

Country: Republic of Bulgaria

Committee: SOCHUM



Agenda Items: Tackling Refugee Trafficking,
Protecting the rights and freedoms of refugees in
wars

The Republic of Bulgaria is located in the Balkan Peninsula in southeastern Europe. Founded in the 7th century, Bulgaria is one of the oldest states in Europe. Bulgaria gained independence from the Ottoman rule in 1908 and found itself within close orbit of the Soviet Union by mid- 20th century. As the Communist governments began to fall in 1990s, Bulgaria was released from Soviet influence. Today, it is firmly fixed on the West, Bulgaria became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 2004, and of the European Union (EU) in 2007. Bulgaria remains a strong partner among other EU members. Bulgaria is a parliamentary republic. The head of government - the prime minister - holds the most powerful executive position. The head of state - the president - primarily holds representative powers as well as limited veto powers. It consists of 27 provinces and a metropolitan capital province (Sofia-Grad). Its currency is the Bulgarian lev, but has committed to adopt to Euro once it fills the necessary conditions. Bulgaria has a population around 7 million of whom 85% are Bulgarians. 60% of the population believes in Bulgarian Orthodoxy and the official language of the country is Bulgarian.

The issue of refugee trafficking and the protection of refugee rights stand as a major issue in the 21st century. According to the ILO, 21 million people are victims of the refugee trafficking of whom a quarter are children. They suffer violence, exploitation, and abuse - ending up in work, forced marriage, prostitution and armed recruitment. Reasons such as poverty, humanitarian crises, lack of education and the absence of birth registration can lead to this international issue. On the other hand, the insecurity that refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) face extends far beyond the guns and blasts of the war. It includes lack of access to food, health care, housing, employment, and clean water and sanitation, as well as loss of community and homes. Over 38 million people in the war zones of Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, the Philippines, Libya, and Syria have been displaced, either abroad or within their own countries, and are living in grossly inadequate conditions. This is a very conservative estimate and the figure could be as high as 49-60 million.

Bulgaria stands strong against refugee trafficking at all costs and also plays its part in protection of refugee rights during armed conflicts. Since the fall of Communism and Bulgaria's entry to the European Union, immigration has increased, with many arriving legally or illegally from less developed countries, and since 2011 the country has been on a migration route used by Syrian refugees. In 2019, around 2.42% of the population of Bulgaria were immigrants. Anyone, from any country, has the right to seek asylum (international protection) in Bulgaria when persecuted or when there is a threat to his/her life or safety.

