



# BULGARIA

## 2026-2028 IFRC network country plan



22 January 2026

### In support of the Bulgarian Red Cross



**28**

National Society branches



**379**

National Society local units



**449**

National Society staff



**17,021**

National Society volunteers

### People to be reached in 2026



**5,000**

Climate and environment



**10,000**

Disasters and crises



**100,000**

Health and wellbeing



**25,000**

Migration and Displacement



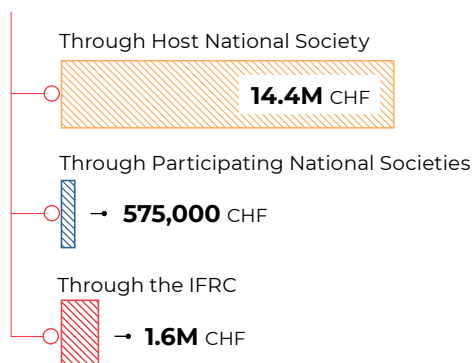
**5,000**

Values, power and inclusion

### IFRC network Funding Requirements

**2026**

**Total 16.5M CHF**



**2027**

**Total 16.3M CHF**

**2028**

**16.20M CHF**

*Projected funding requirements*

### Participating National Societies

- American Red Cross\*
- Canadian Red Cross\*
- French Red Cross\*
- Italian Red Cross\*
- The Republic of Korea National Red Cross
- Swiss Red Cross
- Turkish Red Crescent

*\*National Societies which have contributed only multilaterally through the IFRC in 2025.*

### IFRC Appeal codes

Longer-term needs:

**MAABG001**

## Hazards



Fires



Floods



Earthquakes



Extreme Weather  
Conditions



Population  
Movement

### IFRC network multi-year focus

#### Longer term needs

- Climate change adaptation
- Disaster preparedness

#### Capacity development

- Humanitarian diplomacy
- National Society development

### Key country data links

**INFORM Climate Change Risk Index** **Low**

**Human Development Index rank** **55**

**World Bank Population figure** **6.4M**

**World Bank Population below poverty line** **22%**



The Bulgarian Red Cross responded to people affected by a heavy snowfall in Sliven. (Photo: The Bulgarian Red Cross and IFRC)

## Detailed funding requirements

	2026		2027		2028	
	Host National Society	IFRC	Host National Society	IFRC	Host National Society	IFRC
<b>Longer-term needs</b>						
Climate and environment	150,000	150,000	500,000	50,000	500,000	50,000
Disasters & crises	3M	500,000	3M	500,000	3M	500,000
Health & wellbeing	5M	300,000	5M	300,000	5M	300,000
Migration & displacement	6M	300,000	6M	300,000	6M	300,000
Values, power & inclusion	100,000	25,000	100,000	25,000	100,000	25,000
<b>Enabling local actors</b>	100,000	300,000	100,000	300,000	100,000	300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>14.4M</b>	<b>1.6M</b>	<b>14.7M</b>	<b>1.5M</b>	<b>14.7M</b>	<b>1.3M</b>

### Participating National Societies bilateral support

National Society	Year	Funding Requirement	Confirmed Funding	Climate and environment	Disasters and crises	Health and wellbeing	Migration and displacement	Values, power and inclusion	Enabling Functions
Canadian Red Cross Society	2026	400,000				325,000		75,000	
Republic of Korea National Red Cross	2026	50,000					50,000		
	2027	50,000					50,000		
Swiss Red Cross	2026	75,000					75,000		
	2027	75,000					75,000		
	2028	75,000					75,000		
Turkish Red Crescent	2026	50,000			25,000		25,000		

