

FACT SHEET FOR SERBIA for Ukrainian devotees

Serbia is officially not part of the EU and therefore only domestic law applies and international agreements which are part of the domestic law.

Serbia has powerful NGOs that are employing various legal and other important professionals who can really help people facing a crisis. Many people in Serbia speak Russian and they have documentation and information in Russian and Ukrainian languages. In case of any problems I would always advise to contact them.

Also Serbian language is similar to Russian and Ukrainian. They are all slavic languages.

For example UNHCR and its partner organizations provide refugees and asylum-seekers legal counseling and assistance in asylum procedure, they help with integration, interpretation during medical and legal proceedings, assistance in search for a job and accommodation.

Entering Serbia

Citizens of the Republic of Ukraine do not need a visa for up to 90 days of stay on the territory of Serbia. Upon entering Serbia they should hold a valid passport.

In order to stay in Serbia a person should apply for a visa or for asylum.

Information on visa requirements can be found here:
<https://www.mfa.gov.rs/en/citizens/travel-serbia/visa-requirements>

One should ask locally if certain exceptions apply for Ukraine.

From the information I have collected online, persons from Ukraine will be given refugee status.

COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

Information about restrictions can be found on the following link:
<https://mfa.rs/en/citizens/travel-serbia/covid-19-entry-requirements>

RESTRICTIONS DO NOT APPLY ON CITIZENS OF UKRAINE!

When and how do I apply for asylum in the Republic of Serbia? (through this you can receive a refugee status)

You may apply for asylum **immediately** at your first contact with the Border Police. The procedure for seeking asylum in Serbia is as follows:

- a foreigner may “express (orally or written) the intention to seek asylum in Serbia” within Serbian territory or at border crossings (including the Nikola Tesla Airport in Belgrade);

- once your intention to seek asylum in Serbia is recorded by the officials of the Ministry of the Interior you will be given a certificate of having done so;
- the asylum-seeker is then expected to go to his/ her designated asylum centre, or to notify the Asylum Office should he/she wish to stay in private accommodation;
- upon arrival at the centre or private accommodation, the asylum-seeker files an asylum application with the Asylum Office which then issues a personal identity document to the asylum-seeker;
- the Asylum Office must decide on the application within 3 months of its submission, during which time one or more hearings are held to establish all of the facts and circumstances relevant to rendering a decision. This deadline may be extended to up to 9 months.

For more information about the asylum procedure see: [link](#).

Free Legal Assistance

The [Belgrade Centre for Human Rights](#) (BCHR), a partner of the UNHCR since 2012, provides free legal aid to the asylum-seekers in Serbia. Lawyers of the BCHR explain asylum-seekers their rights and obligations and represent them before appropriate authorities or courts.

Refugees' integration, rights and obligations

A person whom the Government of Serbia has recognized to be in need of **international protection** may be **granted subsidiary protection or refugee status**. Subsidiary protection status is initially valid for **one year**, with the possibility of an extension. Refugee status is granted once for an **indefinite period of time**.

Persons granted subsidiary protection or refugee status in Serbia are entitled to rights and subject to certain obligations, as set out in the [Law on Asylum and Temporary Protection](#).

Once an asylum-seeker has been awarded subsidiary protection or refugee status, the Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) develops an individual integration plan for him/her. An integration adviser is appointed and he/she provides support and assistance to the refugee in accessing all the rights mentioned in the Law and facilitating integration in the country.

Obligations:

- You must respect and observe the laws of Serbia;
- You must report a change of address, or the loss of your Personal ID to the Asylum Office within 3 days through your lawyer;
- You must report all significant material or legal changes such as change of address, name, marital status, cash assistance, job to your integration adviser within 15 days;
- All children up to the age of 15 have a right to and must attend preschool and primary school;
- In order to work, you must obtain a valid working permit.

Identity Card, personal number and passport

Persons granted **refugee status** are issued ID cards valid for **five years**. ID cards issued to persons awarded **subsidiary protection** are valid for **one-year period**. To renew your ID, contact your legal adviser. You are obliged to report any changes of address or loss of your ID card to the Asylum Office within 3 days, through your legal adviser. In such cases, you will be issued a new ID card.

The identity card contains your name, picture, and address. You must always carry it on you. Police officers have the right to check your identity in the street, as is the case with any other citizen or legal resident.

Persons granted international protection need to obtain a personal number from the Asylum Office. This is a prerequisite for opening a bank account and gaining access to health care. The Republic of Serbia does NOT yet issue passports to refugees.

