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ABOUT US

WHO WE ARE

The Bulgarian Industrial Association – Union of the Bulgarian Business is a non-governmental organization founded on 25 April 1980.

BIA is a nationally recognized organization of employers and participates with its representatives in the operation of all national consultative councils, supervisory and managing bodies of state public institutions.

BIA is the only business organization which is a member of BUSINESSEUROPE, a confederate like European business organization, thus representing the Bulgarian companies and employers' interests at a European level. Furthermore, it actively participates in the work of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the South East European Employers' Forum (SEEEF). BIA is also among the founders of the Union of Black Sea and Caspian Confederation of Enterprises (UBCCE).

BIA has signed cooperation agreements with over 70 national business and employers' organizations from countries across Europe, Asia, Africa and the USA.



MANAGEMENT

BIA's highest managing body is the **General Assembly** which incorporates all members of the association. The General Assembly votes BIA's main activity guidelines, amends and supplements the Statute of BIA, elects and dismisses the Board of Management and the Controlling Council and supervises their activity.

The **Board of Management** consists of not fewer than 15 members whom the General Assembly elects for a five-year term. The Board of Management adopts plans and programmes for the activity of BIA, organizes the implementation of the General Assembly resolutions and reports its activity to the General Assembly. The Board of Management elects President of BIA from its members who shall represent the Association in Bulgaria and abroad.

The **Controlling Council** consists of three members who are elected by the General assembly for a five-year term. The Controlling Council supervises the legitimacy and expedience of the implementation of BIA's Management resolutions, as well as the proper care of its property.

The **National Council of Presidents** elected by the General Assembly, composed of not less than 50 people, with a term of five years. It is an advisory body to the Board of Management and assists the Board in formulating relevant policies and tasks concerning economic development.

MEMBERS

BIA has a well-developed matrix structure encompassing sector and regional organizations from the whole spectrum of the Bulgarian economy and territory.

The companies which are members of BIA produce about two-thirds of the country's GDP and provide employment to over 60 percent of all the employed in the Bulgarian economy. 28 percent of the enterprises are big, while over 20 percent are medium-sized ones.

Some of the members of BIA are the Central Union of Producers' Cooperatives, the Central Cooperative Union, the biggest research and development park in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the biggest universities, the Federation of Scientific and Technical Unions, Bulgarian Industrial Capital Association and Bulgarian Industry Confederation.

BIA's membership incorporates over 100 sector employers' organizations (32 of which are also members of the corresponding European sector structures), 26 regional organizations and over 100 municipal associations and local bodies.



THE IN-5 AWARDS

In celebration of its 25th Anniversary BIA introduced the annual IN-5 Awards in 2005. The name of the awards stands for the five major pillars of economic prosperity, namely: Industry, Investments, Innovations, Initiatives, and Intellect. The categories are also five – industrial development, investment activity, industrial innovations, economic initiatives and economy-related scientific product development.

The prizes are being awarded to companies, organizations, scientific bodies, media and natural entities for their contribution to the Bulgarian economic development.

The first prize, an Icarus statuette, is made by the talented Bulgarian sculptor Prof. Velisslav Minekov.

As the years go by, the IN-5 Awards have turned into a prestigious prize and are becoming more and more popular with-in the Bulgarian business circle.

HISTORY

BIA in the 1980s

Representatives of the biggest Bulgarian enterprises established the Bulgarian Industrial Economic Association (BIEA), later on renamed to Bulgarian Industrial Association (BIA), on 25 April 1980. BIEA was the first non-governmental business organization in the former socialist camp – a facilitator of the market relations in Bulgaria. Even in a time of planned economy and strong political pressure, BIEA succeeded in establishing some market principles which were modern for its time and are still regarded as such today.

From its very foundation BIEA started to develop a regional structure by establishing regional industrial associations and chambers. Each regional industrial association is an independent legal entity.

BIEA set up the first Venture Capital Fund in Bulgaria and the first Commercial Bank, Economic Initiatives Bank PLC, by means of which it funded the establishment of over 600 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). A great number of them have been functioning successfully ever since.

An important part of BIEA's activity was the establishment of technological parks in the sphere of technological transfer with the Technical Universities in Sofia and Varna.

The Association's inventive ideas and activities aroused interest not only in Bulgaria but also abroad.

BIA in the 1990s

At the democratic changes onset BIEA was renamed to Bulgarian Industrial Association (BIA). The transition from planned to market economy inevitably assigned BIA a new role in the Bulgarian industry development.

BIA took an active part in the regulation stipulation concerning the business, assisted the privatization process and the foundation of market principles in the Bulgarian economy.

