health Insurance Fund, shall be provided by a transfer from the state budget through the budget of the Ministry of Health by an order determined between the Minister of Health and the manager of the National Health Insurance Fund.

Until 25 July 2022 the state paid social insurance contributions for the persons who received temporary protection before 26 April 2022 (health insurance contributions are paid by the state for 90 days since the date of registration). After 25 July 2022 these persons have to pay their health insurance contributions. There is an exception for persons under 18, women over 63 and men over 66.

Social insurance

There are no special rules on the eligibility to social insurance rights of the displaced persons coming from Ukraine. The general rules of the [Social Insurance Code](#) are applicable.

Social welfare

For **social assistance** persons may refer to the relevant Social Assistance directorates. The address, e-mail, address, and phone number of the Social Assistance Directorates can be found [here](#).

Persons with a temporary protection status can apply for a **one-time assistance**. The aid amounts to BGN 375 (EUR 192) and is granted to the family (single or with several members). Displaced persons from Ukraine must provide a Registration Card proving temporary protection, their personal document from the country of origin and an Address Card of a foreigner (issued to them by the Migration Directorate at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Interior or the hotel where you reside). An application is filled in, in which personal data of the applicant and his / her family members are declared. The assistance can be received in the post office serving the area where the applicant lives or transferred to a personal Bulgarian bank account.

If the applicants are staying in a hotel and the costs of their stay are paid by the Bulgarian state, there is no obstacle to apply for a one-time social assistance.

Unemployed persons with refugee or humanitarian status or temporary protection must register with the Labour Office Directorate within three months of issuing their residence permit in Bulgaria. No registration is required: for pregnant women after three months; for mothers of children up to three years of age; for a person with a permanent disability; for a person caring for a seriously ill family member.

For **monthly social assistance** persons must do four hours of community service for a period of 14 days each month. Persons with granted refugee or humanitarian status or temporary protection who participate in programs and projects containing measures for the integration of foreigners in Bulgaria are exempt from performing community service for the respective period. Persons with a permanent disability, the degree of permanently reduced working capacity or the type and degree of disability must be determined in accordance with the legislation in force in Bulgaria.

In order to be able to use the services of the Social Assistance Agency, persons must:

- ▶ have a valid status document issued by the Bulgarian authorities;
- ▶ have a registration at the current address from the municipal administration in the settlement where they have settled or an address registration at the place of residence;
- ▶ contact the Social Assistance Directorate at their current address.

Entitled categories are persons with asylum status, refugee status, humanitarian status, temporary protection, long-term or permanent residence permit in Bulgaria. People with dual citizenship, one of which is Bulgarian, can use their rights to social protection as Bulgarian citizens.

All these issues are regulated in the Social Assistance Act.

For **social services** persons can submit an application to the Social Assistance Directorate at the place of residence. The Directorates provide complete information on the types of appropriate social services and the terms and conditions for their use. Stateless persons and persons seeking protection, as well as homeless persons and persons who, due to health and/or mental problems cannot for objective reasons certify their current address, are directed by the DSP to their place of residence.

Displaced persons from Ukraine who are not accommodated in State facilities or hotels have the right to apply for targeted assistance for heating. The funds for the heating season (1 November – 31 March 2023) in the amount of BGN 623.55, are provided through the local structures of the Social Assistance Agency. The conditions to access the heating aid are published on the [website](#) of the Social Assistance Agency.

On 29 September 2022, the implementation of the '[Provision of vouchers for the provision of food and essential goods for displaced persons from Ukraine](#)' under the Operational Program for Food and/or Basic Material Support 2014--2020 (co-financed by the Fund for European Assistance to the Most Needy Persons in Bulgaria) began. The Social Assistance Agency (through the territorial structures - Social Assistance Directorates) accepted applications for the BGN 100 vouchers made by displaced persons from Ukraine with temporary protection from 1 November 2022 until 31 January 2023. The aid is granted to cover urgent needs for food, children's food and clothing, school supplies, hygiene materials, etc. products from the store network in the country, as well as to provide additional support through counseling and guidance through appropriate accompanying measures for social integration, in accordance with individually identified needs. The vouchers are valid for a period of two months from the date of their issuance. Until 31 May 2023, persons who have been granted a voucher will be provided with consultations on their social rights under the legislation in force, which would support their successful integration, their access to the labor market, and their referral to medical expertise to determine the degree of permanent disabilities or temporary incapacity, consultations with

psychologists and lawyers. In the period between 1 November and 1 December 2022, 26 549 Ukrainians have taken advantage of their right to a voucher.

III. Any exceptions to the general law in force in the country to access to social security systems or social welfare system relating to employed or self-employed activities

There are no specific issues or salient points identified for this question.

5.0 Public support instruments

Overview of other public support instruments facilitating labour market participation, information about and enforcement of rights and entitlements for displaced persons.

The most important support instruments in Bulgaria are described on the dedicated [online portal](#).

The General Labour Inspectorate offers a [brochure](#) in Bulgarian, Ukrainian, English and Russian with information about the basic labour rights. The bodies of the General Labour Inspectorate are ready to advise displaced persons from Ukraine on their labour rights. For this purpose, an email has been created through which they can ask their questions related to Bulgarian labour legislation, as well as submit signals if they are already employed and believe that their rights have been violated. The [e-mail](#) is published on the [website](#) of the General Labour Inspectorate sections 'Contacts', 'For employers and workers', 'Work of foreigners on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria'.

Since mid-March 2022, the Employment Agency has been advising Ukrainian citizens throughout the country. The consultations are given by the specially created mobile teams in the places where Ukrainians are accommodated. There are about 100 mobile teams available, which can go to any municipality, visit the accommodation of Ukrainians and survey them on their education, qualifications and desire to work.

In the employment offices, experts consult with displaced persons from Ukraine who are interested to work.

At the phone number 0800 88 001, the call centre of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy provides free consultations in Bulgarian, Russian and English to Ukrainian citizens on access to the labour market in Bulgaria and opportunities for social support for children and families every working day from 09:00 to 17:30. Information is available [here](#).

In connection with the planning and organization of the actions of the state authorities for the evacuation and accommodation of persons arriving in Bulgaria from Ukraine, an Operational Coordination Group was established on 10 March 2022 (Prime Minister's Order, information available [here](#)). It consists of six working subgroups. In implementation of the state response plan, regional crisis centres have been established, where coordinated institutions and various civil and non-governmental organizations support the citizens of Ukraine.

A National [portal](#) was created, where full information is provided in Bulgarian, English, Russian and Ukrainian. Information is also provided at the border and at the places for registration. Relevant Ministries, Agencies, and NGOs have a section on their websites providing information to Ukrainian nationals in Bulgarian, Russian, English and Ukrainian.

There is a crisis hotline and email address (crisis@mfa.bg) for inquiries created in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.