



THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON YOUNG MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN BULGARIA

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Abstract. *The notion of crisis introduces two aspects. On the one hand it is a difficult or dangerous time. On the other hand, it covers a condition of instability or danger which implies and presupposes a quick solution and important decision to be made in order to overcome a critical situation. The study is aimed at exploring to what extent vulnerable groups of the society such as young migrants and refugees residing in Bulgaria have manifested an ability to cope with various obstacles imposed by Covid-19 crisis. Methods of the study include interviews conducted with young migrants and refugees and continuous desk research. The migrants were placed in an extremely vulnerable position with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This was due to many factors, including little or no knowledge of the language of the host country, lack of experience in using services provided by institutions, insufficient access to social or health services. Another key risk reinforcing their vulnerability is that they more easily fall from the labor market in a situation of economic crisis as a consequence of a pandemic. However, gathered data from the interviews with migrants and refugees picture them as resilient in coping with crises. The research paper provides findings and analysis of the ability of young migrants to mitigate the negative consequences of the pandemic crisis. It is related to strong curiosity and desire to learn, work and contribute to the host society.*

Keywords: young migrants; young refugees ; Covid-19; integration of young migrants; Bulgaria.

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The COVID-19 pandemic broke out in Europe nearly two years ago, in March 2019. In December, 2021, due to the rapid spread of the virus and the increase in infections, followed by alarming death tolls from the disease, the World Health Organization declared an epidemic. According to the WHO, as of December 23, 2022, there have been 651,918,402 confirmed cases of COVID-19.

On March 8, 2020, the first case of coronavirus was registered in Bulgaria. Since then, Bulgaria has gone through five waves of the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic crisis has caused negative economic effects and has led to great unrest in society and unparalleled changes in lifestyle, work, and social interactions. The implementation of policies such as social distancing and the closure of gathering and interaction centers such as parks, cafes, educational institutions, etc., has had certain social consequences. Due to severe isolation and the cessation of some social affairs, this disease provokes social anxiety, panic due to insecurity, economic recession, and severe psychological stress.¹

The purpose of this article is to investigate the behavior of interviewed young migrants and refugees who live in Bulgaria and their strategies to deal with the COVID-19 crisis despite experiencing higher levels of insecurity. Understating the genesis, manifestation, and implementation of innovative mechanisms for overcoming the challenges posed by the pandemic is a focal point of this study.

The groups of young migrants and refugees aged 15–34 were categorized as one of the most vulnerable social groups during the pandemic. Numerous studies have observed sharp increases in the rates of depression, tension, and anxiety among young people during the COVID-19 crisis² The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the deterioration of youth mental health caused by isolation and the suspension of in-person activities. Migrants face the same COVID-19 health threats as host populations, but in addition, they are even more unprotected due to the circumstances of travel and the poor living and working conditions in which they may find themselves, or barriers to accessing health care.

Based both on desk and field research, and qualitative data collection methods, including the

conduction of intensive individual interviews with young migrants and refugees who live in Bulgaria, the study aims at exploring in depth a respondent's point of view, experiences, feelings, and interpretations of reality. *Interviews have been conducted with young refugees and migrants from Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Spain, Turkey, and the UK* in the frame of a project conducted by the think-tank Policy and Citizens Observatory : migration, digitalization, and climate. More than 100 young refugees and migrants living in Bulgaria took part in various workshops, meetings, discussions, and trainings in the period between March 2020 and June 2022. The project had the objective of researching how young migrants and refugees can integrate better in Bulgaria and cope with the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Migrants and refugees shared their personal and professional experiences as speakers and discussants in both offline and online debates organized on different topics such as ‚Migrant and Bulgarian youth as innovators and (social) entrepreneurs‘, ‚Innovative practices of youth and migrants in the post-pandemic city‘ and ‚Youth strategies and leadership in the three crises: pandemic, migration, and climate‘. Furthermore, for the purpose of this article, existing studies, articles, and publications were taken into account, such as the European H2020 project Matilde, led by the Center for Migration Studies at the New Bulgarian University³.

