

**TWINNING:  
A TESTED EXPERIENCE IN A  
BROADER EUROPEAN CONTEXT**



**European Commission  
Directorate General Enlargement  
Institution Building Unit**



## **INTRODUCTION**

The Twinning programme was established in 1998 to assist the then candidate countries in their efforts to strengthen their administrative and institutional capacity in preparation for membership of the European Union. Since then, more than 1000 Twinning projects have been implemented playing a vital and successful role in this context.

Together, the European Commission and the EU Member States have mobilised significant human and financial resources to help the candidate countries meet the challenge of strengthening their administrative capacity and adapting their administration to implement the **acquis communautaire**. The acquis is the entire body of European community legislation that has developed and been revised over the past 50 years. The acquis is mainly implemented by Member States' public administrations (at central, regional and local level) and by agencies or professional bodies.

The accession of the ten new Member States in May 2004 and the refocused policy on the Western Balkans were an impetus for a co-ordinated approach to Twinning. Therefore, in co-operation with Europe Aid Cooperation Office, a common Twinning manual<sup>1</sup> covering the ten new Member States (under Transition Facility), Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania (PHARE), Turkey (Pre-accession Financial Assistance), Western Balkans (CARDS<sup>2</sup>), the Mediterranean basin (MEDA<sup>3</sup>) and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (TACIS<sup>4</sup>) came into force in May 2005. Given the enlargement context, it is now the responsibility of the Institution Building Unit within DG Enlargement to co-ordinate all Twinning activities under PHARE, Transition Facility and CARDS. Moreover, taking effect on 1 May 2004, the Extended Decentralised Implementation System (EDIS) has been introduced providing a decentralised management framework for Twinning projects in the ten new Member States.

### ***New Member States***

Twinning support under the Transition Facility is foreseen for a three year period (2004-2006). In order to ensure continuity, stability and simplicity, the structures and methods initially established under PHARE for programming, decision making and implementation are still in place, with some small adaptations where necessary.

### ***Accession and candidate countries***

Twinning assists the reinforcement of the institutional and administrative capacity that is necessary in order to take on the obligations of membership and to get the most out of joining the EU.

In the case of Bulgaria and Romania, Twinning focuses on the further refinement of acquis implementation. The approach to Croatia and Turkey as candidate countries is "accession-driven", concentrating on supporting priority areas which will help these countries to become EU members in the future.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/twinning/index.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation

<sup>3</sup> Community programme with Mediterranean Third Countries, the principal financial instrument of the European Union for the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

<sup>4</sup> the Tacis Programme provides grant-financed technical assistance to 12 countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan), and mainly aims at enhancing the transition process in these countries

## **CARDS**

As of 2001, the CARDS programme offers financial assistance to Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro. The priority for the EU remains the promotion of stability and peace in the region, not only on humanitarian grounds but also on institutional and economic development with the wider objective of security and prosperity across Europe.

## **WHAT IS TWINNING?**

The Twinning programme brings together administrations of a Beneficiary Country (BC) with a Member State (MS) in order to develop their institutional capacity. Institution building means developing the structures and systems, human resources and management skills needed to become EU Member State.

Twinning projects are set up as instruments for targeted administrative co-operation. They must achieve mandatory results through the transfer of hands-on public sector experience and expertise. The final and sole ownership of this mandatory result lies with the BC. As a rule, the BC chooses its partner MS to implement a given Twinning project. To underpin the credibility of their commitment, the Twinning partners draft a detailed Twinning work plan that can be adapted in the course of its implementation. It must fix clear benchmarks to allow for close monitoring of progress towards the final result.

Twinning not only provides technical and administrative assistance to the BC, but also helps to build long-term relationships between the old, new and future MS and brings the BC into wider contact with the diversity of administrative practices inside the EU.

Unlike other instruments, Twinning can offer assistance in those areas that are primarily the exclusive territory of Government, such as border management. For example, there are few, if any, private sector advisers who can give BC the advice and assistance they require in such a sensitive area.

