



TWINNING NEWS NEAR N.3



25 July 2016

Institution Building Days 2016 – Twinning in the spotlight

The 2016 "Institution Building Days" (IBD) took place in Brussels on 9 and 10 June, with the key-note speech delivered by Commissioner Johannes Hahn.

Besides the 20th anniversary of TAIEX, the other main topic on the agenda was Twinning and the forthcoming simplification of its procedures.



Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations at the opening of the Institution Building Days – 9 June 2016

In-house training

On 8 June 2016, back to back with the IBDs, an in-house training was organised for IPA (Instrument for Pre-accession assistance) and ENI (European Neighbourhood Instrument) Twinning coordinators from EU Delegations/Office, Central Financial and Contracting Entities (CFCEs) and Programme Administration Offices (PAOs). This interactive meeting offered an opportunity to discuss issues related to the daily management of Twinning.

Training for Resident Twinning Advisers

At the end of a month of intense activities, the fourth joint Pre-accession and Neighbourhood RTA training took place in Brussels on 23-24 June 2016. Beneficiary institutions' project leaders or RTA counterparts had also the opportunity to participate in the training.

The previous training had taken place on 3-4 March. It saw an exceptionally large number of participants (63 in total), with 19 RTAs assigned to projects in the IPA Region and 10 in the ENI Region.

The next RTA training is tentatively scheduled for 10 and 11 November 2016.



Third Joint RTA training, 3-4 March 2016, Brussels

All training for RTA include a session during which attendees are encouraged to give visibility to their projects, as well as of the obligation to state in all printed material that these projects are financed by EU funds.

TAIEX and Twinning Activity Report 2015

The Institution Building Unit's Activity Report 2015 was issued on 1st June 2016, including Twinning "Success Stories" from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Ukraine and Algeria. The photo hereunder pictures participants of a vocational training organised by the project "Support to the Employment Service Agency for Implementation of Active Labour Market Measures and Services" (MK10 IB SO 02), one of the selected Twinning "Success stories" featured in the report.



Participants in the "The Power of Design and Craft" pilot action, September 2014, Skopje. [Twinning Activity report 2015](#)

Yearly Conference on Institutional Building held in Azerbaijan on 27th May 2016

On 27th May 2016, the Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan organised its Annual Conference on Institution Building in Baku. The purpose of the conference was to inform current and potential beneficiary administrations and other stakeholders about the implementation of EU Institution Building Instruments. More than 70 participants from Azerbaijani Public Administrations, EU Member States' Embassies, International Organisations, and potential beneficiaries attended the event.



Mr Sahil Babayev, deputy minister of economy Sahil Babayev and Ms Malena Mard, Head of the EU Delegation to Azerbaijan.

Sahil Babayev, the Deputy Minister of Economy gave an overview of the ongoing cooperation between Azerbaijan and the EU. With 43 Twinning projects circulated so far, Azerbaijan is the main user of the Twinning instrument in the Caucasus region and second for ENI East. Ambassador Malena Mard, Head of the EU Delegation, highlighted the excellent cooperation between the EU and Azerbaijan in the framework of institution building activities.



From right to left, Lucia Santuccioni, Twinning Team, DG NEAR, Mr Ruslan Rustamli, Head of Department on Cooperation with International Organisations, Ministry of Economy, Director of the PAO in Azerbaijan, Mr Jeroen Willems - Head of Cooperation - European Union Delegation to the Republic of Azerbaijan

Lucia Santuccioni from the Twinning coordination team in DG NEAR gave an overview of Twinning and TAIEX implementation in the Neighbourhood with a focus on figures related to ENI East beneficiaries.

Training on Twinning in Albania and Montenegro

The Twinning instrument was the focus of two seminars organised on 14-15 April in Tirana and on 18 April in Podgorica. Christophe Casillas from the Twinning coordination team in DG NEAR, contributed to both training seminars which were organised at the local EU Delegations thanks to the support of Twinning coordinator Philippe Adriaens (Tirana) and Twinning, TAIEX and Sigma coordinator Eleonora Formagnana (Podgorica). 45 attendants were present in Tirana and 46 in Podgorica. Member States' RTAs and counterpart beneficiaries actively participated, stressing the positive and long-term impact of the instrument.

As Sonja Božič, RTA of project "Support the adoption of the Schengen acquis" (MN 13 IB JH 01) in Montenegro said: "The Twinner does not come to do the job but to explain how to do it". Heads of Operations in both Delegations outlined the good timing of the mission, when activities under the European Integration Facility (IPA 2014 and 2015) are going to be launched. The main message emerging

from the seminar was that the success of Twinning is ultimately based on the transfer of know-how between Member State experts and beneficiary institutions. It requires dedication on both sides, but it is also advantageous for all parties.



Blagota Radulović, Head of the IPARD Agency, Montenegro, Eleonora Formagnana Twinning, TAIEX and Sigma coordinator Montenegro, Christophe Casillas, Twinning team, DG NEAR

These training seminars helped to refresh knowledge of Twinning procedures, but also informed about the process of reform and simplification of the instrument. The events offered an opportunity to answer practical questions while ensuring visibility on Twinning and EU cooperation in general. They enhanced interest in the instrument among potential beneficiaries in Albania and Montenegro.

