

The Bulgarian ICT Cluster



The Bulgarian ICT Cluster is an organization of the Bulgarian information and communication technology (ICT) business. The ICT Cluster is a result of a 3-year intensive networking, cooperation and collaboration between both Bulgarian and foreign organizations, as well as individual professionals and experts in the ICT area on, the National ICT Competitiveness Strategy of Bulgaria. The ICT Cluster was formally established in December 2004 as a platform for open exchange of information and ideas equally accessible to both small and big companies, and young and experienced professionals. The unifying principle is to utilize information and communication technologies as a vehicle to enable economic growth and social well-being. The final objective is to establish an active information society in Bulgaria.

The Bulgarian ICT Cluster works in four strategic directions to promote knowledge, best practices and trends for and through the development of information technologies and to encourage the efforts of all stakeholders and organizations in developing a knowledge society and to ensure access to information about ongoing initiatives to all actors in the ICT community. These directions are:

- State ICT Policies and Practices
- Market Environment for ICT
- Education and Professional development
- Branding, Positioning and Promotion

The ICT Cluster concentrates, builds upon and operationalizes the collective public-private work evidenced in the National ICT Competitiveness Strategy.

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USEFUL LINKS

InvestBulgaria Agency
investbg.government.bg
Bulgarian Investment Information Network (BIIN)
www.iinbulgaria.com



BULGARIA

AT THE EUROPEAN BUSINESS SUMMIT

WELCOME TO STAND N



Bulgarian International Business Association

The **Bulgarian International Business Association /BIBA/** was founded in 1992 as a non-profit organization representing the interests of foreign investors in Bulgaria by maintaining an ongoing dialogue with the Bulgarian government and all official institutions in the country. At present 275 companies from 25 countries are members of BIBA, most of them being the largest investors in the country.

BIBA acts as an engine for the improvement of the investment and business climate in Bulgaria. BIBA has introduced clear rules of business conduct and takes an active part in the legislative and regulatory process, it furthers the dialogue between the government and business by providing regular assessments of the business climate, BIBA encourages the introduction of new business ethics and involves the business in tackling the problems of society.

Over the last two years BIBA concentrated its activity within the context of the country's accession to the European Union and the competitiveness requirements. BIBA has prepared strategic documents, such as:

- BIBA's positions on the road to the European Union.
- A strategy for the development of information technologies.

BIBA has focused its attention towards training the young to achieve success in business. BIBA has given an opportunity to the students to get an idea of the best business practices and to network with leading managers and experts in various fields, hence to establish contacts which are going to be useful in their future careers.

BIBA-EABG: THE VOICE OF BULGARIAN BUSINESS

The Bulgarian International Business Association (BIBA) and the Employer's Association in Bulgaria (EABG) are in the process of merging, which will be finalized in the next two months. The new employers' organization will be with the widest representation of the economy of Bulgaria and the most effective in improving the business climate, in increasing the competitiveness and in expanding the opportunities for its members for integration in the Internal EU market through imposing the best international business practices.

Throughout the course of their existence BIBA and EABG were established as two independent business organizations as regards the institutional and financial aspect of their activity which perform their activity solely in the interest of their members. Over the last years the two organizations joined their efforts to improve the business environment by playing an active role in the work of the Council for Economic Growth. The two organizations were jointly represented and during the discussions of the labor and social security legislation within the National Council for Tripartite Cooperation as well as during the preparatory work for the conclusion of the Pact for economic and social cooperation between the government, trade unions and the employers organizations.

The two associations had to unite their efforts also in view of Bulgaria's upcoming accession to the European Union and the requirement to respond to the respective recognition criteria for the employers organizations. In this respect a consolidated representation of BIBA in the EABG as industry representative and large business in the country would not be questionable.

The new organization will be unique mixture between the companies, bearing the best business practices (BIBA) and local experience, sector/branch chambers and national recognition as a social partner (EABG). Cumulatively the new organization will represent more than 450 000 employees and a relative share of the GDP amounting to about 2/3, covering all sectors of the economy. After January 1st 2007 the new organization will aim predominantly at representing Bulgarian industrialists and employers in the EU.



EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATION OF BULGARIA

The **Employers' Association of Bulgaria /EABG/** is an organization of large and medium-sized private companies in Bulgaria. Taking into account the structure of the holding companies and the branch chambers the members of the EABG are over 3000 and jointly they do provide jobs to over 250,000 people covering thus all sectors of the economy. The association was set up in 2000 with the objective to:

- protect the interests of the employers before the legislative and executive authorities, the local administration and trade unions;
- enhance the competitiveness of domestic goods and services on the international market;
- assist the establishment of a favorable tax and investment environment in the country;
- promote good business practices, ethics and corporate responsibility of the business community;
- stimulate economic cooperation with foreign organizations and partners and to encourage new investments

The EABG is officially acknowledged by the government as representative at national level and as a social partner.