The Bulgarian Industrial Association has played a crucial role in the establishment of social dialogue between employers and trade unions, as well as the development of social partnership in the country. Collective bargaining has been implemented at sector and company level with the assistance and active participation of BIA.

Another accomplishment of the Association in the development of the present-day Bulgarian economy is the foundation of the Stock Market in Bulgaria and the Court of Arbitration as an institution to facilitate a fast settlement of economic disputes.

BIA has also played an important role in communication technologies development. The association was the first Internet provider in Bulgarian and it was the first to introduce the use of e-signature.

BIA set up health and social security funds, as well as the first leasing company in Bulgaria, Interlease Inc., which for the time being owns over 40 percent of the market share.

BIA in the 21st Century

BIA continues to work for the development and stabilization of the economic environment in the new century.

It has also enhanced its international activity. BIA facilitated Bulgaria's accession to the EU by setting up an EU-Bulgaria Joint Consultative Committee and functioned as a co-chair on the Bulgarian part for as long as two mandates.

BIA is very active in drafting the economic policy in Bulgaria, developing and enhancing the socio-economic policy regulation, and conducting analyses, research and experts' evaluations in the sphere of industrial, tax, and social policy, industrial relations, environmental protection, goods technical requirements, SMEs development etc.

The Bulgarian Industrial Association plays a crucial role in the vocational training sphere. A **Vocational Education and Training Center (VTC)** was specifically set up which offers a wide range of qualification and re-qualification courses and issues nationally acknowledged certificates.

A **Computer Training Center** was established with the VETC which is accompanied by a regional Cisco Academy for training experts in computer networks. The Academy issues world acknowledged certificates. The **Cisco Academy** with BIA was the first on the Balkan Peninsula to launch training courses in Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP) programme for training Cisco System licensed specialists in network developing. In 2003 Cisco Academy with BIA was awarded the prize "Best trainee in the world" and "Best instructor in Bulgaria". The Academy was also nominated for best management of network academy.

BIA is the only organization in CEE which has a sector for assisting the harmonization of the national and European requirements on environment, quality and safety. The **Clean Industry Centre** implements ISO systems for company management and takes part in drafting regulation documents in the environmental sphere.

The **Court of Arbitration at BIA** guarantees high quality in dispute settlement. This quality is assured by the competent panel of arbitrators, including former Constitutional Court judges and some of the most distinguished scholars and practitioners in the field of commercial law. The Chairman of the Arbitration Court is the former President of the National Assembly (2001–2005) of the Republic of Bulgaria, professor Ognian Gerdzhihov.

Since 2010 a **National Competence Assessment Center** has been operating at BIA which fosters the implementation of a competence-based approach in human resources management. The center coordinates the operation of a competence assessment system, **MyCompetence**, developed within a project under Human Resources Development Operational Programme. The key objective of MyCompetence is to serve as an effective link between education and business by bridging the gap between educational and professional standards.

HISTORY

BIA today

BIA's present-day profile has been determined to a great extent by its work style, impressive potential of experts and the wide variety of services which it offers to its members.

The expert opinions, proposals and positions of BIA on topical economic issues have been part and parcel from the most important discussions in the country.

The Association continues to play an active part in the social dialogue system at national and international level where it upholds the Bulgarian business' interests for regulation and administrative changes. The sector organizations which are members of BIA are parties in almost all collective labour agreements.

BIA works actively in solving economic problems by provoking public discussions on topical issues and offering constructive possible solutions. BIA was the first to pay attention to the informal economy issue, the severe inter-company indebtedness, the breach of market principles in setting electricity prices etc.

Furthermore, the Bulgarian Industrial Association works actively for the implementation of an infrastructural and energy system reform, for decreasing the administrative pressure on business by subtracting regulation regimes, for curtailing informal economy sector, as well as overcoming the grave problems in the pension-social security system, the education system, the healthcare etc.

BIA has published a wide range of information materials and free online newsletters on various topics, including environment, energy industry, labour and social security legislation, European policies, programmes and projects, corporate social responsibility etc.

The Business-Industry-Capitals electronic journal (www.daily.bia-bg.com) offers to all users of BIA's services updated business information in English and Bulgarian, thus reaching an audience of over 30 000 subscribers from the country and abroad.

