



## CRIMINAL PROCEEDING AND DEFENCE RIGHTS IN BULGARIA

Fair Trials is a non-governmental organisation that works for the right to a fair trial according to internationally-recognised standards of justice.

This factsheet covers:

- Definitions of key legal terms;
- Information about criminal proceedings and defence rights in Bulgaria; and
- Useful Links

We have prepared this factsheet with the assistance of local criminal lawyers, who tried to describe how things happen in reality. Even within one country, however, practice can vary greatly from one place to another your own experience could differ from the descriptions below. This document does not constitute legal advice and only provides general information. If you need advice in relation to your specific case, or if you are concerned about a possible violation of your rights, you should discuss this with your local lawyer.

If you think an important question is not covered by this note, please let us know by filling out the sheet attached at the end. We would also appreciate it if you could also take a few moments to give us some feedback about this note. Your comments will help us to improve our services.

*"Fair Trials" comprises Fair Trials International and Fair Trials Europe. Fair Trials International is a registered charity (no. 1134586) and in 2010 was incorporated with limited liability in England Wales (no. 7135273). Fair Trials Europe is a registered public foundation in Belgium (registered number 0552.688.677). We were initially founded in 1992 with the name "Fair Trials Abroad".*

### **IMPORTANT**

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## DEFINITIONS OF KEY LEGAL TERMS

**Appeal** (жалба - *zhalba*): An opportunity to dispute a decision made at trial by asking a higher court to review it. This can result in the decision being overturned or changed.

**Arrest Warrant** (заповед за арест – *zapoved za arest*): A document authorising the police to make an arrest.

**Bail** (гаранция – *garantsiya*): The temporary release from police custody or prison of a person accused of a crime and awaiting trial.

**Bar Association** (Адвокатска Колегия – *Advokatska Kolegiya*): An organisation whose role is to represent lawyers and help people in their dealings with lawyers.

**Charge/Indictment** (обвинителен акт – *obvinitelen akt*): An official statement accusing a person of committing an offence.

**Consulate** (консулство – *konsulstvo*): The section of the embassy whose task is to assist its citizens.

**Court of Appeal** (Въззивен съд – *Vazziven sad*): The court that is competent to hear appeals (i.e. challenges) made to decisions of the lower courts

**Court of First Instance** (*Първоинстанционен съд – Parvoinstantsionen sad*): A lower court where a trial is initially heard.

**Embassy** (*посолство – posolstvo*): The office of a government official who resides in a foreign country and represents his/her government's interests.

**European Court of Human Rights** (*Европейският съд поправата на човека – Evropeyskiyat sad popravata na choveka*): The Court is based in Strasbourg, France, and hears human rights cases against the 47 countries which make up the Council of Europe (which is different from the European Union).

**Inquisitorial System**: A system in which the judge plays an active role in conducting the investigations and seeking the truth. This system is followed in France and many other European countries (but not in the UK). Unlike in adversarial systems such as the UK and the USA, the role of the defence lawyer is to ensure that his/her client's rights are respected, but it is not to investigate the case. An important part of the trial can be based on written submissions.

**Judge** (*съдия - sadiya*): A person with authority to hear and decide on cases in a court of law. In Bulgaria, the judge is also actively involved in the conduct of investigations.

**Judgment** (*съдебно решение – sadebno reshenie*): A decision on a case provided by a judge in a court of law.

**Lawyer** (*адвокат – advokat*): A person whose profession is to give legal advice and assistance to clients and represent them in court or in other legal matters.

**Legal Aid** (*правнапомощ – pravnapomosht*): Financial assistance provided to a person who needs a lawyer and who cannot afford to pay for one.

**Plea Bargain** (*споразумение – sporazumenie*): A procedure which allows the defendant to plead guilty in exchange for a less severe sentence.

**Police Custody** (*полицейски арест – politseyskiarest*): Detention of a suspect by the police after arrest

**Pre-trial Detention** (*задържане под стража – zadarzhane pod strazha*): Detention in prison during the investigations (and often during the trial itself as well), which happens before the decision on guilt or innocence is made by the court.

