



International Mediation Institute

PROFESSIONAL MEDIATION WORLDWIDE

Promoting Consensus and Access to Justice

www.IMImediation.org

Sporazumenia Association

IMI Certified Mediator Training Program

The Organisation

Legal name	Sporazumenia Association
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Website	www.sporazumenia.com
Person completing application	Sevdalina Aleksandrova, President, tel. 359885792525
Program delivery	The program and its assessment may be delivered in person, online, or a mix of both.
Locations and languages	Bulgaria, in the Bulgarian language.

1. Registration

If there is a requirement within a jurisdiction that a training course should be registered, then it should be complied with by the training provider, and the training course should be registered.

Year formed, and under laws of what country/ies	Bulgaria 2008
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Training course registered in accordance with jurisdiction requirements	Yes
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2. Course Content

Course content can be divided into Knowledge Development and Skills Development topics.

The essential KNOWLEDGE topics that should be included in any training program are mediation principles; the roles of legal counsel and representatives; an overview of negotiation and conflict resolution theory; mediator ethics.

The essential SKILL topics that should be covered, demonstrated, and practiced in any training program are forms of listening skills and communication strategies, process management skills (including the use of joint and private meetings), negotiation strategies and skills to manage the content of the dispute, and ways of responding to parties' diverse behaviours.

Attach your course outline	See three variants in annexes: for fully in-person, fully online, and hybrid course.
Mediation principles - neutrality, voluntary nature, confidentiality, party self-determination, process	Module 2 of Level 1, early in the training
The roles of legal counsel and representatives	Module 1 of Level 2
Overview of negotiation and conflict resolution theory	Module 3 of Level 1
Mediator ethics, including appropriate local ethical standards	Modules 2 and 6 of Level 1, and Modules 1 and 8 of Level 2
Forms of listening skills and communication strategies	Module 5 of Level 1, extensively covered

Process management skills, including the use of joint and private meetings	Module 4 of Level 1
Negotiation strategies and skills to manage the content of the dispute	Modules 3 and 4 of Level 1
Ways of responding to the diverse behaviours of the parties	Modules 2, 3, 4 and 5 of Level 2

3. Competency Framework

A training course must have a ‘competency framework’ which clearly and concisely sets out the core competencies that an effective mediator should possess. This framework should be consistent with the content and skills requirements of the course as set out under Section 2 of the guidelines.

Attach competency framework	See annex.
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4. Course Duration

For a course to cover adequately the necessary content using appropriate methodologies, (both of which are set out in these guidelines), courses should have a substantial number of training hours being not less than 40 hours. This does not include pre-course preparation, lunch and breaks.

Course duration	60 training hours, according to the Bulgarian law
Asynchronous learning Up to 10% of the minimum 40 hours’ course may be delivered asynchronously. Applies to programs that are conducted partially or entirely online.	60 training hours total, 54 hours synchronous, 6 hours asynchronous, plus 6 more bonus hours videos and materials

5. Group Size

It is recommended that courses have a maximum class size of 30 students.

Maximum class size	21 participants
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7. General Teaching Approach

Mediator skills training courses should be participatory, interactive and learner focused. To ensure this, a variety of teaching methodologies should be used, including lecturing, videos, interactive exercises, individual work, group discussion, talking in pairs, and role-playing.

As a guideline, for the practical part of any course, that is designed to teach the process and skills to be an effective mediator, the following percentage of time should be spent on these different approaches to training delivery: Lecturing/knowledge input/presentation – approximately 10%; Exercises and discussion – approximately 40%; Role-playing, coaching and feedback– approximately 50%.

The trainer-student ratio should range between an ideal of 1 trainer to every 6 participants; to a maximum of 1 trainer to every 10 participants.

