

# I can

Information review: October 2015

## BULGARIA

Important changes were introduced in 2009 on the basis of the Employment Promotion Act, whereby employees are also allowed to make use of active labour market policies (programmes) and vocational training. The introduction of the training voucher is a result of such a change. One of the main challenge was to increase the people accessing training and life-long learning activities. For instance, in the period 2006-2010 the participation in life-long learning in Bulgaria was the lowest in the EU: it fluctuated at around 1.2–1.3%. The introduction of the practice helped to increase the capacity of training centres to provide ad-hoc training for employees and generated growth: many training centres increased their personnel in order to cope with the training demand.

### Name of the PES

Агенция по заетостта  
National Employment Agency

### When was the practice implemented?

2009 – 2013

### Which organisation was involved in its implementation?

Accredited training institutions (public, private and third sector) provided training for all participants.

### Which social groups were targeted by the practice?

- Employees
- Self-employed

### What were the practice's main objectives?

The practice 'I can' increased the adaptability and the competitiveness of dependent workers and those who are self-employed.

### What activities were carried out?

Participants were granted training vouchers, which give them the opportunity to increase their skills and knowledge through life-long learning and a chance for career development. Two types of training were subsidised: key competences (the training courses that can be selected range from IT to languages to skills related to the participant's profession) and training/education to obtain a higher vocational degree. In order to use the voucher, the employee contacted the local PES office, which assisted him/her in choosing the training as well as in finding a training provider. The voucher was used on the condition that training takes place outside of working hours, in the employee's free time. Each beneficiary received one voucher for a professional qualification and one voucher for key competences. The beneficiaries selected which training to participate in from a list of accredited organisations.

### What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?

Management was carried out within the National Employment Agency by a project administration team of 10 people. The operation was carried out at regional level by experts in regional employment service directorates (9 people) and experts in labour office directorates (105 people). The project team within the local Employment Agency handled the selection of beneficiaries. The training provider submitted payment claims to the local PES office when the training was completed. Upon the PES's approval, the training provider received reimbursement for the eligible costs incurred.

### Source(s) of funding

National budget (tax revenue)  
European Social Fund

What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?	<p><b>People reached:</b> As of December 2012, 11 627 people completed the practice since its inception. During the whole of 2012, 2 868 people took part in the practice, this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 349 people in training for a professional qualification</li> <li>▶ 2 519 people training for key competences.</li> </ul> <p><b>Products:</b> Training vouchers: the voucher for training had the status of a banknote, with a fixed nominal value in Bulgarian lev (BGN), entitling the holder to training. By way of security, the vouchers have serial numbers and assured protection. Only the Employment Agency had the right to provide vouchers for training. The nominal value of the voucher depended on the type and duration of training selected.</p>
What outcomes have been identified?	<p>As of December 2012:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 11 627 people had completed the practice since its inception. Some 2 451 of them had acquired/raised their level of professional qualification and 9 176 completed the course for the acquisition of key competences.</li> </ul>
What are the lessons learnt and success factors?	<p>The findings of the practice evaluation report show that both training providers and participants were satisfied with the practice and that namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Participants gained access to vouchers and training within 4 months on average, while a similar practice, 'Qualification for employees', had longer waiting times (at least 5 months);</li> <li>▶ The introduction of the practice helped to increase the capacity of training centres to provide ad-hoc training for employees and was also generating growth: many training centres have increased their personnel in order to cope with the training demand;</li> <li>▶ Employers showed active interest in improving the qualifications of their employees, because they saw the practice as a way of increasing the competitiveness of the company. Employers willingly cooperated with training centres to inform employees of possible training opportunities.</li> </ul>
More information on the practice	<p><a href="http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/empl_portal/weesp/BG-2.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/empl_portal/weesp/BG-2.pdf</a></p>



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