See back page for explanatory note on funding requirements

# NATIONAL SOCIETY PROFILE

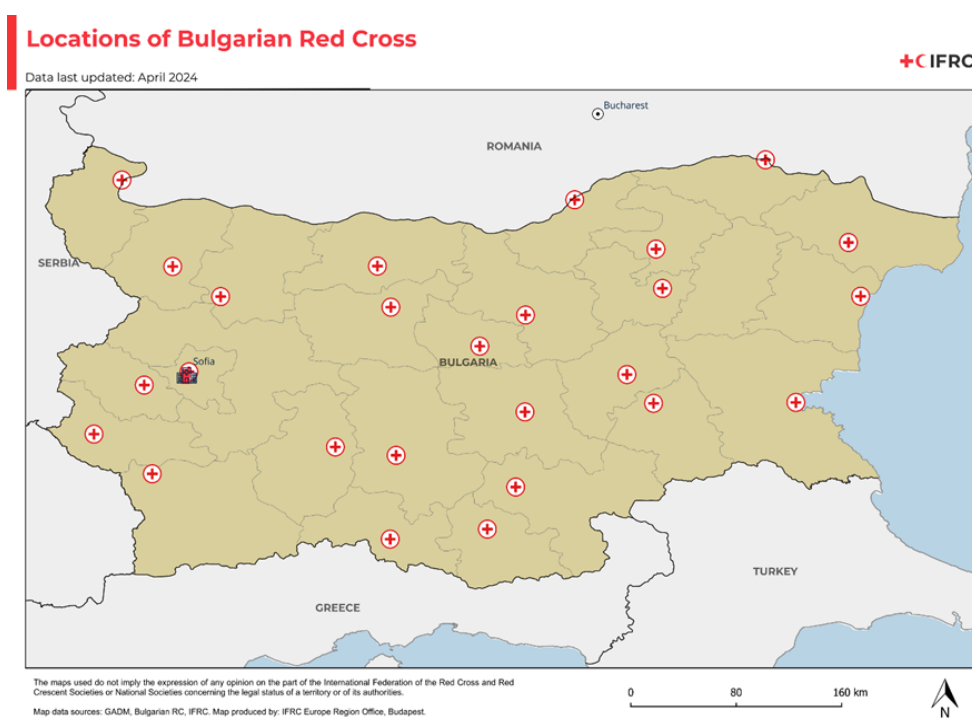
The **Bulgarian Red Cross** was founded in 1878 and was admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 1921.

It adheres to the Bulgarian Red Cross Act and the principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. The National Society is the largest volunteer organization in Bulgaria, providing first aid training, disaster relief, humanitarian aid, rescue operations and various social and health services. The Bulgarian Red Cross follows a four-tier organizational structure, culminating in the General Assembly, its highest governing body.

The Bulgarian Red Cross Strategic Plan, in line with Strategy 2030, focuses on three main strategic goals developed through several national general assemblies:

- Support empathetic and active individuals to overcome vulnerabilities and build integrated, prosperous, and sustainable communities.
- Implement essential activities for successful intervention in disaster and crisis situations and preserve the health and lives of affected members of the communities.
- Make a significant contribution to the reduction of poverty and social exclusion and ensure acceptance of humanitarian values in society to limit negative social attitudes (such as xenophobia, discrimination, intolerance, and aggression).

As outlined in the Strategy of the Bulgarian Red Cross by 2030, its programmes target various areas including first aid, disaster response, long-term development, shelter, health, youth engagement, and migration.



Map of branches of the Bulgarian Red Cross

*The map does not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the IFRC or the National Society concerning the legal status of a territory or its authorities*

# IFRC NETWORK ACTION

## JOINT SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Bulgaria is located in Southeast Europe and shares borders with Romania to the north, largely along the Danube River, Türkiye and Greece to the south, and Serbia and North Macedonia to the west. Its eastern boundary is formed by the Black Sea.

The Republic of Bulgaria is a parliamentary republic and has been a member of the European Union (EU) since 2007. In March 2024, Bulgaria became a member of the Schengen Area and adopted the euro currency on 1 January 2026. The country's political landscape has gone through several periods of instability in recent years, marked by frequent elections and difficulties in forming stable governments. Between 2021 and 2024, the country held seven parliamentary elections, which finally resulted in a government coalition being formed in early 2025. A three-year period of political instability, lasting until early 2025, has resulted in a loss of momentum for the reform agenda, with limited progress on the [National Recovery and Resilience Plan](#).

Bulgaria has seen significant poverty reduction, with absolute poverty dropping 9.5 percentage points (2015-2022). However,

the at-risk-of poverty rate and income inequality remain among the highest in the EU. Institutional and governance weaknesses continue to hinder the country's faster [productivity growth and development](#). Rapid loss of working-age population further caps its growth potential, while exerting growing pressure on public services. Long-term growth is projected to decline to 1.3 per cent by 2050. Economic growth is forecast to slow down markedly in 2025-2026 due to global trade uncertainty. Bulgaria will feel the impact mostly through the indirect effect on the European Union economy, global activity, and investment sentiment.

Bulgaria has made notable labour market and social progress in recent years. However, the country faces a pressing demographic challenge, with a rapidly declining and ageing population, which will have significant repercussions on its labour market and economy. According to current projections, the number of 15-64-year-olds will fall by almost one-third between 2026 and 2060. In addition, large labour market disparities across different population groups persist and informal employment remains widespread.

In the area of migration, since the escalation of the international armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine in 2022, Bulgaria has welcomed 3.3 million people displaced from Ukraine and hosted over 205,000 with Temporary Protection Status.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



### Climate and environment

Bulgaria stands as one of Europe's most [climate-vulnerable nations](#), confronting escalating environmental threats. The country is experiencing accelerated temperature rises and a marked increase in extreme weather events, with documented surges in flooding, prolonged droughts, shortage of potable water in certain areas, intense heatwaves and destructive wildfires over the past twenty years. These climate extremes have resulted in tragic loss of life and severe economic damage, disproportionately impacting impoverished communities and densely populated urban-industrial zones where concentrated infrastructure and populations multiply the risks.