*A pivotal aspect of this study is the understanding of the term „crisis“ as having a twofold meaning. On the one hand, it is a difficult time, a condition of danger and instability. On the other hand, the term points to something temporary, hence the tendency to look for solutions to overcome it. It refers to a time, a critical phenomenon that necessitates decisive action to deal with the major change. The etymology of the word „crisis“ is noteworthy for its dual meaning. Firstly, crisis *krisis*, in medieval Latin, means a violent, brutal manifestation of an illness, while Ancient Greeks used the word to express judgment or a decision as it derives from the verb *krinō* which means „to choose, to decide.“⁴ Therefore the notion of crisis corresponds to a key moment, a turning point, a*

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9052715/#B8>

² <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/publications/the-impact-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-the-mental-health-of-young-people>

³ <https://matilde-migration.eu/project-partners/new-bulgarian-university/>

⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-magazine-monitor-34154767>

moment when, in a way, „everything must be decided,“, the crisis is the time of „now or never.“. In other words, the crisis corresponds to both the ideas of challenge and opportunity. Or, more precisely, it provides a chance for seizing the occasion while successfully confronting difficulties.

With this in mind, the article seeks to answer the following questions: To what extent have *young refugees and migrants designed innovative mechanisms aimed at overcoming the negative consequences of the COVID-19 crisis in Bulgaria?*

The study conveys the idea that even though the general context of the crisis puts at risk the stability of young refugees and migrants, the latest have demonstrated an ability to mitigate the negative consequences of the pandemic crisis in Bulgaria. Their actions and decisions have revealed a capacity for rapid crisis response, which implies and presupposes mental and financial stability, as well as the ability to reflect and act in order to find solutions for individual situations. The identified solutions in the frame of this study cover engaging in entrepreneurship or self-employment, opting for additional education, and moving to more remote or rural places.

At first, the profile of young migrants who remain in Bulgaria is explored with the goal of identifying common psychological, social, and economic characteristics that allow for an outline of the conditions that enable young migrants and ref-

ugees to cope with the crisis. (I) I demonstrate further that based on certain conditions and abilities, COVID-19 was perceived as a time for personal growth (II) and despite its „closing“ characteristics, COVID-19 reshaped migration by creating movements and new waves of migration among young people (III).

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNG MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN BULGARIA

- General context

One of COVID-19's major consequences is the positive migration balance rate recorded in 2020. For decades, people settling in Bulgaria have been fewer than people leaving the country. However, in the last two years, the statistics show a positive trend, probably influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Data from the National Statistical Institute show that over 100,000 people, including locals and foreigners, have chosen to live in Bulgaria in the last three years. In just one year, 39 461 people settled in the country, the majority of whom were men. Of those who arrived in Bulgaria, over 22 000 had Bulgarian citizenship, and over 17 000 had foreign citizenship. There are 5,459 EU citizens, and over 11,900 are third-country nationals. The number of third-country nationals who hold long-term