During the twenty-year severe politico-economic transition BIA has proved to be one of the State's leading partners in setting the economic policy by maintaining at the same time its political neutrality and being guided only by national respect, competence and honesty.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



Due to the expert potential and efforts of BIA in the last years, a number of issues in the field of economy have been resolved. Some of these are:

- Private enforcement process was implemented;
- The Commercial Register was moved out of court;
- The number and gravity of regulatory regimes were significantly revised;
- The natural gas price supplement which remains with Bulgargas was reduced from 3% to 0.5% and hedging was introduced in relation to oil and natural gas price, as well as the US dollar exchange rate;
- A possibility to pay state and municipal fees at POS was implemented without the respective bank fees;
- The procedure for issuing integrated permits was changed in order to simplify the investing process;
- Flat tax was introduced for natural persons;
- The number of payment orders for paying taxes and social contributions was significantly reduced by the introduction of a common payment order;
- Regulation governing the Temporary Agency Work was implemented;
- The closing down of commercial activities and services provided by ministries has started in order to eliminate unfair competition against the private sector;
- A rapid reimbursement of the State and municipalities' overdue liabilities to business has started;
- The structure of Bulgarian State Railways Holding was optimized;
- The Bulgarian business' problems found solution at the European Parliament;
- BIA created the first and the only Competence Assessment Information System in Bulgaria – MyCompetence;
- In 2006 in cooperation with the Interior Ministry Of Norway, BIA introduced pilot electronic export declaration to customs Sofia. This had a crucial role in the accelerated introduction of “electronic customs” in Bulgaria;
- BIA's proposals in progress: link building between the NRA and the Customs Administration, introduction of green certificates trading, stimulating development of renewable energy for their own consumption, building a system for validation of skills and competences, etc.

Some of BIA's proposals are being now implemented including the following: building up a link between the National Revenue Agency and the customs office, introducing green certificates trading, encouraging the construction of RES for individual consumption, developing a system for skill and competence validation etc.



ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

Serving its members, BIA performs the following activities and services:

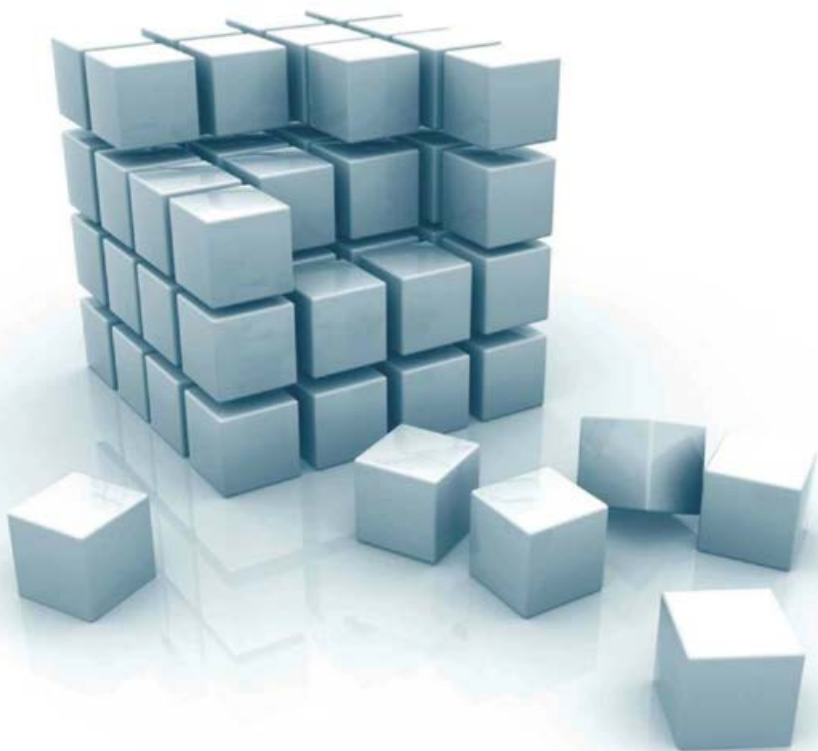
- BIA participates in the operation of consultative councils with state bodies including with regard to regulation development and enhancement;
- BIA conducts analyses, research and expert reports in the field of industry, tax and social policy;
- By means of its Arbitration Court, BIA mediates between economic entities in overcoming and settling various disputes;
- BIA runs re-qualification and qualification training courses under a wide scope of nationally approved programmes;
- BIA issues certificates of origin and force majeure certificates;
- BIA organizes business forums and business calls in Bulgaria and abroad;
- BIA assists the development and implementation of projects with external financing, including European one;
- BIA develops and maintains on-line systems.