The agricultural sector represents a critical vulnerability point. This is despite its fundamental importance to national food security, economic stability, and rural employment (supporting

18 per cent of the workforce). Climate disruptions endanger essential ecosystem services and threaten the livelihoods of approximately 1.5 million people living in rural communities in Bulgaria.

Air pollution is a significant environmental challenge in Bulgaria, particularly in urban areas and industrial zones. The main sources of air pollution include vehicle emissions, industrial activities and residential heating.

In alignment with the EU climate commitments, Bulgaria has developed a robust policy framework to address these challenges. The [Long-Term Climate Change Mitigation Strategy by 2050](#) establishes comprehensive decarbonization pathways, while the [Integrated Energy and Climate Plan \(NECP\)](#) defines specific emission reduction targets. The updated [Climate](#)

[Change Mitigation Act \(CCMA\)](#) strengthens legal enforcement mechanisms and the 2019 [National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan](#) implements tailored resilience measures across economic sectors.

### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Ensure that all its own strategies, policies, and programmes work towards increasing its resilience to the impacts of climate change
- Support local communities as well as national, regional, and local authorities to adapt to climate change and mitigate risks
- Contribute to the international [climate resilience](#) and preparedness by encouraging stronger global engagement and exchanges on adaptation

### Planned activities in 2026

- Develop a comprehensive report that identifies the activities and actions implemented by the National Society with the highest carbon emissions, serving as a foundation for targeted climate action projects
- Support National Society Youth to implement climate awareness activities through youth engagement projects, including tree planting, clean up, and recycling campaigns at schools, grassland renewal actions, and river cleanup projects

- Seek funding to boost climate resilience by supporting community projects and awareness campaigns, involving locals and stakeholders in long-term solutions
- Continue to expand the installation of solar and battery system at National Society properties to achieve both cost savings and reduced carbon emissions

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Bulgarian Red Cross in enhancing green initiatives and carbon tracking efforts, positioning the broader Federation as an eco-conscious entity, and helping in climate change mitigation and adaptation. Leveraging their community trust, the IFRC and the Bulgarian Red Cross possess the expertise and resources to drive urgent action on climate and environmental challenges, prioritizing [community-led solutions](#) and incorporating community input into programme decisions and adaptations guided by community participation, perceptions, and feedback.

Additionally, the IFRC will assist the National Society in adopting and executing the regional roadmap for climate action, fostering collaboration with regional partners to raise awareness and focus on climate issues, and utilizing the [Climate Charter](#) as a guiding framework. It will also support the National Society in utilizing climate assessment outcomes to assess opportunities for expansion and future funding.



## Disasters and crises

For more real-time information on emergencies, see IFRC GO page: [Bulgaria](#)

Bulgaria remains highly vulnerable to flooding due to its mountainous terrain, dense river network, and climatic factors such as heavy rainfall and snowmelt. This geographic make up results in the country experiencing flash floods, urban flooding, and pluvial flooding events. Climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, including floods, heatwaves, droughts, and forest fires. This has led to increased infrastructural damage, economic losses and threats to lives, with rural areas particularly hard hit due to weaker service and emergency response capabilities.

Forest fires are a recurring threat in Bulgaria, especially during hot and dry weather conditions. Forest fires can devastate ecosystems, destroy habitats and threaten human settlements. In 2025, Bulgaria ranked among the EU countries most affected by forest fires. Rila Monastery Nature Park faced wildfires for the

fourth time during the summer. Meanwhile, firefighting crews in Rila National Park fought fires for approximately two weeks. Additional wildfires occurred in the Sakar region.

All three incidents occurred in extremely difficult-to-access terrain, significantly complicating response efforts. The most affected areas were located near the border regions with Türkiye and Greece, as well as in the Rila Mountain range. The Balkan Mountains, locally known as Stara Planina, were not among the areas most impacted by wildfires during this period.

Bulgaria's national government has policies aligned with the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#), notably the [National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction \(2018-2030\)](#). However, implementation gaps remain, including underfunded infrastructure, insufficient floodplain restoration and inadequate emergency preparedness, especially in rural and vulnerable regions.

Bulgaria's national disaster response planning for floods involves continued policy alignment with international frameworks, ongoing infrastructure upgrades and ecosystem-based flood risk mitigation. However, challenges persist in funding, enforcement, and rural readiness, making enhanced investment and coordinated regional action crucial to cope with increasingly frequent, severe flooding events driven by climate change and local factors.

### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Build on programmes, strengthen policies, and prepare people in risk areas through assessments, training, awareness-raising and measures to mitigate the impact of future extreme events
- Enhance its auxiliary role to the public authorities for adequate response to disaster and crisis situations at national and local levels
- Create partnerships that support the development of [Early Action Protocols](#) (EAP) to help anticipate and address risks linked to flooding and extreme weather events
- Continue building the capacity of the National society to deliver more humanitarian aid through cash and voucher assistance (CVA) modalities
- Strengthen the logistic capacity through improved warehouse capacities, and the expansion of pre-disaster agreements

### Planned activities in 2026

- Build capacity and empower local branches through training and simulation exercises standardized across the National Society while also tailored to an interregional

approach allowing for specific local hazards to be addressed

- Recruit new volunteers and provide training supporting regional disaster response with a focus on existing Mobile Health Units (MHUs)
- Increase the effectiveness of water rescue and mountain rescue activities and partner with institutions to reduce water trauma and accidents, in the country through prevention, information, and educational activities
- Improve warehouse capacity through linking the beneficiary database and registration in a system that can be used across the National Society branches
- Engage with financial service providers, organizations that can provide relevant voucher products, and standard products such as food parcels and hygiene kits

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will continue to support the Bulgarian Red Cross in disaster response and recovery operations. It will also support the National Society to implement and fundraise for prioritized activities linked to the [Preparedness for Effective Response](#) (PER) workplan. Where applicable, the IFRC will provide technical support for training, developments, revision and updating of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

IFRC mechanisms such as the Disaster Response Emergency Fund ([IFRC-DREF](#)) and Emergency Appeals will be drawn on as needed for the National Society to respond to disasters and crises.



Following an explosion in the fireworks warehouse in Elin Pelin, the Bulgarian Red Cross mobilized to provide psychological first aid, distribute meals, water, and blankets. (Photo: The Bulgarian Red Cross)



The healthcare crisis in Bulgaria is significant enough to be considered a national security issue, with vulnerabilities such as high morbidity, low immunization rates, antimicrobial resistance, severe medical staff shortages. In addition, Bulgaria is grappling with negative demographic trends like aging population and the emigration of highly skilled, educated, and professional individuals.

Major health challenges in Bulgaria include cardiovascular diseases, cancer, respiratory illnesses, diabetes and rising mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. In 2024, Bulgaria registered 100,736 deaths. Approximately 95 per cent of these deaths were due to noncommunicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes. Meanwhile the remaining 5 per cent were caused by communicable diseases and other conditions. Behavioural risk factors are also continuing to contribute to the disease burden including high smoking rates, alcohol consumption, poor diet, and low physical activity. This has resulted in the life expectancy in Bulgaria of 75.8 years being significantly lower than the EU average of 81.4 years.

Bulgaria has a growing problem of domestic violence. According to statistics from the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria, between 2022 and 2024, the number of registered instances of domestic violence has increased from 736 to 2,204, with a 54 per cent increase only between 2023 and 2024.

Mental health is also a growing priority of the Government of Bulgaria, with strategies being developed to help reduce mental illness morbidity, integrate psychological services into general healthcare (deinstitutionalization) and focus on reducing substance abuse, aggression, and suicide risk. Furthermore, according to World Health Organisation (WHO) data, over 20 per cent of people in Europe suffer from mental disorders, only one in three people seek or receive adequate help and Bulgaria is among the countries with the lowest access to psychiatric and psychosocial services in the EU.

### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Increase health awareness among aged and vulnerable groups with activities, education and campaigns promoting disease prevention and healthy ageing
- Strengthen the resilience of communities and workplaces through first aid and Basic Life Support (BLS) training to build habits for safer living
- Further develop its mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) capacities and increase the ability to respond to emerging mental health and psychosocial needs, through provision of basic psychosocial support

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### Planned activities in 2026

- Establish Mobile Health Units (MHUs) to support health authorities during public health emergencies
- Assist people through epidemic and pandemic preparedness including the provision of first aid, vaccination campaigns, and identifying and referring cases requiring further care to appropriate health institutions
- Continue to enhance first aid training capacities through the provision of Training of Trainers (ToT)
- Conduct ToT in first aid at a regional level
- Undertake mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) activities such as the creation of a MHPSS unit, contact centres/call centres, peer-to-peer mentoring services, and roster of volunteer based professional psychologists remains operational and are sustainably funded
- Develop a sustainable mobile blood collection unit to enable blood donation campaigns with targeted blood collection services

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### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

**The IFRC** will assist the Bulgarian Red Cross with community health programmes, promoting health education, and enhancing access to healthcare services, particularly in underserved areas. This will include training volunteers and supporting outreach initiatives to address specific health needs.