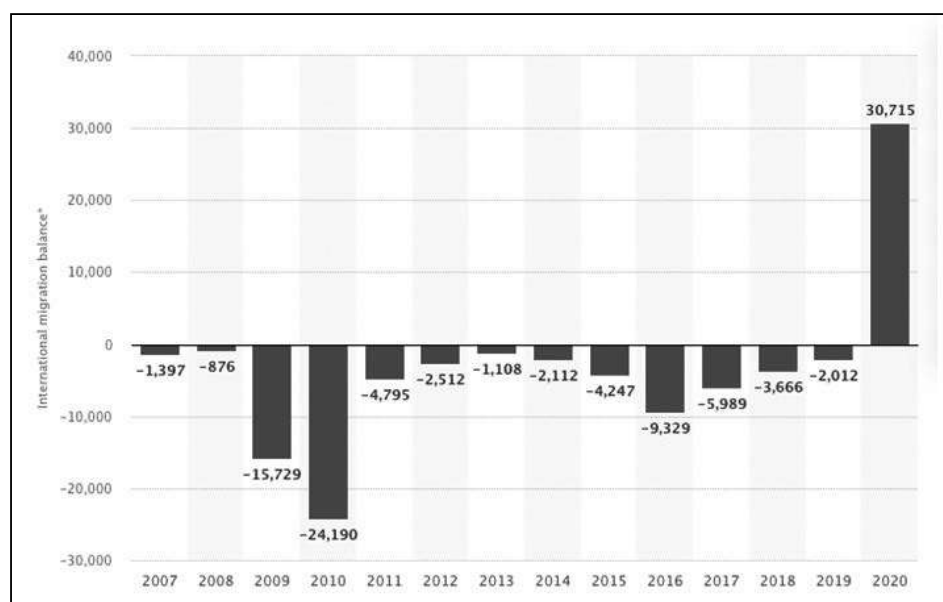


Figure 1. International migration balance in Bulgaria from 2007 to 2020⁵

⁵ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1269190/bulgaria-international-migration-balance/>

and permanent residence permits in Bulgaria is also increasing.⁶

This positive migration balance is due to the record number of persons having entered the territory of the country in the course of the year. According to a report of ECFR entitled “The big return, Covid-19 and the return migration to Bulgaria” by the end of May 2020 over 121 000 people have returned to Bulgaria.⁷ The group of returning young people - students or young professionals who have opted to continue their education and subsequently professional qualification abroad are listed foremost. 2020 marks an increase of 68% (compared to 2019) issued permits for access to the Bulgarian labour market for foreign citizens.⁸ In addition, despite Covid-19 pandemic in the second half of 2020 there is an increase by 63% of applications for international protection compared to 2019 with a total of 3252 registered applications.⁹

- **Young migrants are the largest group of migrants in Bulgaria**

Due to the specific historical and socio-economic peculiarities of Bulgaria, external migration has always been mainly associated with the emigration of the population. Young Bulgarians aged 20–29 years are more likely to emigrate. The latest are attracted

by the idea of living and working in a place with a higher standard of living. In addition, emigration is a way to solve not only their own material needs but also those of their family. A portion of young Bulgarians leave in search of better education. The question of how many of these Bulgarians categorized as „short-term migrants“ will return is becoming increasingly pertinent in the last few years.

In contrast, there is a recent trend in Bulgaria of increasing youth migration that has not yet been thoroughly researched. According to data from the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute, young migrants aged 30 to 34, followed by those aged 25 to 29, constitute the largest group of all immigrants in the country.

- **Increasing number of international students in the last years**

The number of international young migrants in the age range of 30–34 and 25–29 has been steadily rising in the last few years, from 3031 in 2018 to 3766 in 2021 and respectively, from 2636 to 3771 as demonstrated by the graphic below. Young migrants choosing Bulgaria as a destination country are representatives of many national groups, and the reasons shaping their decision for long-term stay in the country are heterogeneous.