**Public Prosecutor** (*прокурор – prokuror*): A person who conducts a case against a person who is accused of a crime.

**Remand** (*задържане под стража – zadarzhane pod strazha*): The act of sending a person, accused of a crime, into prison until the trial.

**Sentence** (*осъждане – osazhdane*): The punishment assigned to a person convicted of a crime as fixed by a court of law.

**Victim** is known as “пострадал” (*postradal*) in Bulgarian.

**Warrant** (*съдебно раз решение – sadebnoraz reshenie*): A document issued by a legal or government official authorising the police to make an arrest, search premises, or carry out some other action relating to the administration of justice.

**Witness** is known as “свидетел” (*svidetel*) in Bulgarian.

## INFORMATION ON CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS AND DEFENCE RIGHTS IN BULGARIA

### Q1. WHERE DO THE LAWS OF BULGARIA APPLY?

The laws of Bulgaria apply in the Republic of Bulgaria.

### Q2. WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS UPON BEING DETAINED?

After your arrest, you can be detained for an initial period of 24 hours. The prosecutor has the power to extend your detention during this period to a maximum period of 72 hours, but only if you are charged. After 72 hours, you must either be released, or be taken to court, which decides whether or not to extend your detention.

#### (a) Right to information:

##### (i) Will the police inform me of my rights? Will this be done orally or in writing?

You should be informed of your rights in writing immediately after you have been told of the accusations against you. You will also be required to sign a document stating that you have been informed of your rights. The document must be either written in your language or translated by a professional interpreter for you.

Your rights include:

- The right to be presumed innocent;
- The right to be tried in your presence;
- The right to get access to read your case file; and
- The right to make applications and appeals

**(ii) Do I have the right to be informed of the allegations / charges against me?**

If there is enough evidence against you, you will be informed of the accusations against you by the investigating officer (usually a police officer, but it could also be the prosecutor). You can be detained for up to 24 hours without being informed of the exact nature of the accusations against you, but you must still be informed of the ground/reasons for the arrest.

You should be given a written copy of the accusations against you and/or of the warrant authorising your detention for 24 hours, and if you do not speak Bulgarian, the accusations should be translated for you. You do not need to sign any documents which have not been translated.

**(b) The right to inform people:**

**(i) Do I have a right to have the consulate informed of the arrest?**

Yes. If you are not a Bulgarian citizen, and you are detained, you should be told of your right to notify your local consulate or embassy. If this is not done, the court can order the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to notify the authorities of your country.

**(ii) Do I have a right to inform my family of the arrest?**

You may be able to make a phone call to your family. Your family may be notified automatically if the Court decides to extend your detention.

**(c) Do I have a right to a lawyer?**

Yes. When the investigating officer notifies you of the accusations against you, you should also be informed that you can appoint a lawyer, and s/he must allow you sufficient time to find a lawyer. You have the right to meet with your lawyer in private before you are questioned, and you have the right to have them present during your questioning.

You are required to have a lawyer by law in a number of circumstances, for example, if you do not have command of the Bulgarian language.

If you cannot afford your own lawyer you are entitled to a lawyer on duty.

**(d) Do I have a right to a translator/interpreter?**

Yes. You have the right to an interpreter free of charge, if you do not speak Bulgarian. You should inform the police and your lawyer if you will require an interpreter during the investigation and proceedings.

You also have the right to receive translations of the charges against you, pre-trial detention court definitions, and of all sentences/judgments at all stages of your criminal proceedings. You may also request translations of other documents or evidence which are important for your defence.

**(e) Do I have to talk to the police or can I remain silent during police interrogation? Will it work against me if I am silent?**

You have the right to remain silent when being questioned, but we would advise you to take advice from your local lawyer on whether you ought to remain silent during police interrogation.

Your silence cannot be used against you during the trial. If you want to, you can provide explanations for your decision to remain silent at later stages of the investigation.

### **Q3. WHEN WILL I KNOW ABOUT THE CASE AGAINST ME?**

You and your lawyer have the right to see the evidence on which the prosecutor has requested your detention, but you will not be given full access to copies of all the evidence in your case until the end of the pre-trial police investigation. You should have access to your case file once it is transferred to the court, in advance of your trial. At this stage, you are allowed to make copies of your file.