Assistance in temporary accommodation

You are entitled to accommodation assistance for one year after being granted subsidiary protection or refugee status. The Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) can offer you to choose between residing in one of its Asylum Centres or cash assistance for private accommodation. The amount awarded by SCRM is the same for everyone. Both of these forms of assistance are available only one year following the recognition of subsidiary protection or refugee status. **After the expiry of one year, you are expected to have found a durable accommodation solution for yourself.**

Access to the national social welfare system

Registration of residence in a city or municipality allows you to apply for financial assistance from the local Centre for Social Welfare. This system supports the most vulnerable citizens of Serbia in meeting their most basic needs. You can apply for: regular monthly cash assistance, one-time cash assistance, child allowance and/or parental allowance. The best way to do so is through your legal representative.

Health care

The health care system in Serbia has three levels – primary, secondary and tertiary. All health care services are provided by the State's National Health Care Service. If you instead choose a private health care provider you will have to cover all the expenses yourself. The Primary Health Care Centre you turn to seek medical assistance depends on the place of your residence. Keep in mind that some medicines are free of charge while you need to pay for others.

Serbian language classes, free of charge

[Serbian Commissariat for Refugee and Migration](#) (SCRM) offers 300 classroom hours/lessons of the Serbian language for a period of one year. Depending on your age and integration plans, you can get extra classes to finish school or to apply for specific jobs. Keep in mind that learning Serbian is a requirement for accommodation assistance. Mastery of the Serbian language also opens many doors and increases job opportunities significantly.

Free of charge primary and high school education and access to higher education

Serbian children usually start going to kindergarten when they turn three, but this is optional and at the expense of the parents.

Six-year-old children are obliged to attend a one-year preschool program. The State may cover its cost, if needed.

A special commission assesses the level of knowledge and enrolls children in school starting from year one. This entails testing of basic knowledge, taking into account age and former academic qualifications.

Primary education in Serbia lasts eight years, is free of charge and mandatory for all children. By getting good marks through 8 grades of primary school, children earn points needed to enroll in secondary school. At the end of primary school, children take a final exam. The secondary school the children will then enroll depends on the combination of the points earned during their primary education and the final test results.

Also Secondary education is free of charge but not mandatory. It can last three or four years depending on the type of school. The academic score obtained in secondary school is important for enrollment in tertiary education.

Tertiary education can last for four or more years and is free of charge only for the best students. There is an entrance test for each faculty, which together with the secondary school scores, will determine whether or not the student will have to pay a tuition fee. The test is in Serbian language and differs for each faculty.

Validation of diploma

Your diplomas can be validated, but this process is NOT free of charge. A special state institution is in charge of this process and the best way to apply for this service is through your legal representative.

Right to work

The right to work is one of your basic rights. To work in Serbia, you have to hold a valid work permit. Obtaining a work permit is NOT free of charge and the best way to get it is through your legal representative. The work permit is valid for the same period as your ID.

- In order to access the job market you must be registered with the National Employment Service in your municipality/city, irrespective of any academic or other qualifications. This

institution should work with you to improve your skills and chances at successfully accessing the job market.

- In order to open a private business, you need to be registered with the Serbian Business Register Company. For further information for this process you must consult your integration officer.
- Re-training is common in Serbia for persons struggling to find a job in their primary profession. It means that you can be enrolled in some form of vocational training on account of your current skills or else on account of what is most needed within the job market.

Right to open a bank account

Once you get a personal number (JMBG), you can choose a bank and open a bank account. You will also need your ID. For any kind of cash assistance from the state or NGOs. You will need a Serbian Dinar (RSD) bank account. You may also have another bank account, but do check the applicable terms and conditions with the bank directly.

Following link provides a document about asylum seekers in Ukrainian and Russian language:
<http://www.bgcentar.org.rs/vodic-za-trazioce-azila-u-srbiji-na-ukrajinskom-i-ruskom-jeziku/>

Important links:

NGO RESCUE <https://www.rescue.org/country/serbia>

UNHCR Ukraine emergency <https://www.unhcr.org/ukraine-emergency.html>

UNHCR Serbia <https://help.unhcr.org/serbia/about-unhcr-in-serbia/>

UNICEF Serbia <https://www.unicef.org/serbia/en>

Government of the Republic Of Serbia: <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/185833/instruction-for-providing-assistance-to-refugees-from-ukraine.php>

Embassy of the Republic of Ukraine: <https://serbia.mfa.gov.ua/en>