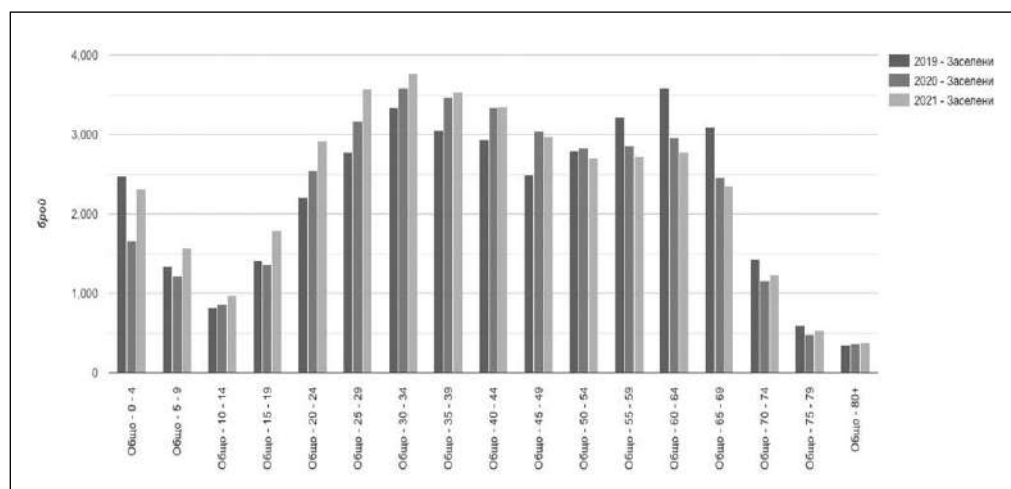


Figure 2. Age distribution of migrants in Bulgaria

⁶ <https://telegraph.bg/bulgaria/za-poslednite-tri-godini-100-000-izbraha-bylgariia.-chuzhdenci-izvyn-es-i-rodni-gurbetchii-zazhiviat-u-nas-340015>

⁷ <https://ecfr.eu/wp-content/uploads/Remigration-Report-ECFR-bg.pdf>

⁸ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-06/bulgaria_arm2020_part2_en.pdf

⁹ <https://www.aref.government.bg/sites/default/files/uploads/docs2021-03/%D0%93%D0%9E%D0%94%D0%98%D0%A8%D0%95%D0%9D%20%D0%94%D0%9E%D0%9A%D0%9B%D0%90%D0%94%20%D0%9D%D0%90%20%D0%94%D0%90%D0%91%20%D0%97%D0%90%202020%20%283%29.pdf>

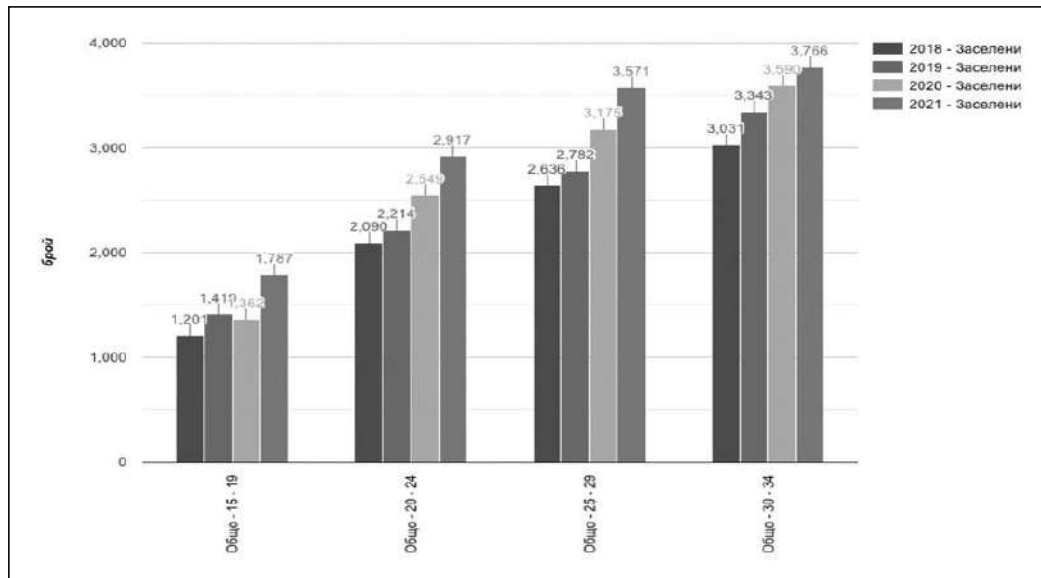


Figure 3. Number of young migrants in Bulgaria

The group of foreign students who wish to enroll in Bulgarian universities is one of the leading groups of young migrants. International students are predominantly from Greece, the UK, Germany, Turkey, Ukraine, and Northern Macedonia.¹⁰ Interestingly, even after Brexit, the proportion of British students in Bulgaria remains one of the highest. The majority of them choose to study specialties mainly in the field of health care, or more concretely, the specialty “medicine.”¹¹ For instance, one of the interviewed migrants is a 25-year-old medical student from Turkey. When asked why he has moved to Bulgaria, he outlined as the main driver behind his decision to study in the country the rapid growth of life quality in Bulgaria, which is very appealing to young people who are looking for opportunities. He pointed out other factors that helped him make his final decision, such as his great familiarity with the country due to the fact that he has visited it many times and the presence of his relatives in Sofia.