### **Q4. HOW DO I FIND A LAWYER? WHAT IS THE ROLE OF MY LAWYER?**

#### **(a) How do I find a lawyer?**

The Bulgarian Supreme Bar Council (Висш адвокатски съвет – Vissh advokatski savet) should be able to assist you with finding the names and contact details of local criminal lawyers. There are 27 regional Bar Associations in Bulgaria which can all be contacted through the Supreme Bar Council.

If you are not a Bulgarian citizen, your local embassy or consulate may also be able to help.

If you are unable to find a lawyer by yourself, you may be appointed one by the court. The fees for court appointed lawyers are covered by the state, but if you are convicted at trial, you may be required to reimburse your lawyer's fees, unless you are on legal aid.

#### **(b) I cannot afford to pay for a private lawyer, what should I do?**

If you cannot afford to pay for a lawyer, but wish to have legal representation, you may be entitled to legal aid.

In order to be eligible for legal aid, you must either:

- Be eligible for social assistance benefits; or
- Have been placed in a specialised institution where social services are provided; or
- Be part of a foster family, or family, friends or relatives with whom a child has been placed; or
- Fall within any of the categories of individuals who are obliged to be defended by a lawyer.

Applications for legal aid are made to the court or the prosecutor. If you are eligible for legal aid, one of Bulgaria's 27 regional bar associations will appoint you a lawyer. You are not, as a general rule, entitled to choose a specific lawyer, if you are on legal aid.

#### **(c) What is the role of my lawyer? Will s/he investigate the case?**

Your lawyer's role is to advise you, and to represent your interests by ensuring that your rights are protected and make any applications or appeals that may be helpful to your defence.

The prosecutor, the investigating authority, and the court take the leading roles in the investigations in your case. However, you and your lawyer can have an active role in the investigation, and you are entitled by law to make certain requests, including requests to have certain types of evidence gathered, to present evidence, or to request evidence gathered by the investigative authorities not to be used at trial. Within these rights your lawyer can be an effective participant in the investigation and make a difference.

#### **(d) I am unhappy with my lawyer: How can I change lawyer? How can I complain about my lawyer?**

If you have been appointed a lawyer on legal aid, you may complain and ask for a different lawyer to the investigating authority and/or the prosecutor. Your complaint about your lawyer should be written and must be well grounded. A common reason for changing lawyers is "disagreement on the line of defence".

If you use a private lawyer, you must declare in writing that you wish to withdraw your authorisation and you should be given additional time to appoint another lawyer before any further proceedings are accomplished. You do not need to give arguments for the dismissal of your private lawyer unless you do it too often, and are therefore suspected of intentionally obstructing the progress of your criminal proceedings.

## **Q5. WILL I HAVE TO STAY IN PRISON UNTIL MY TRIAL STARTS? IF SO, FOR HOW LONG?**

The information given below is specific to Bulgaria. For general information and tips about how to obtain your release prior to your trial, please refer to our note of advice on *Applying for Release Pending Trial*.

### **(a) Will I have to stay in prison until my trial starts?**

You may have to remain in prison until your trial begins, but you could either be placed in house arrest, or be released subject to certain conditions.

Foreigners who do not live in Bulgaria are rarely released. This is because you need to show that you have a permanent address in Bulgaria, and that you have sufficient funds to maintain yourself until the trial starts.

The severity of the offence of which you have been accused will be a factor taken into account when whether you should be granted bail is being assessed.

### **(b) How long can I be kept in prison before my trial starts?**

You can be detained prior to your trial for up to eighteen months, depending on the seriousness of the crime of which you have been accused.

### **(c) How and when can I apply for release while waiting for trial?**

You can appeal against the court's decision to order the extension of your detention to the Court of Appeal within 3 days from the day the decision is made, and the Court of Appeal should consider your appeal within 7 days of the initial decision.