Additionally, the IFRC will support the National Society in developing a MHPSS unit and scaling up its efforts to become the premier organization providing mental health services for people affected.

The **Canadian Red Cross** will support the Bulgarian Red Cross with establishing, training, and developing Mobile Health Units to support health authorities during disasters and crisis situations such as road accidents, influx of migrant population, pandemics, and public health emergencies. Furthermore, Canadian Red Cross is continuing to support Cash for Health and MHPSS activities for people displaced from Ukraine and living in Bulgaria.



Bulgaria is geographically and politically strategic, acting as a bridge between Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia. This location places it on key migration routes, including the Balkans migration route, utilized by migrants from the Middle East, Asia and Africa, resulting in elevated migratory pressure.

Migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers passing through or residing in Bulgaria face substantial humanitarian needs and support gaps. Critical needs include access to safe shelter, healthcare, education, and legal assistance. Additionally, language barriers, discrimination and limited opportunities for social and labour integration compound these challenges.

Bulgaria has encountered difficulties in processing asylum claims and integrating displaced persons effectively. However, its active participation in European Union migration frameworks, most notably the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, set to come into force in June 2026, is driving improvements in asylum systems, reception mechanisms and policy alignment.

The country complies with international and regional frameworks such as [the Global Compact on Refugees](#) and has implemented national legislation and coordination bodies, including the State Agency for Refugees and the National Council for Migration and Integration, to manage migration and displacement.

As of June 2025, Bulgaria had granted temporary protection to [212,223 displaced people](#) from Ukraine, with 67,725 holding valid TPS. While government support remains limited in addressing the broad humanitarian, social and economic challenges faced by displaced persons in Bulgaria. Moreover, the extension of the EU Temporary Protection Directive until 4 March 2026 provides a legal framework for ongoing protection and rights access. However, EU Member States are revising or scaling down financial assistance programmes, increasing uncertainty and stress among displaced populations, particularly for those in vulnerable situations.

Though the trajectory of the international armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine remains uncertain, the humanitarian needs both inside Ukraine and among displaced communities across Europe persist, underscoring the need for continued attention, coordination and flexible support mechanisms.

### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Provide timely and effective assistance to protect vulnerable persons, including [restoring family links](#) (RFL) services and protection services
- Ensure meaningful participation of refugee and migrant communities and facilitate sustainable integration into host community

## 9 Country plan • Bulgaria

- Maintain auxiliary role to the state on refugee and migration issues, including access to reception facilities
- Diversify funding sources to secure sustainable refugee support and advocacy, including pursuing state funding where available and build capacity for transitioning from emergency care to medium- and long-term support

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### Planned activities in 2026

- Empowering refugee communities and mobilize their internal capacity for independent and self-sufficient residence in Bulgaria
- Advocate for improving the quality of reception and integration conditions for those seeking and receiving international protection and persons granted temporary protection
- Provide humanitarian assistance to meet the basic needs of refugees and migrants, as well as measures aimed at integration and inclusion in Bulgarian society
- Promote peer-to-peer education and partnerships with National Societies in South-Eastern Europe to enhance cooperation on migration and displacement, including restoring family links (RFL) and protection
- Strengthen the role of the Refugee and Migrant Services as a key partner in reception, basic needs provision, integration, inclusion, and fostering a tolerant social environment

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### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will work closely with the Bulgarian Red Cross to improve its capacity in responding to the needs of migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking people, by supporting with technical expertise, resource mobilization, and capacity building. Additionally, it will assist the National Society in strengthening the resilience of affected communities and facilitate their successful integration into the host society. The IFRC will also provide support to the National Society in coordinating with stakeholders such as government agencies, civil society organizations, and international partners, to ensure a comprehensive and collaborative response to migration and displacement issues in Bulgaria.

The **Swiss Red Cross** will continue to collaborate with the National Society in scaling up the RFL programme and protection response mechanisms for greater impact. It will apply community engagement and accountability (CEA) and PER approach and also introduce tailored mapping for RFL and protection needs for people in vulnerable situations, migrants, and refugees. The Swiss Red Cross will also aid the development of programmes to address identified needs for potential funding.



## Values, power and inclusion

In Bulgaria, groups in vulnerable situations, such as single mothers, people with disabilities, and ethnic minorities often experience significant inequalities, with limited access to resources and opportunities. Their exclusion from decision-making processes further exacerbates this situation.

Human trafficking is a pressing concern in Bulgaria, necessitating measures to identify and protect at-risk people, provide comprehensive support to survivors and enhance law enforcement against traffickers. Refugees, migrants, and other people separated from their families require specialized assistance to facilitate family reunification and address the psychological impacts of separation. People with disabilities often face risks of violence and exclusion, hampering their accessibility, opportunities and support services.