Training on Twinning at EIPA - Maastricht

As in past years, on 10-11 March 2016 the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) held in Maastricht a seminar on the "Successful Preparation and Implementation of Twinning Projects". This activity, independently organised by EIPA, saw also a contribution by Christophe Casillas from the Twinning coordination team in DG NEAR.



EIPA Seminar on Twinning 10-11 March 2016

Twinning conference in Warsaw

The "Annual Polish twinning conference" organised by Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs took place in Warsaw on 30 November 2015.

The aim of the meeting was to gather Polish institutions interested in Twinning and TAIEX instruments. The conference was opened by Zuzanna Kierzkowska - Director of Department of Development Cooperation Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Polish Twinning and TAIEX National Contact Point, Wojciech Gołębiowski followed with an intervention related to Poland involvement in Twinning and TAIEX instruments. The Polish Ministry of Infrastructure and Development presented their experience in the implementation of a Twinning project "Support to the Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine in Strengthening of Safety Standards of Commercial Road Transport" in Ukraine.

Lucia Santuccione from the Twinning coordination team in DG NEAR updated Polish administrations on the implementation and new features of Twinning and TAIEX instruments.



From left to right, Zuzanna Kierzkowska - Director of Department of Development Cooperation Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lucia Santuccione Twinning team, DG NEAR and Wojciech Gołębiowski - NCP, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Country focus: Croatia

Croatia has been a Member State since 1st July 2013. It can therefore actively deliver Twinning assistance in beneficiary countries. At the same time, and till January 2017, Croatia can still host Twinning projects. The last three running programmes where contracting is still due are:

- Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, National Programme 2012 (IPA NP 2012) – contracting deadline: 29/11/2016;
- Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, National Programme 2013 (IPA NP 2013) – contracting deadline: 14/01/2017;
- Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, Transition Facility Programme 2013 (TF 2013) – contracting deadline: 13/12/2016.

Nirvana Sokolovski, Assistant Director of the National contact point (NCP) for Twinning sent us the following statement:

"The last programming exercise for Twinning has ended recently. There are twelve Twinning light fiches, mostly financed from IPA transition facility (TF) 2013 budget allocation, which are in circulation (or ready for recirculation) and which need to be contracted before the contracting deadlines. In general, the covered sectors refer to finance, justice and home affairs. We would be glad to continue

good cooperation with other Member States and successfully close the contracting of Twinning projects in Croatia. Despite the quickly approaching contracting deadlines and the related challenges, we believe in Member States' on-going support and their interest in cooperation through Twinning instrument. Croatia is very glad that the Commission has given us this opportunity to cooperate with so many different Member States on our path towards reform, modernisation and accession to the European Union. I sincerely believe that Twinning is a very useful tool that ensured sustainable development of Croatia and enabled valuable cooperation with Member States."

Focus on Twinning projects aimed at strengthening national assemblies

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Project BA 12 IB JH 01 "Enhancing the role of Parliaments in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in the EU Integration context" has been the largest Twinning ever carried out for the benefit of a national Parliament. It has been implemented by Hungary in consortium with France and has intensively involved the National Assemblies of the two countries. Overall however, more than 100 experts from 13 Member States have contributed actively to the project. The project, funded by a €3.5 Mio EU grant, started in March 2013 and ended in January 2016. An outstanding achievement was the signature of an agreement on a cooperation mechanism on EU integration by representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, of the National Assembly of Republika Srpska, of the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of the Assembly of the Brčko District.



Signature of protocol on cooperation on EU matters between parliaments, 26 January 2016

Project Leader Zoltán Horváth of Hungary, commented: "The key question is always whether recommendations remain on the shelf or will be

applied in practice. This project was extremely successful: action plans for the parliaments of BiH, tailored within the project, are already adopted by the four assemblies".

*Kosovo**

EU Twinning Project KS 14 IB OT 01 "Further Support to the Kosovo Assembly" has the strategic mission to assist the building up of a well-functioning, fully independent parliament in Kosovo with special attention to the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA). It is a 24 months project with a total budget of €1.3 Mio implemented by the Hungarian National Assembly. The project started in March 2016 and is expected to last until February 2018. It has already involved more than 50 experts from Hungary and 7 other parliaments of EU Member States as well as from the European Parliament.

The project builds on the results of two previous twinning projects, namely Twinning Project KS 10 IB JH 01 "Support to Kosovo Assembly" (2011-2013) and Twinning Light Project KS 12 IB JH 01 TWL "Strengthening the functioning of Kosovo Assembly" (2014).



Xhavit Haliti, Deputy Speaker of the Assembly of Kosovo during opening ceremony of the project on 12 April 2016

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Turkey

Twinning project TR 14 IB JH 03 'Empowerment of the Role of Parliament in the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights by Strengthening the Administrative Capacity of Parliament' with budget allocation of €950,000 with Submission deadline on Monday 28 March 2016 (EuropeAid/ 137-820/IH/ACT/TR) was awarded to Greece-Italy and is due to start in the coming months.