### ***Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA)***

Each Twinning project involves the **secondment of at least one EU public sector expert**, known as a Resident Twinning Adviser, to the relevant Beneficiary Country. RTAs are made available for a period of at least one year to work on a project in the corresponding Ministry in the BC. RTAs are supported by a Project Leader in their home administration, who is responsible for ensuring the overall direction of the project implementation and coordinating all other inputs from the MS. In order to achieve the objective of the Twinning project, it is necessary to combine different means, including short-term expertise, training, services (translation and interpreting) and specialised help (specialised computer software).

### ***Results-oriented projects***

The main feature of a Twinning project is that it sets out to deliver **specific and mandatory results** agreed between the parties in advance, for the implementation of priority areas of the acquis.

The fact that Twinning is focused on the acquis generally makes it possible to identify specific targets and to deliver the means to achieve them. For example, the object of a Twinning project might be to help a Beneficiary Country implement value-added tax (VAT) or to have its veterinary or border control service operate to the same standards as those in the Member States. The common Twinning manual commits the MS and BC to jointly achieve the agreed results. It is the responsibility of the BC to ensure that the right pre-conditions for

success are met (e.g. introduce or change legislation, train and equip staff, set up appropriately staffed and trained monitoring or implementing agencies, etc). Both parties agree on a detailed work plan setting out their respective responsibilities for each step and the means to achieve it.

### ***How does Twinning work?***

A network of National Contact Points has been established to work with the European Commission in the Twinning process. Each Member State and each Beneficiary Country has appointed such a contact point to represent them, liaise with their own administration and ensure the flow of information through the Twinning network.

The first step in every Twinning project is the assessment of its needs by the BC resulting in the drafting of a Twinning Fiche<sup>5</sup>. Consequently, MS are invited to submit Twinning proposals outlining the required public sector expertise. Twinning proposals are then sent to the BC and after specific selection procedures it is up to the BC to choose the proposal which best corresponds to its needs. In some cases, two or exceptionally three MS may join forces to provide assistance or the BC may invite MS offering different elements to combine them in a single project.

### ***What is the contractual relationship between partners?***

Upon selection, the Twinning partners develop a detailed work programme which will, together with its matching budget, form the basis of the Twinning contract. The result of the co-operation between the partners is then submitted to the European Commission for a final appraisal (Steering Committee procedure) in so far as its relevance for the implementation of Community legislation is concerned.

From a legal point of view, Twinning projects are designed as grant type agreements (Twinning contract).

Some special procedures are necessary to take into account the particular nature of Twinning and to ensure sound financial management. These procedures are laid down in the regularly updated Twinning manual (which includes a system of fixed rates and prices for the reimbursement of the provided public sector expertise by the selected Member State administration). The common Twinning manual and other relevant documents can be found on-line at the following address:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/twinning/index.htm>

### ***Evaluation***

Since 1998, the Twinning programme has been evaluated providing significant feedback for all Twinning stakeholders.

The Court of Auditors has noted in its report on Twinning activities<sup>6</sup>: 'Twinning is ...a positive initiative by the European Commission to assist candidate countries in acquiring the capacity to adopt, implement and enforce the *acquis communautaire*. The Twinning projects acted as a catalyst in setting the candidate countries' reform in motion, bringing together specialists from MS and candidate countries' administrations and promoting the adoption of the Community legislation. (...) The mandatory results can only be achieved if all parties perform as required.'

---

<sup>5</sup> technical Twinning term for a document which lists projects specifications and requirements

<sup>6</sup> The full version of the report can be found under:

[http://www.eca.eu.int/audit\\_reports/special\\_reports/docs/2003/rs06\\_03en.pdf](http://www.eca.eu.int/audit_reports/special_reports/docs/2003/rs06_03en.pdf)

The conclusions of an evaluation of the programme by independent experts from MS were also positive: “There is no question in our mind about the continuation of the Twinning as an essential instrument of the accession process. The challenge is to improve an instrument which is accepted by all as a good idea”.

Building on these conclusions, the European Commission has further streamlined proceedings and has enhanced flexible management tools such as the development of the above-mentioned common Twinning manual.

## **TWINNING WORKS WHEN THE CONDITIONS ARE RIGHT**

Twining achieves its objectives when all the Twinning stakeholders co-operate and communicate with each other both, in terms of project implementation and in terms of political commitment. This is why the network of National Contact Points for Twinning is so crucial for the promotion, development and co-ordination of Twinning activities within the administrations of the Member States and Beneficiary Countries. The same is true for the Twinning co-ordinators in the Delegations, Administrative Offices and in the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR) as their constructive input and problem-solving attitude is vital for the successful implementation of Twinning projects.