Fourteen centers have been founded at BIA to facilitate the implementation of these activities:

- Industrial Development Center
- Industry and environment Center
- Employers' interests protection
- Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Center
- International Economic Relations Center
- International Organizations and Programmes Center
- Vocational Training Center
- Computer Training Center
- Legal Services Center
- Court of Arbitration
- Internet Center
- Public Relations Services Center
- Organizational activities Center
- National Competence Assessment Center

Some of BIA's services are provided through its companies:

- **BIC Capital Market Ltd.** maintains and provides company data bases, market, financial, technological, stock exchange and other kind of information, carries out analyses of the current state of different economic sectors etc.
- **BSC – Commerceconsult Ltd.** Offers services in the field of international trade.



INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Industrial Development Center at BIA conducts analyses and macroeconomic research on the state of the country's economy, particular economic sectors or given macroeconomic issues.



Some of the fundamental analyses and research of the Center include the following:

- › Companies' indebtedness from the non-financial economic sector, including intra-company indebtedness
- › Labour productivity and remuneration levels
- › Regulatory regimes in Bulgaria
- › Business climate indexes
- › Evaluation of the Bulgarian economy's competitiveness and possibilities to boost it.

The analyses and research help BIA in:

- › Developing positions and proposals on the country's economy and economic policies
- › Withstanding the business and industry's interests within the social dialogue with the government, trade unions and various public organizations.

Due to this activity BIA has proved as one of the leading centers for macroeconomic research and analyses for the past 20 years in Bulgaria.

The Industrial Development Center at BIA offers the following services:

- › Analyses and macroeconomic research;
- › Training courses and consultations in the field of investment policies, energy efficiency, public procurement

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INDUSTRY AND ENVIRONMENT

The Clean Industry Center facilitates the dialogue between the administration and business regarding the implementation of regulatory requirements for decreasing environmental impacts and increasing the efficiency and the productivity.

The center proposes expert opinions on bills concerning the environment and asserts their adoption and implementation by the executive and legislative powers.

The experts at the center participate in national consultative councils, working groups and committees with various ministries and institutions.

The team assists the implementation of best available practices and technologies in the separate economic sectors, including the so-called “clean production”.

The Clean Industry Centre offers the following services:

- Financial evaluations of eco-damages
- Training courses and consultations in:
 - Developing environment management systems (ISO 14001 and EMAS);
 - Developing sustainable production plans;
 - Implementing legislative requirements related to chemical usage, climate change, waste managements, air, water pollution etc.;
 - Determining carbon footprint of production activities.
- Information on European requirements and good practices concerning environment by issuing a regular e-newsletter entitled Industry and Environment directed towards managers and experts from enterprises, sector and regional industrial organizations.

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EMPLOYER'S INTERESTS PROTECTION

The Employer's Interests Protection Center at BIA conducts analyses, expert opinions and proposals in the field of tax, labour and social security legislation.

Representatives from the centre participate in the National Council for Tripartite Cooperation, the National Tax Policy Council at the Ministry of Finance, National Institute for Conciliation and Arbitration, the Supervisory Board of the National Social Security Institute, National Council for Encouragement of Employment, the Consultative Council at the National Employment Agency, National Council on Working Conditions etc.

The center offers Bulgarian employers assistance in resolving company financial and economic issues related to taxation, social security relations and labour disputes. Numerous cases of controversial interpretations of tax, social security and labour legislation implementation, as well as the related provisions have been resolved with the experts help.



The Center offers the following services:

- ▶ Consultations on tax legislation issues, Labour Code, Social Security Code, Occupational Health and Safety Act, as well as the subordinate legislation governing their implementation;
- ▶ Consultations on employment legislation and encouraging measures for employers;
- ▶ Expertise and mediation in collective bargaining and in resolving collective labour disputes.

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SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES



Rendering assistance for the development and protection of the small and medium-sized enterprises' interests is a priority for BIA.

Participating in various consultative bodies at national level, BIA influences some of the ruling decisions concerning SME's activities.

Historically, BIA has been playing an important coordinating role in developing regulatory documents, encouraging and establishing SMEs.

Despite the planning system governing investments in 1980s, BIA introduced for the first time SMEs financing based on effectiveness in order

to encourage technological update. This activity resulted in the establishment of over 600 SMEs in early 1990s.

BIA played a crucial part in the establishment of the Bulgarian SMEs Promotion Agency, as well as the adoption

Some of BIA's activities in fostering SMEs include:

- › Carrying out analyses and issuing forecasts for separate economic sectors development;
- › Assisting the development of sector development strategies;
- › Providing information about legislation amendments, regulatory provisions, market environment etc.;
- › Providing consultations on how to start up a business;
- › Consulting SMEs in various activities;
- › Fostering SMEs production export by providing market information, international contacts and participation in trade fairs and exhibitions;
- › Providing methodological assistance and participation in the implementation of European and other SMEs-directed international projects and programmes;
- › Professional training of company staff in a wide range of activities.