Lecturing, knowledge input, presentation	<p>The full mediation course is 60 training hours, equal to 45 astronomic hours (of which 8 hours theory, 15 hours practical exercises, 21 hours simulated mediations (including 13 hours exam mediations), 1 hour written test, 1 hour interview).</p> <p>This makes 18% lecturing, and presentations, (also including comprehensive discussions, while introducing each topic, and while reflecting on the experience of participants related to this topic),</p> <p>33% practical exercises, (only include the exercsises in couples, small groups and in big groups, and the analyses accompanying them),</p> <p>47% simulated mediations (including exam mediations),</p> <p>2% test.</p>
Exercises and discussion	33% practical exercises

Role-playing, coaching, and feedback	47% simulated mediations (including exam mediations)
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8. Participant Materials

When preparation prior to the course is required, participants should receive comprehensive materials in sufficient time to allow them to prepare adequately. As a guideline, it is suggested that this should be no later than two weeks in advance of the course.

In a similar way, when participants are required to prepare for their roles in advance of the role plays, role play confidential briefs should be supplied in sufficient time to allow role players to prepare. As a guideline, it is suggested that this should be no later than one week in advance of the course.

If courses are designed with no pre-course preparation required, this guideline does not apply.

In what format and how far in advance do participants receive general course materials and confidential role play briefs?	Participants receive a short material with useful information about mediation and general instructions for the roleplays at least 10 days before the course.
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9. Setting up Role Plays

Role plays are used for participants to practise the wide range of mediation skills in a simulated environment and also for participants to have the benefit of feedback and coaching from an experienced mediator, acting as a coach. Accordingly, role plays should be planned and run to allow the participants the maximum opportunity to learn.

Each role play in a course has a maximum of six persons for a two party mediation.	Yes
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Mediation time slots within role plays are a minimum of 45 minutes	Yes
At least 50% of role plays are supervised by an experienced coach/trainer, and a coach is present for at least 50% of the role playing time	Yes
Where role plays are used as assessments, they are supervised by the assessor or a course manager 100% of the role play time	Yes
Coaches are rotated among groups and participants	Yes
Coaches and trainers who coach a participant are not involved in subsequent assessment of that participants	Other
Role plays during the course ensure participant work with the widest range of fellow participants as possible	Yes
All participants mediate the same number of times in role plays	Yes

Role plays are varied in subject matter and allow for practice of different stages of the mediation process	Yes
Comment where guidelines are not met	Trainers and coaches who participated in the training also are present at the assessment, but the assessment is also made by at least 2 experienced assessors who have not attended the training. The trainers are observing the performance in some of the mediations in order to be able to share specific observations or make short discussions with the group about areas of good performance and areas for improvement in order to help them advance their skills. This is applicable as the practical exam with assessed roleplays is in two different days - Day 3 of Level 1 and Day 3 in Level 2. Such analyses are made after the first part of the exam.

10. Providing Feedback

Participants learn not only by practising the skills of mediators but also from receiving feedback from experienced mediators acting in the role of coaches throughout the course. Training programmes must provide opportunities for feedback to participants. This feedback should be delivered using a competency framework to ensure consistency of approach to feedback by coaches trained in delivering effective feedback (see coaches' guidelines).

How is performance feedback given to participants on your course?	Performance feedback is given to participants in each 14 mediations they conduct during the training. They have a personal coach for each mediation. The feedback is given based on the attached Mediators Competence Framework Requirements.
Attach course feedback forms or guidance	See annex.