Member States and Beneficiary Countries must work to identify their synergies and to implement projects that really work. Twinning at its best is, after all, about teamwork.

### ***Role of the Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA)***

The key success factor, according to the expert report and the collective view of Twinning partners on the ground, is the quality of the Resident Twinning Adviser.

Flexibility and willingness to adapt are clearly prerequisites in a RTA, as Norbert Sagstetter of the European Commission Delegation in Tallinn observed: “Projects work best when staffed by people who can adapt to working in different environments”. RTAs have to adapt culturally to work successfully in another country’s administration. However, the most important asset identified by RTAs themselves is the ability to relate to their counterparts and inspire trust as fellow professionals.

### ***Institutional Support***

RTAs must have the support of their own administrations in their work. Often the demands of the Twinning projects, for instance for Short Term Expert input, coincide with pressure at home on normal administration duties. Another important component of a successful project is the Project Leader. Successful projects often have not only a dynamic RTA, but also Project Leaders who provide support throughout the project.

Equally important, the host Government must ensure that their project environment is one in which their work can take root, grow and bear fruit. This requires support at the top and intermediary levels but also an overall commitment to make the project work. One RTA illustrated his “good fortune” by comparison with another project where the RTA, although very well-qualified, was unable to make any progress because the local Project Leader (a State Secretary) took no interest in the project and gave it no support.

The crux of Twinning is that the RTAs and Short Term Experts are there to transfer know-how, not to take the burden of work off the shoulders of the Beneficiary Country’s administration. In fact, they often increase that burden. Therefore, only if their counterparts are really committed to the process can the project be made to work.

### ***Steering role of the European Commission***

The European Commission has a crucial role to play in the co-ordination of the Twinning activities. The Directorate Generals in Brussels and the Delegations in the field can provide the global vision and quality control across the board. Administrative Offices and EC Delegations/EAR must continue to monitor progress, identify challenges and help to create a receptive environment for Twinning projects.

A Twinning Co-ordination Team was set up at European Commission headquarters in 1998 to promote the instrument in the enlargement context in order to maintain its uniform implementation through the common Twinning manual, to ensure its European visibility and to function as a central help-desk.

### **TWINNING IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT**

Demand for Twinning is rising and Twinning support for the reinforcement of administrative and judicial capacity in partner countries will indeed be continued.

In the ten new Member States, which joined the EU in May 2004, a limited number of Twinning projects may still be launched under 2006 Community funds. This limited institution building assistance will help to ensure that the administrations in these MS will develop their full potential as first hand implementing actors of Community legislation.

The acceding countries, Bulgaria and Romania signed the Treaty of Accession with the European Union on 25 April 2005. The European Commission has noted that both countries have made good progress in their preparations for joining the Union. They should now focus their efforts on reform with particular emphasis on concrete and practical implementation of the acquis. Some Twinning projects to be launched in 2006 will be instrumental in assisting these countries to reach that target. Moreover, the plans are that a Transition Facility will be set up to consolidate the administrative capacities of both countries during the first year after their accession.

Croatia and Turkey are proceeding with negotiations for future membership. Both will have to demonstrate their resolve and ability to complete the necessary transformations to implement community legislation. Twinning will therefore remain an essential tool to reach the required level of administrative and judicial capacity.

The Western Balkans are a particular challenge for the EU. Enlargement policy needs to demonstrate its power of transformation in a region where states are weak and societies divided. A convincing political perspective for eventual integration into the EU is crucial to keep their reforms on track. But it is equally clear that these countries can join only once they have met the criteria in full. Each country has to follow the road map setting out the steps and conditions for realising the European perspective. This includes political relations and the development and management of the CARDS programme. European Union assistance in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina is managed by the European Union's Delegations in those countries. The European Agency for Reconstruction (Council regulation No 2667/2000-05/12/200) is responsible for assistance in Serbia and Montenegro, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Experience with the Twinning projects that have already been launched as pilot projects in this region show that an increase in the number of Twinning projects will be welcome in this long process of adjustments and alignment.