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INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS



International Economic Relations Center may assist you with:

► **Product Marketing and Business Contacts with Bulgarian Partners**

Marketing information involves targeting of new customers and understanding the

position of prospective clients. IERC offers a variety of services:

1. Finding appropriate business partners, preliminary conversations;
 2. Marketing of goods and services, evaluations
 3. Trade and industrial statistics;
 4. Analyses on different branches of Bulgarian economy on demand;
 5. Organization of presentations and meetings.
- **Investment consulting, support in mergers and acquisitions**
- **Customs and import/export regime consultations**
Market Access; Customs duties and quotas; Trade Defense Instruments, Consulting on off-set deals.
- **Credit Reports and Competitive Intelligence of Bulgarian Companies**
Credit reports provide the information necessary to make better credit decisions. Our standard report may include:
1. Registration, profile, ownership, changes, Balance Sheets, Income Statements, Financial Analyses Ratios, liabilities;
 2. "Soft" information from media sources, annotations;
 3. Connections with other companies or persons;
 4. Unwritten information about a company, reputation.
- **The Center maintains buy/sell database, enquiries made by Bulgarian and foreign companies**
Our experts participate in: Enterprise Europe Network, Working Group Internationalisation, Sector groups Women Entrepreneurship, Environment, Agrofood. National Contact Point "Access to Finance" in Horizon 2020.

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INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS & PROGRAMMES



The International Organizations and Programmes Center was established in 1993 marking the beginning of active planning, developing and carrying out international projects funded by various programmes and in collaboration with European and Bulgarian partners.

Some of the center's main activities include the following:

- ▶ **Providing BIA members with information** about EU requirements concerning Bulgarian business
- ▶ **Assisting BIA members in the European social dialogue** including by raising possibilities for sector organizations to participate in European sector federations' activities.
- ▶ **Applying good European practices in various fields including the following:**
 - Online training systems in the field of quality management and occupational health and safety;
 - Establishing occupational health services with the employers' organizations;
 - Boosting green energy production enterprises;
 - Change management in industrial relations;
 - Flexicurity and social dialogue development in CEE countries;
 - Implementing 'serious games' as a human resource management tool.

The center coordinates BIA's collaboration with international organizations such as:

- ▶ **BUSINESSEUROPE** – Confederation of European business and its members – national business organizations from 35 European countries;
- ▶ **International Labour Organization (ILO)** and ILO International Training Center in Turin;
- ▶ **International Employers' Organization.**

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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING



The Vocational Education and Training Center at BIA was established in 1998 and is a nationally acknowledged, license holder, training organization for carrying out activities for professional qualification in full professions or parts of professions.

Experts from the center take an active part at all levels of tripartite cooperation in working out human resources development policies including workforce qualification and re-qualification in line with the new European labour market requirements.

The VET center has implemented numerous projects, fully or partly funded by national and European programmes.

The VET center at BIA offers the following:

- ▶ Vocational training in 35 professions and over 60 positions issuing nationally recognized certificate. All licensed programmes include modules for acquiring basic skills such as foreign languages, occupational health and safety at work, information technologies, communication skills, team work etc.
- ▶ Developing projects on different programmes upon employer's requests;
- ▶ Seminar on topical issues;
- ▶ Consultations in the field of qualification and human resources development, as well as the implementation of occupational health and safety management systems OHSAS 18001;
- ▶ Company trainings at the workplace or away upon employer's request, including trainings for professional qualification in full professions or parts of professions, in company training focused on optimizing the managerial skills of teams at different management levels;
- ▶ Training courses for unemployed in all ongoing programmes of the Employment Agency.


All training courses can be carried out around the country with the assistance of the well-developed partner network of BIA's regional and sector structures.

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COMPUTER TRAINING



The Computer Training Center at BIA was established in 2002 and since 2003 it has been licensed by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET) as a national training center.

The instructors are experts who hold international certificates and have rich experience in adult teaching, as well as in developing and offering e-training courses.

The clients are state institutions and big Bulgarian and international companies.



Cisco Academy

In 2001 the Center became one of the first regional Cisco academies in Bulgaria, part of Cisco's global network of academies, which are training specialists in the network program CCNA (Cisco certified network associates). In 2002, the academy was the first in Bulgaria to offer training for network professionals, the CCNP course, and since 2012 it has been a certified Instructor Training Center.