Several circumstances can help explain why more and more foreign students are choosing Bulgaria. Generally, international students enjoy lower university taxes and a cheaper cost of living - rents are much cheaper compared to Greece, for instance.

In addition, special programs of the Ministry of Education provide easy access and full scholarships. In addition, Bulgarian universities also offer them opportunities for study grants. According to Bulgarian legislation, third-country nationals who are full-time students are entitled to work up to 20 hours per week during the academic year. In addition, they have the possibility to stay in Bulgaria for a period of nine months after graduation and to seek employment through the Employment Agency.¹²

Furthermore, Bulgarian universities offer various programs taught in English, French, or German. In addition, changes have been made to the Ordinance on State Requirements for Admission of Students to Higher Education Institutions aimed at facilitating the admission of foreign students.¹³ According to NSI data for the period over the past three years, the number of international students has been growing. *The number of foreign students increased, accounting for 8% of the total in 2020.*¹⁴ In 2021, an increase of 8.44% is recorded compared to 2019 and around 5 % compared to 2020. These results show that the outbreak of the pandemic did not negatively impact the number of international students; on the contrary, there is even greater interest noted in 2021.

¹⁰ https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2020/countries/bulgaria_bg.html#seven

¹¹ <https://www.segabg.com/node/66774> ; <https://money.bg/inovations/s-blizo-1-4-narastva-broya-na-chuzhdestrannite-studenti-u-nas-prez-poslednite-5-godini.html>

¹² <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/budapest/17068.pdf>

¹³ <https://bntnews.bg/news/ulesnyavat-priema-na-chuzhdestranni-studenti-v-balgarskite-universiteti-1199223news.html>

¹⁴ <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eac/education-and-training-monitor-2021/en/bulgaria.html#seven>

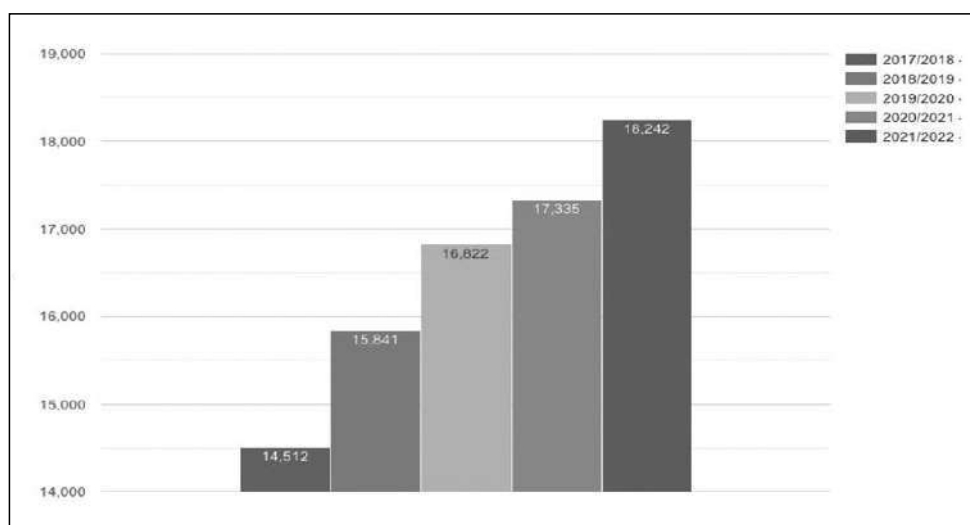


Figure 4. Foreign students enrolled in higher education institutions in Bulgaria

Many reports show that COVID-19 has had a negative impact on the well-being of students in universities, mainly due to limited social contacts (UNICEF, 2020). However, interviewed young foreign students stated that the fact that restrictions in Bulgaria were not as severe as in many other countries helped to alleviate their feelings of worry, anxiety, and stress. Short lockdown periods and free access to the city's parks and gardens made it possible to explore wonderful places in nature. When asked about her experience in Bulgaria during the pandemic, a young girl from Spain shared that "the pandemic has reshaped our priorities and the way we see our lives and our future. In the case of young migrants, I see that it has opened our eyes to alternatives that less than two years ago didn't seem realistic, such as working from home and having more freedom in choosing where to settle."