## **WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?**

Further information on Twinning is available from the European Commission's website:  
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/twinning/index.htm>.

The full text of the report of the Court of Auditors can be found on:  
[http://www.eca.eu.int/audit\\_reports/special\\_reports/docs/2003/rs06\\_03en.pdf](http://www.eca.eu.int/audit_reports/special_reports/docs/2003/rs06_03en.pdf).

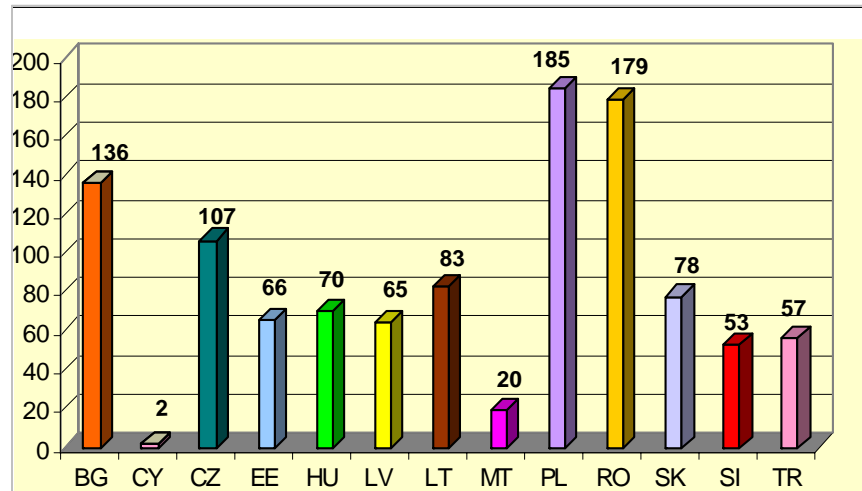
## FACTS AND FIGURES

### Number of PHARE/TF Twinning Projects 1998–2005

| YEAR         | Overall N° of projects |
|--------------|------------------------|
| 1998         | 103                    |
| 1999         | 122                    |
| 2000         | 146                    |
| 2001         | 133                    |
| 2002         | 195                    |
| 2003         | 154                    |
| 2004*        | 177                    |
| 2005*        | 71                     |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1,101</b>           |

\* subject to update

### Twinning PHARE/TF projects 1998-2005





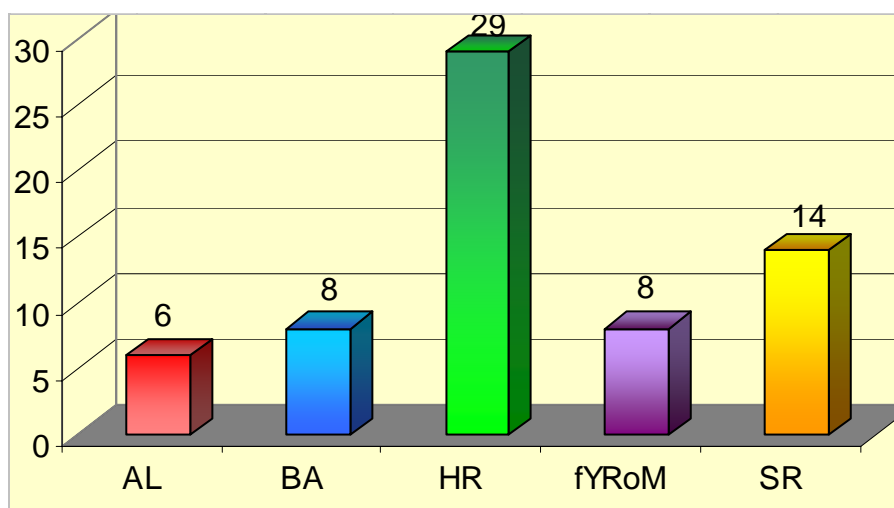
## Twinning PHARE/TF Projects per sector in the NMS/CCs 1998-2005