You can request the court to review your detention at any time during the pre-trial phase of your criminal proceedings. If the court decides to keep you in detention, it may determine a period of up to two months during which you will not be allowed to challenge the detention. This rule will not apply if your appeal is based on ill health.

### **(d) Can I go back to my home country if I have been released pending my trial?**

You should be able to leave Bulgaria, so long as you are not subject to a travel ban, but you should inform the investigating authority of your intention to do so, and check that you are not violating any conditions of your release.

If you are a foreigner, you are likely to be banned from leaving the country, especially if you could face more than 5 years in prison. However, even in such cases, you could ask the prosecutor for permission to leave the country.

### **(e) What will happen if I breach the conditions of my release?**

If you could violate the conditions of your bail, you could be arrested, and the bail money deposited with the court could be confiscated. Such violation will not be treated as a separate criminal offence.

### **(f) Do I need a lawyer to apply for release?**

Yes, the participation of a defence lawyer is obligatory in pre-trial hearings where your detention is reviewed.

## **Q6. HOW LONG BEFORE MY CASE GOES TO TRIAL?**

Investigating authorities are given an initial period of 2 months to carry out their investigations, but this can be extended by 4 months or more, for complicated cases.

It is difficult to predict when you will be tried, but it can take up to 18 months from your arrest for your case to reach trial.

If you have been charged with a minor offence your case may be handled through a fast-track procedure, which means that you could be tried within a few days or weeks (maximum 2 months) of your arrest.

### **(a) There are always delays with my case, does that mean my lawyer is doing a bad job?**

Delays are possible at each stage of the proceedings and courts are often overburdened with the number of cases they have to try.

This means that cases can progress very slowly due to factors which are outside the control of your lawyer.

## **Q7. CAN I PLEAD GUILTY? WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF PLEADING GUILTY?**

You can plead guilty, but by doing so, you may lose some important rights. You should seek your lawyer's advice before deciding on your plea.

Your criminal proceedings may continue even if you plead guilty, because you cannot be convicted solely on the basis of your own confession. However, your guilty plea may help you get a reduced sentence.

You may also plead guilty in order to benefit of a faster procedure called plea bargain where you confess your guilt and sign an "agreement" with the prosecutor in return of a reduced sentence. The "agreement" must be approved by the court and cannot be appealed. This procedure is much quicker, but you should seek your lawyer's advice before deciding whether to choose a plea bargain.

## **Q8. WHAT HAPPENS AT TRIAL?**

The trial will begin with the prosecutor filing the charges against you.

The court examines the evidence produced by the prosecutor but may, at the request of the parties or on its own initiative, collect and examine new evidence.

### **(a) Do I have to be present?**

If you are accused facing 5 or more years' imprisonment, you are required by law to attend your trial. However, if you are not from Bulgaria, and you are not present in Bulgaria at the time your trial is due to go ahead, you could be tried in your absence, if your whereabouts are unknown, or you cannot be summoned for other reasons. If your case is heard in your absence you cannot waive your right to a lawyer.

You can however ask the Supreme Court to reopen the trial if the procedure for your summoning outside Bulgaria has been breached, or if you could not be summoned for reasons beyond your control.

Trials via video-link are possible under very limited circumstances, but they are rare.

### **(b) Can I ask for the trial to take place in my home country?**

No.

### **(c) Is there a jury?**

Most trials are heard by a single judge, or a judge assisted by two jurors, depending on the seriousness of the accusations against you. In the most serious cases, you may be tried by two judges and three jurors. There are no jury trials in Bulgaria, in which you are tried by a panel consisting of members of the public.

### **(d) Can my lawyer call and cross-examine witnesses?**

You can request to have defence witnesses interviewed to support your case.

You and your lawyer can also ask questions to prosecution witnesses to challenge what they have said against you. Cross-examination can take place at any stage during the trial.

### **(e) I don't speak the language of the court, do I have a right to an interpreter? Is it free?**

Trials are conducted in Bulgarian. If you do not speak Bulgarian, you can get an interpreter free of charge.