• Young refugees living in Bulgaria

Refugees and asylum seekers form another big part of the young migration to Bulgaria. Traditionally, the age structure of those applying for protection is predominantly made up of people in the active working age range of 18 to 34, but there has also

been an increase in the group of minors under 18. For instance, in 2021, young people distributed in the age categories between 14 and 17 years and 18 and 34 years were the most represented among asylum seekers in the country.¹⁵

In the whole of 2021, 10,999 people applied for protection in Bulgaria. On a broader time scale compared to the last four years—2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020, there is a clear increase in the number of asylum seekers in Bulgaria in 2021. The total number of unaccompanied minors according to the SAR report for 2021 is 3,172; most of them are from Afghanistan. Again, this is a significant increase over the previous year, which recorded 799 unaccompanied minors. Out of 10999 asylum seekers in 2019, 10999 will be granted international protection in 2021.

Statistics from previous years regarding the age proportion of asylum seekers and people granted protection are not easily accessible. *It is not possible to know how many young refugees actually reside in the country. It is known, however, that the majority of asylum seekers and refugees perceive Bulgaria as a transit country. Nevertheless, some refugees decide to remain in the country and build a life here. Their exact number is a mystery, but it is possible to outline*

Table 1. Number of refugees aged between 14 and 34

	Total	In the age 14-17	In the age 18-34
Number of asylum seekers	10999	2991	6446
Number of granted protection	2019	155	1252

¹⁵ State Agency for Refugees, Statistics on persons seeking international protection in 2021.

the main drivers behind their decision, not migration to western countries. It is important for this study to point them out because these are the prerequisites that enable young refugees and migrants to successfully respond to the coronavirus crisis.

A common characteristic of refugees who stay in Bulgaria is the **possession of capital**, which guarantees the availability of funds to cover basic needs (food, shelter), and therefore an initial sense of independence and material tranquility when settling down in the country. An interviewed young man from Syria arrived in Bulgaria after spending a few years in Turkey, where he had the chance to work and collect money, allowing him to cover his basic needs such as finding a place to live and providing himself with food and clothes.

Other refugees interviewed have **relatives in Bulgaria from previous migration waves** on whom they can rely, at least at the start of their integration process. It is generally accepted that positive social support increases feelings of happiness and reduces stress, anxiety, and depression.

Interviewed young migrants highlighted that Bulgaria is a preferred destination because they enjoy *a feeling of peace and tranquility in the country. This is particularly relevant for refugees who run from traumatic episodes that have occurred in their lives. The feeling of safety is a key factor in easing their integration, as it is related to their personal well-being.* This statement is relevant not only to refugees but is also stated as a main reason to relocate for British nationals. It is worth noting that for most of the young migrants and refugees, it is a voluntary choice to be in Bulgaria, and the country is perceived as a desired destination.

All components mentioned above are a predisposition for life satisfaction and mental resilience, which translates into the ability to cope with stressful situations, maintain the faith and belief that things can and will get better, and have the agency to change. Young migrants' mental health is an important factor in their integration. It is on the basis of their mental resilience and confidence in their strengths that further drives young migrants to seek development, to gain knowledge and skills, to function well in society, to be productive, and finally, to make a contribution to the community.

All information gathered from interviews with young migrants and refugees led to the assumption that the specific profile of refugees and migrants living in Bulgaria, which is characterized by their economic, emotional, and psychological stability, provided the conditions and enabled them to tackle the pandemic crisis with confidence. Even more, to

perceive the crisis in the ancient sense of the word—as a challenge that shall be transformed into an opportunity.