| Sector                              | BG         | CZ         | CY       | EE        | HU        | LV        | LT        | MT        | PL         | RO         | SK        | SI        | TR        | Total       |
|-------------------------------------|------------|------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| 1. Agriculture & Fisheries          | 17         | 7          | 0        | 12        | 14        | 7         | 20        | 8         | 38         | 26         | 10        | 11        | 5         | 175         |
| 2. Environment                      | 18         | 12         | 0        | 8         | 11        | 6         | 2         | 4         | 20         | 16         | 13        | 2         | 7         | 119         |
| 3. Structural Funds                 | 7          | 6          | 0        | 3         | 4         | 3         | 3         | 1         | 19         | 24         | 4         | 7         | 1         | 82          |
| 4. Consensus & Social Policy        | 8          | 22         | 0        | 11        | 9         | 6         | 7         | 1         | 17         | 15         | 10        | 3         | 1         | 110         |
| 5. Public Finance & Internal Market | 34         | 23         | 1        | 12        | 13        | 18        | 21        | 1         | 44         | 38         | 13        | 12        | 10        | 240         |
| 6. Justice & Home Affairs           | 37         | 26         | 1        | 16        | 14        | 16        | 18        | 1         | 25         | 42         | 19        | 11        | 17        | 243         |
| 7. Transport, Energy & Telecom      | 9          | 5          | 0        | 2         | 4         | 1         | 8         | 1         | 7          | 7          | 5         | 3         | 5         | 57          |
| 8. Standardisation                  | 1          | 0          | 0        | 0         | 0         | 5         | 1         | 0         | 2          | 0          | 0         | 2         | 8         | 19          |
| 9. Others                           | 5          | 6          | 0        | 2         | 1         | 3         | 3         | 3         | 13         | 11         | 4         | 2         | 3         | 56          |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>136</b> | <b>107</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>66</b> | <b>70</b> | <b>65</b> | <b>83</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>185</b> | <b>179</b> | <b>78</b> | <b>53</b> | <b>57</b> | <b>1101</b> |

## Number of Twinning CARDS Projects 2000–2005

| YEAR         | Overall N° of projects |
|--------------|------------------------|
| 2000         | 1                      |
| 2001         | 8                      |
| 2002         | 16                     |
| 2003         | 11                     |
| 2004         | 18                     |
| 2005         | 11                     |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>65</b>              |

## Twinning CARDS projects 2000-2005



## Twinning CARDS: Sectoral distribution 2000-2005

| SECTOR                              | AL       | BA       | HR        | fYROM    | SR        | Total     |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Agriculture & Fisheries          | 0        | 1        | 3         | 0        | 5         | 9         |
| 2. Environment                      | 0        | 0        | 0         | 1        | 1         | 2         |
| 3. Structural Funds                 | 0        | 0        | 0         | 0        | 0         | 0         |
| 4. Social Policy                    | 0        | 0        | 1         | 0        | 1         | 2         |
| 5. Public Finance & Internal Market | 2        | 0        | 10        | 2        | 0         | 14        |
| 6. Justice & Home Affairs           | 3        | 2        | 11        | 4        | 2         | 24        |
| 7. Transport, Energy & Telecom      | 0        | 2        | 0         | 0        | 2         | 4         |
| 9. Others                           | 1        | 3        | 2         | 1        | 3         | 10        |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>6</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>65</b> |

EU MEMBER STATE BENEFICIARIES



Cyprus



Czech Republic



Estonia



Hungary



Latvia



Lithuania



Malta



Poland



Slovak Republic



Slovenia

CANDIDATE COUNTRIES



Bulgaria



Croatia



Romania



Turkey

WESTERN BALKANS



Albania



Bosnia and Herzegovina



Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia



Serbia and Montenegro

The Institution Building Unit (IBU) of the European Commission is in charge of the TAIEX Instrument, Twinning and SIGMA. To know more about us, or about enlargement of the EU

VISIT THE TAIEX WEBSITE  
<http://taieux.cec.eu.int>

or VISIT THE TWINNING WEBSITE  
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/twinning/>

or VISIT THE SIGMA WEBSITE  
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/phare/programmes/multi-bene/sigma.htm>

or CONTACT THE IBU DIRECTLY  
Tel: + 32 2 296 73 07 Fax: +32 2 296 68 40 or [elarg-taix@cec.eu.int](mailto:elarg-taix@cec.eu.int) or [elarg-twinning@cec.eu.int](mailto:elarg-twinning@cec.eu.int)

or VISIT THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S WEBSITE  
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/>