In 2003 Cisco Academy with BIA proved to be one of the leading academies both nationally and worldwide as one of its instructors was awarded the prize "Best instructor in Bulgaria" and was awarded "Best trainee in the world" at an annual meeting later that year of Cisco Academies from Europe, Middle East and Africa which was held in South Africa. In 2004 the Academy was awarded for best management of network academy.

Partnership with Microsoft

Since 2002 the Computer Training Center has been an authorized Microsoft training and testing center for the "Microsoft Office Specialist" (MOS) program.

European certificates

Since 2006 the center has been authorized to administer tests for obtaining the European computer certification – IT card.

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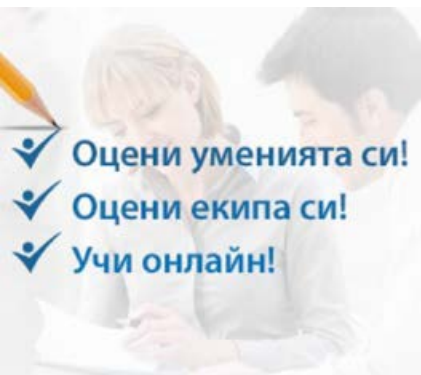
Human potential is the most important corporate asset and key factor for achieving effectiveness, economic growth and competitiveness. This is why more and more companies have resorted to developing their own competency models and have been applying a competence-based approach to the decision-taking process concerning recruitment, human resource motivation, training and development.

In order to meet the real business' needs and provide modern human resource management models, the Bulgarian Industrial Association has developed a workforce competence assessment system, MyCompetence. It has been developed in a partnership with CITUBE and Podkrepa Confederation of Labour within a project under Human Resources Development Operational Programme, co-funded by the European Social Fund and the Republic of Bulgaria in line with agreement BG051PO001-2.1.06.

MyCompetence contains the following:

- Professional standards and competence classifiers (sector models) for over 20 economic sectors;
- Over 1 800 competencies and 9 000 behavioural indicators drawn from the practice;
- Workplace behaviours which can be observed and measured in order to testify to the level a given competency is mastered;
- Descriptions of the requirements for 460 key positions;
- Methodological guidelines, competence classifiers, platform for developing company competency profiles and competence assessment cards for key job positions;
- Self-assessment tool and various competence assessment tools (specialized tests and questionnaires);
- E-learning platform encompassing over 20 online courses;
- Links to similar systems, classifiers and generic libraries of competencies in other countries;
- Links to the National Classification of Occupations and Positions, National Qualification Framework, a List of Occupations and Specialties in Vocational Education, a List of Accredited Majors in Higher Education, a List of Regulated Occupations in Bulgaria etc.
- Sector analyses of the technological development trends and human capital current state;
- Results of national surveys concerning labour market and workforce competence.





Potential users of MyCompetence are:

- ▶ **Employers**, managers and human resource management experts who would like to enhance their companies' effectiveness, competitiveness and productivity by implementing a competence-based approach to management;
- ▶ **Employees** who would like to assess, compare and develop their competencies in accordance with the employers' expectations;
- ▶ **Career development seekers** who could undertake a self-assessment in order to define their professional aptitude for a given job;
- ▶ **Students** who would like to learn the requirements and assess their suitability for a given position in a given sector;
- ▶ **Training institutions** (vocational schools, universities, VET centers and other learning providers) which could compare their syllabi and educational standards with the actual expectations and requirements of the business to the training of key job holders;
- ▶ **State institutions** which deal with forecasting and planning of labour market development measures and workforce skills.

MyCompetence is maintained and updated by the National Competence Assessment Network which comprises 20 Sector Skills Committees, 10 Regional Competence Assessment Centers, 460 trained and certified competence assessors from 260 pilot enterprises and 15 leading consulting agencies in the field of human resource management and development. The overall work of the National Competence Assessment Network is being methodologically guided by the National Competence Assessment Center and governed by a National Competence Assessment Council.

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LEGAL SERVICES

The legal advisers at BIA offer highly qualified legal aid both to the association itself and to its members and partners. The center prepares expert positions on regulation which directly impacts employers' interests.

Services:

- › Consultations on current company legal issues;
- › Preparing documents for company registration and entry into the commercial register;
- › Legal aid in realizing investments in Bulgaria;
- › Carrying out a company legal analysis;
- › Consultation in labour law;
- › Drawing up contracts in line with the Obligations and Contracts Act and the Commerce Act;
- › Consultations and preparation of documents for setting up nonprofit organizations under the Law on Non-Profit Legal Entities;
- › Issuing internationally valid force majeure certificates. The certificate grants an enterprise protection when damages are incurred due to insurmountable force and under agreement clauses on discharge of liability for delaying or failing to perform a commercial deal due to force majeure circumstances.