COVID-19 CRISIS PERCEIVED BY YOUNG MIGRANTS AS THE RIGHT TIME TO PLAN THE FUTURE AND ACT IN THE PRESENT

Paradoxically, societal bugs and blockages could unlock mechanisms for self-dealing with the crisis and personal growth. COVID-19 had a surprisingly positive effect on the lives of interviewed migrants, as it empowered them to be even more innovative, creative, and brave. The following quote from a young immigrant from Ireland points to this unpredictable effect of COVID-19. She claims that she was so fortunate to be in Sofia during the pandemic : „It gave me the opportunity to reflect on my values, what I want to achieve in life, and then furthermore, it gave me the time and space to explore them. The pandemic's pause gave me a chance, probably for the first time in my life, to reflect on myself. Having been distanced from the needs of others, I was brought closer to my own needs. Since this time, I have learned to readjust my mindset and reprioritize. „I'm a different person now.“

The COVID-19 Crisis also resulted in significant changes in lifestyle. Pandemic restrictions forced us all to slow down, to slow the dynamics of life. It allowed for new perspectives and a re-examination of life. Finally, it pushed people to make life decisions. Migrants make no exception to this global trend. In this sense, the example of a young refugee is speaking : „The COVID-19 came, and I was unemployed. I had my old hair clipper that I got from Turkey. I didn't try it in Turkey because life was hard there and I had no time. In the refugee camp, it was forbidden to go out during the pandemic. There was nothing left for me to do. Then I said to myself, „Now I am calm and I have to ask myself, what do I love? Because whatever I love - that's what I have to do. And I started to learn Bulgarian and to do hair-dressing. Little by little I started to practice by cutting friends' hair. That's how I became a hairdresser. For me, the pandemic was no problem; to open a hairdressing salon and learn.“

A girl from Iraq decided to pursue a second master degree in the time of the pandemic : „In the third year of my studies in the university COVID-19 outbreaked. I stayed home, I had time to think about my future and I decided to sign up for a second degree. As a result I ended up taking two master degrees in only one year.“

Other interviews demonstrate the examples of two self-employed refugees: a man from Syria who opened a barber shop and a young woman from Afghanistan opened the first restaurant for Afghanistan food in the time of pandemic.¹⁶

Interviewed migrants are more likely to select self employment as the state does not implement successful initiatives to support migrant entrepreneurs and services, which encourages entrepreneurship. An example demonstrating the failure of state policies is the program run by the employment agency on behalf of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, in the frame of which a very limited number of refugees have been employed through the program. Instead, it has been used mostly to hire unemployed Bulgarian citizens to work with refugees. Also, no refugees have studied the Bulgarian language through the program since its inception. However, the specifics of the Bulgarian economic and labor market context seem to stimulate the self employment of young migrants. Interviewed migrants claim that in Bulgaria there is not the same strong competitive spirit as many places in the West. In addition, the country provides a relatively liberal regime of work for refugees, as it grants recognized refugees full access to employment opportunities in every sector, per the Law for Employment Promotion. However, asylum seekers are denied the right to undertake employment for the first three months. For comparison, in France or Spain, for those with pending asylum applications, formal employment is allowed only after the application has been in process for six months. In Germany, they are not allowed to work for the first nine months of their stay in the centers.

As a result of the crisis, drastic decisions and changes have occurred, including migration. For instance, amenity migration to Bulgaria has intensified as a response to the crisis.