6 and 11. Online programs

<p>Course design</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The course is delivered as close as possible to the in-person training and provides the same amount of practice. 2. We use zoom platform for the synchronous part. 3. We engage participants through a dynamic set of exercises, discussions and mediations - by using Breakout rooms and various forms of small groups exercises, or exercises in front of the group, also screen sharing, video sharing, group work and sharing of their "project results" by participants, which ensure that they are fully engaged during the entire course. 4. All participants are required to participate actively by camera and microphone - and they are fully informed about that in advance. Exceptions are only allowed for health purposes or because of internet connection challenges, only for very short amounts of time (minutes to about an hour). 5. We assist participants technically during the entire training - by an initial session, which is held in advance of the training (in another day, or in the same day before the training session), and throughout the entire training. We always have a team member available to help them. 6. We provide breaks more often than in the in-person trainings (at least once in every 60 to 90 minutes).
<p>Provisions for participants not able to attend all 40 hours</p>	<p>There is no way to complete the course without attending 90 to 100% of the live training. If they are not able to attend, then they are required to attend a next training and take all the necessary hours.</p>
<p>Preparing the participants</p>	<p>We set clear requirements at the moment participants apply for the course, we also talk to them on the phone to further explain the requirements and to help them understand that they need a microphone, camera and stable internet connection.</p>

	<p>We assist them through an initial session for technical guidance (in advance of the training the previous day or in the day of the training before the training hours).</p> <p>We also support every participant having technical difficulties - we use a separate breakout room, or viber, where a member of our team helps them with any technical issues.</p> <p>We also always have a double channel communication - such as zoom and viber - for emergency issues.</p>
Informal meetings	<p>We always announce free workshops with mock mediations. We also provide time before the training, during the training and after that, for the participants to communicate informally - they also have breakout rooms in zoom and viber available for these purposes. Some of them create viber and FB groups with our assistance.</p>
Role-plays for post-course assignment	<p>We understand that this post-course assignment is a new requirement. So, we will always provide opportunity for online participants to make an in-person mediation as part of their assessment or afterwards in front of us - in a special workshop for mock mediations only.</p> <p>Provided that they are unable to participate in such, we will request a video of their in-person mediation according to the criteria set by IMI. We believe that we must not keep these recordings for very long and we would follow any guidance from IMI in this respect.</p>
Written component of post-course assignment	<p>We will require from the participants a statement containing their vision on venue arrangement, their personal approach to building rapport and comparing mediation in-person and online mediations, including based on their personal experience during the training and in the assignments during the course and afterwards. (We always give assignments to be performed in between the course sessions).</p>

Feedback on post-course assignment	We will provide feedback on the mediation - on areas of excellence and areas for improvement - with specific skills and steps to take. We will provide them with feedback on their written assignment mentioning some general rules as to the venue, rapport, and special suggestions regarding their approach.
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11. Performance Assessment and Accreditation

If a course is designed to assess, certify or accredit a participant as having the necessary skills and knowledge to mediate a dispute competently, then it must contain an actual assessment of the participant's mediator competence, as compared to its own competency framework, developed under these guidelines. In relation to assessment of a mediator's skills, this should be done using a participant's performance during a role play.

Does your course provide an assessment of a participant's competence as a mediator, and if so, how is this process undertaken?	Yes. According to the Bulgarian Law, the assessment consists of 1 hour written test, an interview on theory, and simulated mediations. In our course, participants are assessed based on their performance in 3 different types of mediations, so that they could show different abilities in the context of mediation or co-mediation. The Assessment is based on the Mediators Competence framework, where clear criteria are established. Each mediation is assessed by an individual assessor for each group, and the assessors rotate so that one mediator is assessed by different assessors. The final assessment is made as a calculation of the average grades by each assessor. We apply a scale for assessment for the fulfillment of each of the Requirements in the Mediators Competence Framework.
Does your course provide an assessment of a participant's knowledge as a mediator, and if so, how?	Yes, they are assessed by 1 hour written test with 50 multiple-choice questions, and a short interview on a random topic from all theory in the course.