Types of legal services:

- › by subscription;
- › in case of need with the price being open to negotiation.

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COURT OF ARBITRATION



The contemporary world has long ago discovered the advantages of alternative dispute resolution. It is an alternative to court litigation which is clumsier and more expensive everywhere in the world and particularly in Bulgaria.

The Court of Arbitration at BIA guarantees high quality in dispute settlement due to its competent panel of arbitrators which include former Constitutional Court judges and some of the most distinguished scholars and renowned practitioners.

The Court of Arbitration at BIA places an emphasis upon intellectual property rights disputes. To this end, some of the best experts in the field have been working at the court.

Its statute introduces legal procedures on mediation for the first time in Bulgaria. Mediation offers a way to settle out of court with the help of a mediator who is an expert in the field. This not only saves money but

also resolves disputes in the best possible way, for it is common knowledge that “even the worst settlement is better than a court ruling.”

If you seek a remedy for a violation of your right and you want a prompt and final solution of a dispute, you can resort to arbitration. In this one-instance process you will obtain an award enjoying the same force as the decision of a state court. Based on the arbitrator’s award, you can also obtain enforcement abroad under the New York Convention.

Make the intelligent choice!

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INTERNET CENTER

The Internet centre, **BIAnet**, was established by the Bulgarian Industrial Association in 1997 to assist the business in Bulgaria in the field of information technologies.

Its clients encompass companies and NGOs from the whole economic spectrum.

Based on the best technologies and software instruments available, the center offers a wide range of services and consultations including the following:

- Unique and modern website design and development;
- Data base design;
- Intelligent business management systems;
- Specialized business solutions;
- Search Engine Optimization;
- Advertising on the Internet;
- Banner design;
- Registration and maintenance of domains, hosting and corporate electronic mails.

Each and every client of the center is paid special attention to and is being approached individually by highly qualified specialists with the ultimate aim of reaching the best possible solution. All the client has to do is choose a service they need and enjoy using it.



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BIA's public communication is carried out by the Public Relations Center and the Parliamentary Secretary of the association.

The Public Relations Center maintains BIA's contacts with different interested parties such as the media, community, governmental institutions, NGOs, members and employees of BIA. Its main objective is to facilitate communication with everyone who is interested in BIA's activities and goals, as well as to provide the public with up-to-date and timely information about the initiatives, positions and priorities of the association.

The Public Relations Center activities can be separated in several groups:

- Collecting, analyzing and summarizing information which could be of interest to BIA's team and members;
- Preparing online newsletters on key topics and fields;
- Organizing press conferences and other public events;
- Conducting specialized training courses in communication skills etc.
- Maintaining contacts with parties interested in BIA's activities, including the media
- Maintaining BIA's corporate web-channels, including the official website, social media groups, project and initiatives websites etc.

The Parliamentary Secretary at BIA assists members of the association to enter into contact with representatives of the Parliamentary Committees with the National Assembly and take part in their meetings. The Parliamentary Secretary monitors the legislative process and provides information about current bills in the field of industrial policy, labour and social security legislation, environmental legislation etc.

The Parliamentary Secretary prepares and distributes the following:

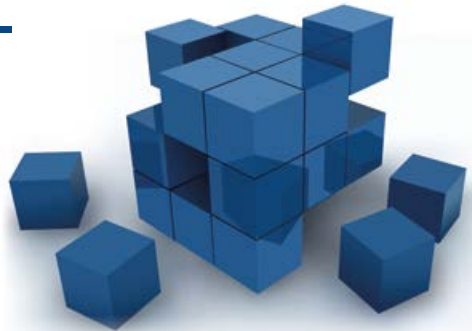
- Preselected information packages concerning the agenda and decisions of the National Assembly, Parliamentary Committees and the Council of Ministers on a weekly basis;
- Information on ongoing legislative procedures;
- Extracts from the minutes of the National Assembly upon request;
 - Analyses of the Council of Ministers and the National Assembly legislative activity on a regular basis.



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- **Parliamentary Secretary** – Tel: +3592 932 09 45
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ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES



The center called “Organizational activities and collective members” organizes and coordinates all activities directly related to supporting, strengthening and developing regional and sector organizations, as well as other collective members of BIA. Some of its daily work includes:

- › Coordinating interaction between BIA’s collective members and the other centers of the association;
- › Writing letters of recommendation for tender participation and Issuing certificates for delegating representative rights concerning all forms of social dialogue
- › Providing information and coordinating participation of BIA’s collective members in writing expert opinions and proposals for regulation amendments, regimes etc.