### **(f) Will the written evidence be translated for me?**

You have the right to free interpretation and translation of the charges, the verdict, and any decisions on appeal. You may also request for translation of any other documents on the case file if they are of substantial importance for your defence.

### **(g) Will the interpreter also help me if I need to talk to my lawyer?**

Yes.

### **(h) Why is the victim taking part in the trial?**

The victim may be called as a witness in the trial, but can also take on the role of a private accuser. The victim can also join the trial to seek compensation for the harm (both physical and emotional) caused by the crime.

**(i) Will I be informed of the decision of the court on the day of the trial?**

You will normally be informed of the decision of the court on the day of the last open court hearing. In some cases, if the case is complicated, the court will set another day and court hearing to pronounce the decision, which all parties are required to attend.

**(j) Can I receive a copy of the judgment in my mother tongue?**

You are entitled to translations of all judgements of your trial.

**(k) I was tried in my absence and was not informed of this, what can I do?**

You may request the Supreme Court to renew the criminal proceedings, and your case may restart from the very beginning (the investigation stages), or from the trial or appeal stage, depending on how the Supreme Court decides. You need a lawyer's assistance to get a retrial.

**Q9. I AM NOT HAPPY WITH THE DECISION, CAN I APPEAL AGAINST IT? HOW DO I APPEAL?**

Yes. You can appeal against your conviction and/or your sentence.

Your appeal should be lodged with the court where you were tried.

Appeals against convictions must be filed within 15 days from the date they are handed down. Your appeal must be in writing and must contain your signature or that of your lawyer, provided that s/he is authorised to represent you.

Procedural rules for filing appeals can be complicated, and they could depend on the type of decision you are trying to challenge, so we would encourage you to seek assistance from your lawyer.

**(a) Do I need to pay my lawyer more money if there is an appeal?**

If you are paying for your lawyer, you should be aware that the fees you agreed previously might not cover appeal proceedings.

**(b) What is the time frame for the appeal to take place?**

There is no legal deadline for the Court of Appeal to set a hearing date.

**(c) Could things get worse during the appeal? If I am acquitted, can the prosecution appeal?**

Things could get worse for you only if the public prosecutor or the private prosecutor (if there is one) also decide to appeal.

Both the public prosecutor and the private prosecutor (where applicable) are entitled to appeal.

**Q10. I HAVE EXHAUSTED ALL LEGAL REMEDIES. WHAT OPTIONS DO I HAVE?**

**(a) Is it possible to get my case reviewed?**

There are limited circumstances under which you could get your case reviewed, for example, if you are able to produce new evidence that strongly supports your defence, or if the evidence or testimony that forms the basis of your conviction is proved to be false at a later stage. Your case could also be reopened, if the European Court of Human Rights has decided that there has been a violation of your rights in your criminal proceedings.

**(b) Can I apply for a pardon?**

Yes. You can ask the President of Bulgaria for a pardon, but it is rarely granted. Pardons are usually not granted unless you show that you have been rehabilitated, and that you are remorseful of the crimes of which you were convicted.

**Q11. WHAT RIGHTS DO I HAVE AS A PRISONER?**

**(a) Do I have rights as a prisoner? Where can I find out about my rights?**

You should be informed of your rights shortly after your arrival in prison.

Prisoners are given basic rights, and are for example entitled to free food, to send and receive mail, to make telephone calls, and to decide how to spend their spare time.

You may also ask your lawyer for more information about your rights as a prisoner.

**(b) What can I do if my rights are violated? Where can I get assistance regarding my welfare issues, regarding abuse and mistreatment?**

Prisoners can lodge a complaint with the governor of their person. You should also ask for your lawyer's advice if you think your rights have been violated.

If you are not a Bulgarian citizen, your local embassy or consulate may be able to help.

You may also be able to lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman. Contact details can be found under the 'Useful Links' section at the end of this note.

**Q12. CAN I GET MY SENTENCE REDUCED?**

You can appeal against your sentence, but you may also be eligible for early release.

You could be released after half or your sentence if you were convicted of a minor crime, or two thirds (with at least 3 years remaining on your sentence), if you were convicted of a more serious offence.