Gender inequality is high, especially considering its intersection with other forms of inequality. Efforts should concentrate on promoting gender equality, challenging harmful gender stereotypes and empowering women and girls. Single mothers constitute one of the most vulnerable groups in Bulgaria, with poverty rates nearly three times higher than the national average. Child poverty is particularly prevalent among families with multiple children, contributing to social marginalization.

Children are especially susceptible to violence and exclusion, underscoring the importance of comprehensive child protection systems to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect and exploitation. Discrimination and marginalization are also faced by the LGBTQI+ community, racialized people and ethnic and religious minorities. In Bulgaria, people are at risk of identity-based violence, including sexual and gender-based violence (GBV).

### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Build capacity and targeted programming to effectively engage with affected communities and vulnerable groups in order to address all needs and inequalities and to build resilience and self-reliance
- Make a significant contribution to reducing poverty and social exclusion and creating conditions for protection, gender, and inclusion (PGI)

- Create the conditions for improving the adaptation of vulnerable persons to their environment and enhancing their skills and capacities to cope with the difficulties and challenges they face in their daily lives

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### Planned activities in 2026

- Provide training and capacity-building opportunities for staff and volunteers to strengthen their understanding of PGI mainstreaming across all National Society activities
- Organize community engagement events for children and adults, including host communities, as part of PGI mainstreaming efforts through awareness campaigns, posters and branding
- Conduct a community engagement and accountability (CEA) self-assessment and develop a workplan to support communities in influencing programmes and services that affect them
- Foster two-way communication, gathering feedback, and building trust to improve the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of humanitarian efforts

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### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will provide support the Bulgarian Red Cross in advancing community dialogue, raising awareness and advocating for the rights of marginalized people and groups. Through knowledge exchange and learning platforms, the IFRC will improve the capacity of the National Society to respond to the needs of people in vulnerable situations effectively. This includes support in developing and implementing policies that uphold human rights, gender equality, and social inclusion.

As part of Bulgarian Red Cross work with displaced people from Ukraine, the **Canadian Red Cross** will provide additional funds for PGI activities in 2026.

## ENABLING LOCAL ACTORS

The Bulgarian Red Cross is currently implementing Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) activities, based on the plan of action drafted following the initial assessment conducted with support from IFRC in 2024.

The PER approach is a continuous and flexible process that enables National Societies to assess, measure and analyse the strengths and gaps of its preparedness and response mechanism and take necessary action to improve it. The IFRC network is committed to support the National Society in its development according to its priorities.



### Strategic and operational coordination

#### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Strengthen strategic partnerships, representation in global and regional groups and networks, develop bilateral and multilateral relationships and establish the National Society as a well-positioned international partner
- Participate more actively in the preparation and conduct of forums of the National Societies in the Balkan region and South-Eastern Europe (SEE) region and take a leading role in the dialogue to establish lasting partnerships
- Enhance the exchange of good practices and expertise by increasing visits to and from other National Societies and organizations, and to foster collaboration through the initiation of joint activities and projects at various levels



### Key Institutional Indicators

The National Society has put in place the following:

- Strategy to strengthen its auxiliary role
- National Society development plan
- Youth engagement strategy
- Health, accident and death compensation for volunteers
- Protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) policy
- PSEA Action Plan
- Integrity line

#### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

**The IFRC** will provide technical expertise, guidance, and resources to assist the Bulgarian Red Cross in developing and implementing strategic plans and operational frameworks. This includes support in identifying priority areas, setting strategic objectives, and designing programmes that align with the organization's mandate and the needs of the communities it serves.

The IFRC will also assist the National Society to enhance its ability to mobilize resources, manage volunteers, coordinate with relevant actors, and effectively respond to emergencies and crises. It will also support capacity building initiatives to enhance coordination mechanisms. This may involve training programmes, workshops, and knowledge-sharing platforms that focus on strengthening the skills and competencies of staff and volunteers in strategic and operational coordination.



## National Society development

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### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Establish sustainable and accessible systems for organization-wide learning and knowledge management
- Develop a digital knowledge base that consolidates training materials, manuals and good practice, ensuring access across all branches to support shared learning and facilitate on boarding
- Develop campaigns and outreach initiatives that will increase and maintain a stable youth volunteer base at all levels and capacities
- Review and update the volunteer policy and ensure alignment with legislation, safeguarding requirements, and data protection standards and other relevant documents and procedures
- Use multiple recruitment and retention channels through community outreach, partnerships with employers and institutions, with internship opportunities, training,

and recognition pathway that encourages long term engagement and progression

- Develop a centralized system for tracking donors and issuing donation certificates and develop new fundraising opportunities and system including SMS, Point of Sale (POS) terminals to replace cash-based donation boxes, improved communication and outreach campaigns

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

**The IFRC** will support the Bulgarian Red Cross in foster its National Society development, including strategic planning, capacity building, and programme implementation. The IFRC will provide technical expertise, guidance, and resources to assist the National Society in strengthening its organizational capacity, enhancing coordination mechanisms, and improving service delivery. Through knowledge-sharing platforms, training programmes, and collaborative partnerships, the IFRC will facilitate continuous learning and growth.



