

# OPENING DOORS FOR EUROPE'S CHILDREN

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STRENGTHENING FAMILIES. ENDING INSTITUTIONAL CARE.

## BULGARIA



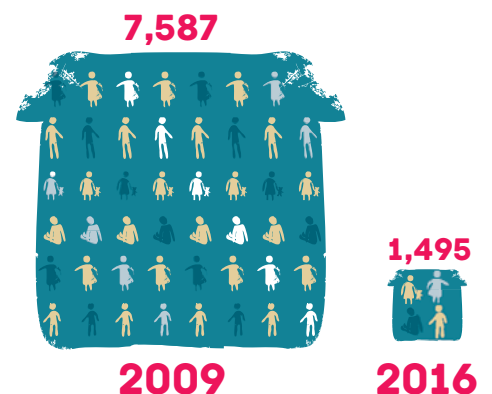
### COUNTRY FACT SHEET

In Bulgaria, there has been a significant decrease (more than 80%) in the number of children placed in institutional care: from 7,587 children in 2009 to 1,495 children at the beginning of 2016. In 2015 alone, 1,226 children left institutional care and 33 institutions were closed. All specialised institutions for children with disabilities have also been closed down now. Adoption of the Action Plan for the implementation of the National Strategy “Vision for Deinstitutionalisation of Children in Bulgaria” 2016-2020 in October 2016 marked another significant achievement towards deinstitutionalisation reforms in Bulgaria.

Two main reasons for children entering alternative care in Bulgaria are poverty and disability. This is often because parents of children with disabilities are not adequately supported in providing care for their children. Although vulnerable families have access to community-based services, they are not sufficient and require increased capacity and quality of provision.

At the beginning of 2016, 1,495 children were living in 47 institutions in Bulgaria compared to 2,721 children in 87 institutions in 2015. Despite the decrease, 726 children under the age of three are still remaining in Homes for Medico-Social Care for Children. More than 200 children in conflict with the law and children with delinquent behaviour remain in institutional care; their numbers are not accounted in the official statistics.

In 2015, 2,382 children were placed in 253 Family-Type Placement Centres (FTPCs) referred as Small Group Homes (SGHs) in Bulgaria. Only between 2014 and 2015, 135 of the FTPCs accommodated children, adolescents and young people above the age of 18 with disabilities. Although intentions were good and FTPCs were built rapidly to ensure that individual children's needs were met, the transition from institutional care to FTPCs has not always been >>



**INSTITUTIONAL CARE IN  
BULGARIA HAS DECREASED BY  
80% SINCE 2009**



## 2016-2020 ACTION PLAN FOR DEINSTITUTIONALISATION WAS OFFICIALLY ADOPTED

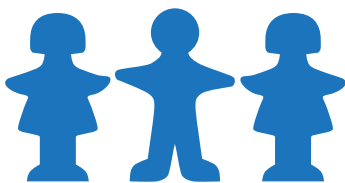
- improving the effectiveness of the system in order to guarantee children's rights, and
- measures for building the infrastructure needed to provide services for children.

The National Network for Children, however, is concerned that the Action Plan does not provide an integral framework for implementation of the "Vision for Deinstitutionalisation". It outlines general developments in the system of child protection and focuses on improving the infrastructure rather than enhancing capacity of the professionals working in the system. In addition, the National Network for Children recognizes the lack of sufficient measures for cross-sectoral primary prevention of the separation of children and families. It acknowledges the lack of financial mechanism to ensure the resources of existing institutions are ring fenced to finance the new services for children and families<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.openingdoors.eu/bulgaria-updates-its-action-plan-on-deinstitutionalisation/>

## FAST FACTS & LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

- **49% OF THE CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONAL CARE IN BULGARIA ARE AGED 0-3**
- **IN 2015, THERE WERE 6,463 CHILDREN IN KINSHIP CARE AND 2,323 CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE IN BULGARIA**
- **AS OF 2016, ALL SPECIALISED INSTITUTIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES HAVE BEEN CLOSED DOWN**
- **THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY "VISION FOR DEINSTITUTIONALISATION OF CHILDREN IN BULGARIA" 2016-2020 WAS OFFICIALLY ADOPTED AND PUBLISHED IN OCTOBER 2016**



National Network for Children

### OPENING DOORS NATIONAL COORDINATOR IN BULGARIA

The National Network for Children is an umbrella organization which unites more than 130 NGOs working with children and families in Bulgaria. Their mission is to strengthen and facilitate co-operation among all stakeholders related to children's rights and well-being. They are advocating and working in partnership with NGOs, businesses, institutions, children and families. To find out more visit [www.nmd.bg](http://www.nmd.bg)

### NATIONAL PARTNERS

Members of Coalition "Childhood 2025": Bulgarian Association for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (BAPID), Bulgarian Center for Not-for-profit Law, Bulgarian Clinical Psychology Association, De Passarel Bulgaria Foundation, Equilibrium Association, FICE Bulgaria, For Our Children Foundation, Haralan Alexandrov, Hope and Homes for Children Bulgaria, International Social Service Bulgaria, Karin Dom Foundation, Know How Centre for Alternative Care for Children, SOS Children's Villages Bulgaria, The Cedar Foundation, Tulip Foundation. Members of the National Network for Children: <http://nmd.bg/tchlenove/>

The Opening Doors for Europe's Children campaign supports national efforts to develop child protection systems that strengthen families and ensure high-quality family and community-based alternative care for children, by leveraging EU funding and policy and building capacity in civil society.

It is a partnership between 5 international organisations and civil society across 15 European countries. For more information go to [www.openingdoors.eu](http://www.openingdoors.eu)