**(a) What would help me get early release?**

Good behaviour in prison, for example, by participating in educational programmes, and social training, may help you get early release. You will need to show that you have been rehabilitated.

If you work during your time in prison, every two days you work will count towards your sentence as the equivalent of serving three days in prison.

**(b) I have been sentenced to pay a fine, what will happen if I don't pay it?**

Non-payment of the fine cannot lead to a change of your sentence with imprisonment or another form of punishment. If you do not pay your fine, an order could be made against your properties or financial funds anywhere in the European Union, and in other countries with which Bulgaria has signed agreements enabling such orders to be enforced.

**Q13. CAN I GO BACK TO MY HOME COUNTRY?**

**(a) Can I serve my prison sentence in my home country?**

You can ask to be transferred to your home country, if there is an agreement between Bulgaria and your home country that allows such transfers to take place. Please see our 'Prisoner Transfers' note for more details.

**(b) Can I be expelled instead of serving my sentence?**

If you have already been sentenced you cannot ask to be expelled instead of serving your sentence.

However, you may wish to seek advice from your lawyer before trial to find out whether you could be expelled instead before you face charges in court.

**(c) Is there a risk that I will be deported after serving my sentence?**

Yes. If you are not a Bulgarian citizen, you may be deported after serving your sentence. You can challenge deportation decisions.

**USEFUL LINKS**

| ORGANISATION         | MANDATE | CONTACT DETAILS |
|----------------------|---------|-----------------|
| LAW GOVERNING BODIES |         |                 |



|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Bulgarian Supreme Bar Council</b><br><br><b>Висш Адвокатски Съвет</b><br><br><i>Vissh Advokatski Savet</i>                            | <p>The Bulgarian Supreme Bar Council is Bulgaria's national bar association that regulates lawyers and represents their interests.</p> <p>The Supreme Bar Council maintains an online directory of all registered lawyers in Bulgaria.</p> <p><u>Languages:</u> Website available in Bulgarian and English</p>  | <p>Website: <a href="http://www.vas.bg">www.vas.bg</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.bar-register.bg/public/">http://www.bar-register.bg/public/</a> (online directory of lawyers)</p> <p>E: <a href="mailto:arch@vas.bg">arch@vas.bg</a> or <a href="mailto:protocol@vas.bg">protocol@vas.bg</a></p> <p>T: +359 (0)2 986 2861<br/>F: +359 (0)2 987 6514</p> |
| <b>Sofia Bar Association</b><br><br><b>Софийска Адвокатска Колегия</b><br><br><i>Sofiyiska Advokatska Kolegiya</i>                       | <p>The Sofia Bar Association is one of the main local bar associations in Bulgaria.</p> <p><u>Languages:</u> Website available in Bulgarian and English</p>   | <p>Website : <a href="http://www.sak-sas.bg">www.sak-sas.bg</a></p> <p>E: <a href="mailto:sak_sas@abv.bg">sak_sas@abv.bg</a></p> <p>T: +359 (0)2 987 0519</p> <p>Sofia 1309<br/>Todor Blvd., 137, Fl. 2 and Fl.3</p> <p>София 1309,<br/>бул. Тодор Александров<br/>137, ет.2 и 3</p>  |
| <b>LEGAL AID</b>   |   |   |
| <b>National Legal Aid Bureau</b><br><br><b>Национално Бюро за Правна Помощ</b><br><br><i>Natsionalno Byuroza Pravna Pomosht</i>          | <p>The National Legal Aid Bureau is responsible for the administration of legal aid in Bulgaria.</p> <p>The website of the Legal Aid Bureau contains further information about legal aid, and includes a directory of legal aid lawyers.</p> <p><u>Languages:</u> Website available in Bulgarian and English</p>  | <p>Website: <a href="http://www.nbpp.government.bg/">www.nbpp.government.bg/</a></p> <p>E: <a href="mailto:nbpp@nbpp.government.bg">nbpp@nbpp.government.bg</a></p> <p>T : +359 (0)2 819 3200<br/>F: +359 (0) 2 865 4812</p> <p>Sofia 1421,<br/>Razvigor St., 1</p> <p>София 1421,<br/>ул. "Развигор" № 1</p>   |
| <b>OMBUDSMEN and COMPLAINTS COMMITTEES</b>   |   |   |
| <b>Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria</b><br><br><b>Омбудсманна Република България</b><br><br><i>Ombudsman na Republika Balgariya</i> | <p>The Ombudsman investigates complaints about misconduct of public authorities, including alleged violations of human rights. The Ombudsman can issue criticisms and make recommendations in cases where a public authority has behaved improperly, but he cannot overrule decisions.</p> <p>The Ombudsman cannot handle complaints about court decisions or allegations of misconduct by prosecutors.</p> <p><u>Languages:</u></p> <p>Website only available in Bulgarian</p> | <p>Website: <a href="http://www.ombudsmen.bg">www.ombudsmen.bg</a></p> <p>E: <a href="mailto:priemna@ombudsmen.bg">priemna@ombudsmen.bg</a></p> <p>T: +359(0)2810 6955<br/>+359(0)2980 9510</p> <p>1202 Sofia,<br/>George Washington St., 22</p> <p>София 1202,<br/>ул. Джордж Вашингтон № 22</p>   |
| <b>INTERPRETERS</b>  |   |   |
| <b>Association of Interpreters and Translators</b><br><br><b>Асоциация на Преводачите</b><br><br><i>Asotsiatsiyana Prevodachite</i>      | <p>The Association of Interpreters and Translators is an independent non-profit association of interpreters and translators.</p>  | <p>Website: <a href="http://www.translators-bg.com/">www.translators-bg.com/</a></p> <p>E: <a href="mailto:ait@translators-bg.com">ait@translators-bg.com</a></p>   |
| <b>NGOs</b>  |   |   |