## Humanitarian diplomacy

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### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Develop and implement training to support branches to improve their capacity in communicating needs of key beneficiary groups, developing key messages for the organisation, and tailoring messages for relevant stakeholder groups (government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), communities, municipalities)
- Disseminate knowledge about emblem protection, the role of the Red Cross in conflict and disaster situations, its fundamental principles and internal regulations
- Share effective policies and practices with government institutions, particularly from EU countries, to address priority issues impacting vulnerable groups and enhance responses

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

**The IFRC** will support the National Society to develop and design an action plan that will focus on strengthening Humanitarian Diplomacy skills and capacity building, supporting outreach efforts of the National Society, and producing promotional materials and multimedia content that highlight the auxiliary role, fundamental principles, principled humanitarian action, and emblem protection.



## Accountability and agility (cross-cutting)

### Multi-year high level objectives of the National Society

- Ensure digital transformation through effective programmes by improving the planning processes, financial management, reporting and control systems, risk management and adopt new technology and tools
- Develop a new Bulgarian Red Cross corporate website with a mobile version
- Ensure methodological guidance for the management, monitoring and evaluation of projects and activities at all levels

### Longer-term support from the IFRC network

The IFRC will support the Bulgarian Red Cross's efforts to enhance transparency, integrity, and responsible governance within the organization. This includes guidance, training, and resources to enhance the National Society capacity in financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting. Additionally, the IFRC assists in building the organization's adaptive capacity, enabling it to respond effectively to evolving humanitarian challenges. Through continuous collaboration, the IFRC Network will promote accountability and agility, ensuring it remains accountable to its stakeholders and agile in meeting the needs of people in vulnerable situations.

## THE IFRC NETWORK

### The IFRC

The Central and South-Eastern Europe (CSEE) regional office of the IFRC oversees operations in Bulgaria. Aligned with its core functions, the IFRC supports the Bulgarian Red Cross through various means, encompassing technical assistance, capacity building and coordination of international aid during crises. Recent assistance includes guidance on disaster risk

reduction, health initiatives, volunteer management and community resilience.

The IFRC aids the Bulgarian Red Cross through emergency appeals and the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), addressing disasters and crises and assisting individuals.



*The Bulgarian Red Cross provided psychological support to people affected by stormy winds in the villages of Lavino and Isperih in Bulgaria. (Photo: The Bulgarian Red Cross)*

## IFRC membership coordination

IFRC membership coordination involves working with member National Societies to assess the humanitarian context, humanitarian situations and needs; agreeing on common priorities; jointly developing common strategies to address issues such as obtaining greater humanitarian access, acceptance and space; mobilizing funding and other resources; clarifying consistent public messaging; and monitoring progress. This also means ensuring that strategies and programmes in support of people in need, incorporate clarity of humanitarian action, links with development assistance and efforts to reinforce National Societies in their respective countries, including through their auxiliary role.

The Bulgarian Red Cross closely partners with the IFRC, benefiting from technical support, capacity building and resource mobilization for emergency response and community programmes. Operating within the IFRC's CSEE Regional Office, the Bulgarian Red Cross engages in knowledge exchange, collaboration and advocacy with neighbouring National Societies.

The **Canadian Red Cross** supported the Bulgarian Red Cross since the onset of the conflict in Ukraine. It has been one of the key partners supporting the National Society to provide support to displaced people from Ukraine living in Bulgaria. This has recently included protection, gender, and inclusion (PGI) focused support in 2024 and 2025 with activities such as Bulgarian language classes, Cash for Protection, Cash for Education, CFSs and peer-to-peer mentoring. In addition, the Canadian Red Cross Society has a bilateral agreement with the National Society that is targeting the development

of ten Mobile Health Units (MHUs) that are being trained and enhanced with equipment provided through this ongoing partnership.

The **Republic of Korea National Red Cross** is continuing to provide support to Bulgarian Red Cross, specifically targeting displaced people that are countries other than Ukraine. This support has and continues to be critical for the Refugee and Migration Service, with reduced funding from long-term partners creating challenges for the National Society and many other NGOs that have typically provided support to this target group.

The **Swiss Red Cross** is supporting Bulgarian Red Cross to strengthen engagement with migrant beneficiaries, communities and institutional stakeholders. It includes integrating the Community, Engagement, and Accountability (CEA) approach into Restoring Family Links (RFL) and protection services, enhancing collaboration with partners, building a knowledge base for the PER Framework in migration crises, embedding humanitarian diplomacy throughout activities, and fostering regional cooperation through knowledge sharing and best practices.