COVID-19 AS A TRIGGER FOR AMENITY MIGRATION TO BULGARIA

The intensified tendency to choose Bulgaria as a destination for amenity migration can be illustrated with two examples. The first is based on evidence

gathered by Anna Krasteva during the MATILDE study of the Haskovo and Harmanli region. What is highlighted by Krasteva is the new attractiveness of rural and mountain places in post-COVID-19 times. The recent immigration of young foreigners from the UK, Finland, and the Netherlands to the villages in the Haskovo region is becoming more visible and is part of a more general migration process. In addition, this new mobility from the big cities to more rural places began before the COVID-19 crisis, but has been accelerated by the pandemic. Young migrants are attracted by a few important factors: a nice climate with more sun, a better quality of life, fresh food, a more calm and relaxing way of life, and more comfortable homes in houses with gardens.¹⁷ One of the major findings of the above-mentioned study is that young Bulgarians take part as well in this recent trend of migration from cities to villages. For instance, COVID-19 led to a marked increase in digital nomads in Bulgaria. Many young people use digital technologies to perform their professional tasks and enjoy the chance to work from home in a village and thus escape from the intense and dynamic climate of big cities. For international digital nomads, Bulgaria is an attractive destination because of its geographic position, its proximity to all major financial and business centers, its great prices, its fast internet, its entrepreneurial spirit, and its nomad community.¹⁸ The Internet is full of articles reflecting this tendency: „Bansko, a Digital Nomad Haven off the Beaten Track“; „Black Sea Home Office for Digital Nomads in Byala“; „Bulgaria becomes hub for digital nomads“; „Here’s Why Digital Nomads Are Flocking To Bulgaria This Winter“; „Digital Nomads Love Bulgaria for Visa & Tax Benefits“; etc. In addition, young artists who moved to Bulgaria during COVID-19 represent another interesting group of people. They claim that the country is a calm place that helps artists focus on their creative pursuits, even the capital „Sofia is a calm and quite green city, with none of the stress of larger capitals.“¹⁹

Another interesting example of amenity migration is the phenomenon of people from Western European countries choosing to migrate to Bulgaria in order to escape the stress created by the crisis, during which the police control was strictly enforcing containment measures and failure to comply

¹⁶ https://www.dnevnik.bg/evropa/2021/12/21/4296071_da_predpochetesh_bulgariia_pred_zapadna_evropa/

¹⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/sites/default/files/2021-09/MATILDEProject_SocialImpact_BgReport.pdf

¹⁸ <https://www.trendingtopics.eu/hype-and-homeless-how-digital-economy-and-covid-are-changing-the-lifestyle-of-sees-modern-nomads/>

¹⁹ <https://vijmag.bg/en/article/migrants-got-talent-piero-epifania-peru>

could result in a fine. To outline this tendency, the term „COVID-19 refugees“ could be employed. Prominent is the case of the German anti-vaxxers who very quickly migrated to the Bulgarian Black Sea. The German newspaper Spiegel wrote that the city of Aheloy on the coast is becoming a bastion of anti-vaxxers from Germany. They have organized through a group on the social network „Telegram“, which is called „German expatriates in Bulgaria“ and unites approximately 2,500 people.²⁰ It is unknown, however, if some of them remained in the country after easing the lockdown and restriction measures on COVID-19. It is difficult to outline with certainty why foreigners decided to move to Bulgaria. To some extent, the decision to move to Bulgaria is paradoxical because the country ranks eighty-seventh in the world in the number of infections per million inhabitants (over 187,000) and second in the world (after Peru) in the number of deaths per million inhabitants (over 5,000).²¹ However, economic advantages such as cheaper rents, food, as well as the international image of Bulgaria as a country in which measures are not strictly enforced, might be the reasons that help explain this phenomenon.

Young migrants residing in Bulgaria are relatively well integrated. Their integration is more a result of their personal efforts and qualities than a targeted state policy or strategy. Similarly, dealing with the unprecedented consequences of the pandemic resembles a personal life action plan rather than following or benefiting from government policies. Analyzed examples of young migrants and refugees who lived in Bulgaria during the pandemic show that, to a large extent, they found mechanisms to mitigate the negative consequences of the crisis. Even more, to come up with innovative ideas for self development. Having managed to cope with the challenges, all of the interviewed young migrants and refugees expressed their openness to more communication with locals as well as their keenness to contribute to Bulgarian society. In this regard, more activities targeting young people for engagement in social solidarity could have a positive impact.

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