| HUMAN RIGHTS  |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Bulgarian Helsinki Committee ('BHC')</b><br><br><b>Български Хелзинкски Комитет</b><br><br><i>Bŭlgarski Khelzinski Komitet</i>                   | <p>BHC is a non-governmental organisation that works for the protection of human rights in Bulgaria, by carrying out advocacy and law reform activities.</p> <p>In certain cases, BHC may be able to help individuals file complaints with the European Court of Human Rights.</p> <p><u>Languages:</u> Website in Bulgarian and English</p>   | <p>Website: <a href="http://www.bghelsinki.org">www.bghelsinki.org</a></p> <p>E: <a href="mailto:bhc@bghelsinki.org">bhc@bghelsinki.org</a></p> <p>T : +359 (0)2 943 4876<br/>+359 (0)2 944 0670 +359 (0)2943 4405</p> <p>1504 Sofia<br/>Varbitsa St., 7</p> <p>София 1504<br/>ул. "Върбица" № 7.</p>   |
| <b>Bulgarian Lawyers for Human Rights</b><br><br><b>Български Адвокатиза Праватана Човека</b><br><br><i>Bŭlgarski Advokatiza Pravata na Choveka</i> | <p>Bulgarian Lawyers for Human Rights is a non-governmental organisation that works for effective protection of human rights in Bulgaria according to international standards. They provide information and training to lawyers on human rights standards, and they also intervene or provide legal assistance in certain cases.</p> <p><u>Languages:</u> Website in Bulgarian and English</p> | <p>Website: <a href="http://www.blhr.org">www.blhr.org</a></p> <p>E: <a href="mailto:hrlawyer@blhr.org">hrlawyer@blhr.org</a></p> <p>T: +359 (0)2 980 3967</p> <p>Sofia 1000<br/>Gurko St., 49A, Fl. 3</p> <p>София 1000,<br/>ул. „Ген. Й. Гурко“ № 49<br/>А, ет.3, ап.7.</p>   |
| ASSISTANCE FOR PRISONERS  |  |   |
| <b>Crime Prevention Fund IGA</b><br><br><b>Фонд за Превенцияна Престъпността– ИГА</b><br><br><i>Fond za Preventsiya na Prestupnostta – IGA</i>      | <p>IGA is a local non-governmental organisation working to promote rehabilitation of prisoners. They can provide information and advice to prisoners about social services and other activities and opportunities that could be available to them in prison.</p> <p><u>Languages:</u> Website is available in Bulgarian and English. IGA have some English speaking staff.</p>                 | <p>Website: <a href="http://www.iga-bg.org">www.iga-bg.org</a></p> <p>E: <a href="mailto:office@iga-bg.org">office@iga-bg.org</a></p> <p>T: (+359) 34 44 23 89<br/>(+359) 34 44 23 98</p> <p>4400 Pazardzhik<br/>8 AleksandarStamboliyski Blvd.<br/>Post Box 140</p> <p>Пазарджик 4400<br/>бул. "Александър<br/>Стамболийски" 8. П.К. 140</p> |