The center facilitates the following activities:

- › Establishing and developing regional, sector, cluster and other business organizations, including yielding assistance in preparation of startup documentation;
- › Enhancing collective members’ administrative capacity and expertise by organizing various forums and training courses;
- › Developing strategic documents and carrying out sector and regional policies for protecting the industrial interests of BIA’s collective members and their company members;
- › Developing and running externally financed projects;
- › Implementing projects which foster new working methods and processes to boost competitiveness, making use of current partnership networks;
- › Fostering partnership between BIA’s collective members and representatives from the central and local authorities, as well as their participation in various bodies, committees and working groups at sector and regional levels.

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

BIA clearly understands that investing in community can solve important issues and serves as a potential for business development and entrepreneurship in Bulgaria.

In order to apply the fundamental principles of corporate social responsibility (CSR), the Global Compact was launched in 1999 – a voluntary initiative bringing together companies, UN agencies, trade unions, business and nongovernmental organizations to support sustainable growth and civic responsibility. The ten underlying principles of the Global Compact initiative aim at implementing responsible business practices in the field of human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption.

The Global Compact in Bulgaria was established in 2003 under the aegis of President Georgi Parvanov. Since 2011 BIA has been an official member of the network.

The experts at BIA dealing with CSR issues carry out the following activities and services:

- › Setting out the CSR objectives and priorities of BIA;
- › Communicating social responsibility principles and raising awareness of the its importance among BIA's members;
- › Assisting BIA's members in the decision-taking process concerning investments in the community;
- › Planning, marketing, and implementing CSR initiatives and campaigns of BIA and its members;
- › Collecting, summarizing and distributing information about CSR initiatives to BIA's members;
- › Conducting CSR training courses for individuals, entrepreneurs, employees, state and nongovernmental experts, PR specialists etc.



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BIC CAPITAL MARKET LTD.

BIC Capital Market Ltd. is 100-percent owned by the Bulgarian Industrial Association and is specialized in providing a wide range of business information, economic analyses, investment consultancy. It provides:

› **Bulgarian Enterprises Information System (BEIS):**

BEIS comprises standardized profiles of over 40 000 leading Bulgarian companies including full contact details, information about the management and related persons, major shareholders and partners; financial data and indicators, summarized stock exchange information, media publications etc, BEIS clients can make use of certain online services upon request and obtain information for instance about market shares, contact details of certain sectors an/or products, foreign entities research etc.

› **Training and consultations on production processes optimization in line with REFA–Germany methodology**

BIC Capital Market Ltd. and BIA are the official representatives of REFA–Germany in Bulgaria. The basic course offered is entitled “Optimization of production processes company management in market economy” The successful graduates of the course are awarded REFA certificates which significantly boost their competitiveness and may be used as a reference in their work with their German partners. The course is suitable for managers and leading specialists in the field of corporate organization and management from all economic spheres.

› **Bulgarian industry reports and sector analyses**

Upon request, BIC Capital Market Ltd. offers sector analyses and industry reports prepared on a quarterly and annual basis. The analyses contain information about the main development trends in the respective economic sector, sales data, production, import, export, as well as information about major producers, exporters/importers, key foreign and domestic markets.

› **Business Industry Capital daily electronic newsletter**

Business Industry Capital provides its subscribers with a daily review of the Bulgarian business press, economic indicators, stock exchange quotations, up-to-date information about privatization and other processes, information about BIA's initiatives. The issue is distributed via e-mail, both in Bulgarian and English, to over 24 000 Bulgarian companies and over 3 500 foreign subscribers, including commercial representatives, investment companies and analysts, the media etc.

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BSC COMMERCECONSULT LTD.

BSC Commerceconsult Ltd. is a licensed customs agent. It was registered in 1998 and is 100 percent owned by the Bulgarian Industrial Association.

The main business activity of the company is issuing and legalizing Certificates of Origin as well as other international documents on behalf of the Bulgarian Industrial Association. Bulgarian exporter-companies need those documents in order to do their business and to ensure an unimpeded release of their stock by the customs in the particular importer-country.

BSC Commerceconsult offers the following services:

- › Issuing Certificates of Origin, force majeure certificates and other international commercial documents.
- › Full customs service including representation before the customs authorities and obtaining all documents needed, such as certificates, permits, licenses etc. from ministries and other administrative bodies.
- › Consultations on domestic commercial matters in Bulgaria and in other countries.
- › Translation and legalization of documents.

BSC Commerceconsult highly-qualified staff can guarantee excellent service to all its current and future clients by saving them valuable time and facilitating the enduring process of meeting all the requirements related to stock export and import.

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