The **Turkish Red Crescent** is working with Bulgarian Red Cross to strengthen coordination of activities along the common border and are currently developing plans that would allow emergency response items to be stockpiled within Bulgaria, that would then be available for neighbouring countries in the event of an emergency. Community-based projects, migration, and health are among the other cooperation pillars.

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## Movement coordination

The Bulgarian Red Cross ensures regular exchanges with the IFRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and participating National Societies, for the alignment of support and action between Movement partners. In times of emergencies, closer coordination is organized. This is carried out in line with the [Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation \(SMCC\)](#) principles and the newly-adopted [Seville Agreement 2.0](#).

**The ICRC** supports the Bulgarian Red Cross based on its mandate, offering technical expertise, capacity building and advisory support. This includes assistance in disaster management, health services, civilian protection and humanitarian law. The ICRC also provides guidance and support in priority areas based on the Cooperation Agreement with the Bulgarian Red Cross and annual plans.

## Coordination with other actors

The Bulgarian Red Cross collaborates with public authorities at national and sub-national levels through coordination mechanisms led by relevant ministries and agencies. It actively participates in assessments, first response activities, and registration processes during disasters, showcasing its auxiliary role. The organization also forms partnerships with ministries and departments for longer-term work, addressing areas such as health, social welfare, education and civil protection, humanitarian aid and development.

Along with the IFRC and other network partners, the National Society engages in inter-agency coordination mechanisms

such as sectoral clusters, and working groups. In cases relevant to shelter assistance, it may contribute to shelter cluster coordination.

The National Society also builds partnerships with international actors such as United Nations (UN) agencies, international NGOs and embassies, facilitating knowledge exchange and resource mobilization. Additionally, it collaborates with national and local actors including the private sector, academic institutions, and NGOs, leveraging diverse expertise and resources for resilience-building and community development.



**The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)** is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 191 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 16 million volunteers. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

### About the plan

The plan reflects the priorities of the host National Society, the IFRC and National Societies providing international support, for 2026 and subsequent years. It is aligned with IFRC [Strategy 2030](#), representing the collective ambitions of the IFRC membership, and is the result of a joint planning process and will serve for joint monitoring and reporting. It will be revised on an annual basis to adjust priorities and funding requirements to the needs in-country.

### Explanatory note on funding requirements and definitions

- The total funding requirements show what the IFRC network seeks to raise for the given year through different channels: funding through the IFRC, through participating National Societies as bilateral support, and through the host National Society from non-IFRC network sources. All figures should include the administrative and operational costs of the different entities
- Host National Society funding requirements not coming from IFRC network sources can comprise a variety of sources, as demonstrated when reporting on income in the [IFRC network databank](#)
- Participating National Society funding requirements for bilateral support are those validated by respective headquarters, and often represent mainly secured funding
- IFRC funding requirements comprise both what is sourced from the IFRC core budget and what is sought through emergency and thematic funding. This includes participating National Societies' multilateral support through IFRC, and all other IFRC sources of funding
- Figures for the years beyond 2026 most often represent partial requirements that are known at time of publication. Many National Societies have annual internal approval processes for funding requirements, and lower figures do not mean a decrease in funding requirements in future years
- Missing data and breakdowns: data may not be available from all IFRC network members for funding requirements. This may lead to inconsistencies across different reporting tools as well as potential under-estimation of the efforts led by all
- Reporting bias: the data informing this Federation-wide overview is self-reported by each National Society (or its designated support entity) which is the owner and gatekeeper, and responsible for accuracy and updating. IFRC tries to triangulate the data provided by the National Societies with previous data and other data in the public domain
- **Definitions:**
  - » **Local units:** ALL subdivisions of a National Society that coordinate and deliver services to people. These include ALL levels (provincial, state, city, district branches, sections or chapters, headquarters, and regional and intermediate offices, as well as community-based units)
  - » **Branches:** A Branch has its roles, responsibilities and relationship with the National Headquarters defined through the National Society's Statutes, including the level of autonomy given, especially in the area of its legal status, mobilising local resources and building local partnerships, and the decisions it makes. It has a local-level decision-making mechanism through its Branch members, board and volunteers, equally defined through the National Society's Statutes

### Additional information

- [IFRC network country plans](#) • [All plans and reports](#)
- Data on National Societies on [IFRC Network Databank](#)
- Live data on active emergency operations on [IFRC GO platform](#)
- Live data on [IFRC-Disaster Response Emergency Fund Response and Anticipatory pillars](#)
- [Evaluations and research bank](#) • [Donor response reports](#)

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