Fair Trials would like to thank the law firms and individual practitioners, including **Asya Mandzhukova** and **Roumen Petrov (Mandzhukova Shopov Petrov Law Firm, Sofia)**, who have generously given their time and expertise to help produce these legal guidance notes.

For a full list of our funders see  
[www.fairtrials.org/get-involved/supporters/](http://www.fairtrials.org/get-involved/supporters/)



Fair Trials aims to help people accused of crimes to understand and exercise their fair trial rights by providing information and referrals. We do not charge for any of our assistance.

If you complete this form, we may be able to:

- Send you general information, including advice about the local legal system that could be helpful to you;
- Provide answers to any specific questions you might have; and
- Refer you to local sources of support (for example, referrals to local lawyers, if appropriate).

**We cannot provide any legal advice or representation that is specific to your case, and we are also unable to provide any welfare support or financial assistance.**

Please fill out this form and send it back to:

By Post: Fair Trials, Temple Chambers, 3/7 Temple Avenue, London, EC4Y 0HP, United Kingdom  
By Fax: +44 (0)20 7822 2371

All information will be treated confidentially, and in accordance with our privacy notice set out overleaf.

### A) Personal Information

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Full Name   |  |
| Nationality   |  |
| Your current address (your prison address, if you are in custody) |  |
| Prisoner Number<br>(if applicable)                                |  |

### B) Legal Representation

Would you like referrals to local lawyers? Yes ☐ No ☐

Are you able to pay for a lawyer? Yes ☐ No ☐

Depending on the country, you may not be able to choose your own specific lawyer, if you cannot pay for one.

### C) Fair Trials

|  |  |
|--|--|
| How did you hear about us?   |  |
| How did you receive this form?   |  |
| If you have already seen any of our materials (e.g. 'Arrested – Practical Guidance'), please let us know, and tell us which you have seen. |  |

## D) Further Information / Questions

We have printed materials on a range of topics where we are most often asked for help. Please tick on any of the following topics on which you would like further information.

*Applying for Release Pending Trial* ☐  
*The European Arrest Warrant ('EAW')* ☐  
*INTERPOL Red Notices* ☐

*Prisoner Transfers* ☐  
*Criminal Records in the European Union* ☐

Use the space below to:

- Request clarifications on any information from us that you have already seen;
- Highlight any specific information, or referrals that you believe could be helpful to you; and
- Give us feedback or comments

Please be specific with any questions or requests you have.

## E) Nominated Contact

It can sometimes be difficult for Fair Trials get in touch directly with people in prison. In such cases, it can be helpful if we are provided with the name and contact of a family member or a friend whom you are happy to nominate as Fair Trials' point of contact. Please provide their details below:

Full Name: ..... Relationship to you: .....

Address: .....

Telephone: ..... Email: .....

## F) Privacy Notice

We collect information about you when you complete and return this form. We use this information to assist you and otherwise provide support in relation to your case. Fair Trials will retain your information for up to six years after: 1) if we are notified about the end of your legal proceedings, from the date of notification; or 2) if we are not notified, the date of the last correspondence with you about your case.. For more information about how we handle your personal information, please see the privacy policy on our website ([www.fairtrials.org/privacy-policy](http://www.fairtrials.org/privacy-policy)). Please sign here to confirm that you have read and agree to the Privacy Notice in this form.

Full Name: ..... Signature: .....