Tunisia

"Renforcement des capacités de l'Assemblée des représentants du peuple" is a three year Twinning project with a budget of €1.6 Mio. It started in January 2016 and is designed to continue until January 2019.

It is implemented by the French and Italian parliaments with the support of the national assemblies of Germany, Hungary, Czech Republic and Greece. The project supports the "Assemblée des représentants du peuple" of Tunisia and its 217 elected representatives who, following the October 2011 elections, drafted the new Constitution.



The opening conference of the Twinning project TN 15 ENI OT 48 "Renforcement des capacités de l'Assemblée des représentants du peuple" 29 avril 2016 Assemblée Représentants du Peuple, Palais du Bardo.

Morocco

MA/41 "Appui à la Chambre des Représentants du Royaume du Maroc" is a two year Twinning project with a budget of €1.2 Moi. Implementation started in March 2016 with the support of the Assemblée Nationale of France and the House of Commons of the United Kingdom.

At the request of the Chamber of Representatives of the kingdom of Morocco, the Twinning project was formulated with the aim of "Strengthening the overall performance of its parliamentary work and the competencies within its administration". The global objective of the project is to support the Chamber of Representatives within its new functions granted by the 2011 Constitution. The project also aims at strengthening the dialogue with the general public by facilitating communication with all citizens.

This Twinning project is part of an EU programme supporting the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the Chamber of representatives.

Examples of good media coverage

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The closing conference of the Twinning project MK 10 IB SO 02 "Support to the Employment Service Agency for Implementation of Active Labour Market Measures and Services" was the opportunity to give visibility to the achievements of the project and the role of the European Union.

Facebook promotion: <https://www.facebook.com/EUIC.mk>

Twitter: https://mobile.twitter.com/EU_InfoCentre

Photos available on Flickr:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/133089479@N05/albums/72157664417777436>

Project webpage: <http://twinning-esa.mk/>

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Achievements of Twinning project BA 12 IB JH 01 "Enhancing the role of parliaments in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the EU integration context" are explained in detail on the EU Delegation's webpage on the project: <http://europa.ba/?p=39758>

Croatia

Twinning light project HR 11 IB JH 05 TWL "Support to the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs in capacity building related to the Membership in the European Union", also referred to as "Centre of Excellence on EU Affairs in Croatia" was presented by National contact point for Twinning in Croatia to the 2016 DG NEAR Communication Awards

Video: <https://youtu.be/LQQCePUYTx8>

Photos available:

ftp://photos.photos789@ftp.urm.lt/Kroatija_twin2.zip

Tunisia

Project TN 15 ENI OT 48 "Renforcement des capacités de l'Assemblée des représentants du peuple"

Television broadcast:

20:18-22:36: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=geiQ6wtOKU>

16:55-18:06: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x51EAXI_6PU

Radio:

<http://www.shemsfm.net/fr/actualite/un-accord-de-parteneriat-de-plus-d-un-million-d-euros-entre-l-arp-et-l-assemblee-nationale-francaise-139080>

Press articles:

- <http://www.lapressenews.tn/article/arp-lancement-dun-projet-de-jumelage-avec-les-parlements-francais-et-italien/94/4555>
- <http://www.tunisiefocus.com/politique/centaine-dexperts-europeens-seront-mobilises-apporter-lassistance-technique-necessaire-a-larp-148881/>
- http://www.portalangop.co.ao/angola/fr_fr/noticias/afrika/2016/3/17/Les-Parlements-tunisien-francais-scellent-accord-cooperation,49d2328c-7d73-4f8c-bf13-9714de0601bb.html
- <http://www.webmanagercenter.com/actualite/societe/2016/04/30/169397/cooperation-les-parlements-europeens-a-la-rescousse-de-leur-homologue-tunisien>

New PRAG

January 2016 saw the publication of the updated 'Practical Guide to contract procedures for EU external actions'. The new PRAG is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/about-funding-and-procedures/procedures-and-practical-guide-prag_en

Good Practices

If you have examples of "good practices" used in your project to share, please send your contribution (maximum 300 words) to our new functional mailbox near twinning NEAR-TWINNING@ec.europa.eu

Twinning Community Tool (TCT)

The TCT provides a collaboration tool that allows users (from within and outside the Commission) to exchange files, comments and links on a platform.

The main purpose of TCT is to create a virtual network of RTA, National Contact Points, EU Delegations and other relevant stakeholders of Twinning.

If you belong to one of the above categories and wish to participate to the network, please send a mail with your name, role, organisation and a valid e-mail account to: NEAR-TWINNING@ec.europa.eu

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Twinning website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/twinning/>

Functional e-mail boxes:

When sending a message to the Brussels Twinning coordination Team, please always put in copy:

near-twinning@ec.europa.eu

For IPA-ENI proposals sent by the NCP for Twinning to the Twinning co-ordination team: near-twinning@ec.europa.eu

For sending draft IPA Twinning contracts and draft Twinning contract addenda to be examined by the Twinning steering committee: near-twinning-stc@ec.europa.eu

For sending all IPA-ENI Twinning quarterly and final reports: near-twinning-reports@ec.europa.eu