Process of appointing assessors on a course	The assessors we appoint usually have 10 years of experience as mediators, some of them have 3 years, but in this case they have either additional experience as trainers or professionals in conflict resolution. They also have at least of 10 years' experience as lawyers, psychologists, HR's, and other professions, usually dealing with conflicts as part of their professional work.
Clarification of passing criteria. How a student passes or fails this program	Students pass the Test by 64% or more. Students must have at least 18 points of the 30 points system for assessment, which are considered to be the standard level of covered mediators competences. See the document related to assessment, attached below.
Next steps taken, should a student fail.	If students fail on test, they can do it one more time. If they fail on mediations, they should attend the assessment part of the training and make the assessment simulated mediations successfully. They do not pay a fee for this.
Policy documents relating to assessment (optional / if applicable)	See annex.

12. Facilitation of further development as a mediator

While it is accepted that training providers cannot offer actual mediations for all participants, they have an obligation, as far as possible, to facilitate participants' further development as a mediator.

Indicate what your organisation does to facilitate participants' development as mediators	We organize free workshops for exchange of experience an practising mediations and new tools every 2 or 3 months.
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	<p>We also started an initiative called Mediation for all, which is opening a Free Mediation Reception office, where mediators can practice by providing pro bono mediations for parties in small-claim cases and family cases. For maximum 2 sessions, 2 hours each.</p> <p>We also extend the professional exchange meetings and simulations by involving participants have more active role in them and present useful tools from their own professional fields which can be used in mediation.</p> <p>We also make mediation awareness campaigns where we encourage our trained mediators to share their videos, articles and other awareness raising materials.</p> <p>We also organize Open doors providing free consulting as to the suitability of mediation for various cases - we have experts in many different fields.</p>
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13. Complaints and Appeals

All courses should have a clearly set out written complaints policy for participants who are dissatisfied with the quality of the course.

In addition, for those courses that have an assessment element, there should be a clearly set out appeal or review process for participants who are not satisfied with the outcome of their assessment.

Attach complaints and appeals policy	See annex.
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Conflicts of Interest

Please outline what steps you take to avoid any potential conflicts of interest between trainer/coaches/assessors and participants on your course.	We only appoint trainers who do not have any conflict of interests with any of the participants and rotate trainers and assessors as necessary.
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Trainers, Coaches, and Assessors

<p>Anyone seeking to act as a TCA has successfully participated in a mediation training course which meets the requirements set out above.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Where mediator registration is required in a jurisdiction, trainers, coaches and assessors are registered as mediators.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>TCAs have conducted at least two actual mediations of at least four hours' duration in each of the preceding three years before being appointed. Once appointed, they conduct two actual mediations of at least four-hours duration per year AND are able to show that they have maintained continuous professional development (CPD) of six hours per year.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Trainers attend 'train the trainer' training of at least 18 hours, broadly covering topics set out in the IMI guidance notes</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Coaches and assessors undertake a course broadly covering topics set out in the IMI guidance notes	Yes
Trainers deliver at least one basic mediator skills training course or refresher course every two years	Yes
Coaches and assessors coach and/or assess at least four role play sessions over the course of two years.	Yes
On-going feedback is sought from course participants, and given to those delivering the course.	Yes
Comments and/or explanations	Our trainers meet much higher requirements than the above, e.g. each of them had passed more than 60 hours training of trainers and many subsequent courses regarding his/her trainers qualification, and are regularly participating in and delivering other trainings as trainers, such as various

	trainings in dealing with difficult people, negotiations, etc. (at least 2 times a year)
New TCAs are to be observed and given performance feedback by senior colleagues	We usually work with well-experienced colleagues, but when new colleagues are included, they are given detailed instructions on the criteria for giving feedback and are interviewed them after each coached mediation about what went well and what could be improved. We also speak delicately with the participants about their satisfaction with the feedback they received and their needs.
Explain your peer review system for trainers, coaches and assessors	We discuss at least once a day each of the observed mediations, share challenges and take joint decisions on how to proceed. We sometimes organize mediations so that 1 additional coach also attends mediation partly or entirely in order to be able to discuss the coaching, feedback and assessment process.
Attach Train-the-Trainer Program	See annex.
Attach template feedback form	See annex.