



TAIEX and Twinning Activity Report 2013



Štefan Füle
European Commissioner
for Enlargement and
Neighbourhood Policy

Foreword

In a period of prolonged economic and financial difficulties, it is encouraging to see how the fundamental ideals of the European Union (EU) continue to represent a powerful example and incentive for reforms in our neighbourhood. Our enlargement and neighbourhood partners have not ceased to seek support and assistance for a better understanding of the *acquis* and the way it is implemented and enforced at EU Member State level and for reinforcing the capacity of their public administrations. In this context, this report provides evidence of how the European Commission's institution-building instruments Twinning, TAIEX and SIGMA act as facilitators of the sharing of experience, know-how and best practices between EU Member States and our partner countries.

The enlargement perspective and that of a special relationship between the EU and its neighbourhood require commitment, seriousness and credibility by both providers and recipients of assistance. Thanks to the fundamental contribution of EU Member States' officials, through the short-term activities developed by TAIEX, the longer-term and programmed approach of Twinning and the horizontal domains of public governance addressed by SIGMA, these principles materialise in concrete actions and develop a clear meaning.

As this report shows, the continued rise in demand in 2013 for peer-to-peer technical assistance, and correspondingly for TAIEX, Twinning and SIGMA support, demonstrates how valuable it is to offer opportunities of direct cooperation between civil servants.

On 1 July 2013, the European Union welcomed Croatia as its 28th Member State. This accession marks another milestone in the construction of a united Europe and it is also a touchstone for the Union's enlargement policy. TAIEX and Twinning have accompanied Croatia throughout the whole approximation process since the beginning of accession negotiations.

In the neighbourhood, 2013 has seen some progress towards the objectives of contributing to an area of security, prosperity and good neighbourliness with our partners but at the same time witnessed crises that reinforce the necessity for a sustained assistance to reforms implemented by the eastern and southern countries of the region.

With big challenges in the enlargement and neighbourhood regions, the 2013 activity report on the EU institution-building instruments underlines their increasing relevance as platforms for a constructive interchange of ideas and expertise. Well-established tools, they continue to be valuable assets for public administrations engaged in reforms.

What is TAIEX?

TAIEX (technical assistance and information exchange) was set up in 1996 to share EU Member State public administrations' technical expertise in all fields of EU legislation with those countries that are preparing to join the European Union. In 2006, this instrument was extended to neighbourhood countries, both south and east. TAIEX is mainly demand driven and facilitates the delivery of appropriate tailor-made expertise to address short-term institution-building and capacity-development needs.

Three main types of assistance are delivered under TAIEX.

Workshops: EU Member State experts present specific areas of EU legislation in workshops attended by officials from the beneficiaries' administrations.

Expert missions: one or several experts from EU Member States are sent to the beneficiary administration to provide in-depth advice on the transposition, implementation or enforcement of a specific part of EU legislation. Normally, expert missions last up to 5 working days. They allow working intensively with a smaller group of officials from relevant departments of beneficiary administrations.

Study visits: a group of up to three practitioners from a beneficiary administration embarks on a study visit to an EU Member State for up to 5 days to learn how to implement a specific part of EU legislation and above all to study EU best practices.

A mainly demand-driven instrument

The activation of TAIEX assistance is largely triggered by direct requests submitted by beneficiaries' central public administrations. The number of requests increased from 1996 after which it stabilised over the last 5 years at more than 2 000 applications per year, testifying to the reputation of the instrument and to the positive accomplishments of TAIEX over the years.

Number of requests	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	2359	2380	2080	2284	2201

An overview of TAIEX operations

While overall numbers have remained stable after 2010, TAIEX operations achieved a new record in 2013 with almost 1 900 events organised.

TAIEX's main beneficiaries are the candidate and potential candidate countries for accession to the European Union. Within that group, leading applicants for assistance in 2013 were the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (236) and Turkey (207). The number of requests coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina remained stable (127), while there was a decrease in the applications originating from Albania (82), Serbia (92) and Croatia (130). In terms of operations, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia stood again in first position (202 events), while the highest rise in numbers of events organised was recorded for Montenegro with 122 events (+ 50 compared to 2012).

Number of operations	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	1687	1849	1845	1778	1966

Taiex operations in 2013

Albania	17	27	11			Lebanon	7	7	1		
Algeria	4	2	8			Libya					
Armenia	4	8	1			Moldova	28	39	27		
Azerbaijan	7	4	4			Montenegro	42	15	11	38	
Belarus	3	16	14			Morocco	3	3	2		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	21	26	39			Palestine	1	4	1		
Croatia	33	59	59			Russia	6	2	2		
Egypt	4	4	2			Serbia	25	17	33	6	
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	44	64	45			Tunisia	2	2	8		
Georgia	6	9	1			Turkey	19	49	55		
Iceland	19	12	7			Turkish Cypriot community	210	10	30		
Israel	4	2	8			Ukraine	3	20	18		
Jordan	8	9	3			Multi-country	3	1	98		
Kosovo*	66	14	5								

■ Expert mission
 ■ Study visit
 ■ Workshop
 ■ Screening

An instrument aligned with EU policy priorities

To be able to competently and swiftly serve TAIEX clients, the European Commission's Institution Building Unit in the Directorate-General for Enlargement is organised in four teams, possessing dedicated sectoral expertise in the following main fields: freedom, security and justice (JHA), internal market issues — also including social policy and employment, enterprise and industrial policy, customs and taxation, consumer protection and health (IM), agriculture, rural development and food safety (AGRI) and environment, climate change, transport and telecommunications (ETT).

A flexible instrument

Outside classic TAIEX, the Local Administration Facility (LAF) aims at increasing the capacity of western Balkans regional and local governments by fostering their understanding and knowledge of European integration and the accession process. In total, 18 LAF events were organised in 2013 gathering more than 600 participants.

In 2013, the TAIEX instrument confirmed its flexibility and resource efficiency through a broad set of other activities. Increasing use has been made of TAIEX medium-term technical assistance, a sequence of agreed short-term interventions. This approach was deployed mostly in the agriculture and food safety sectors as well as generally for the Turkish Cypriot community and in Kosovo.

Number of operations per area

JHA	556
Internal Market	383
AGRI	353
ETT	311
Screening support for Montenegro	38
Screening support for Serbia	6
LAF	18
Aid to the Turkish Cypriot community	456

* 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

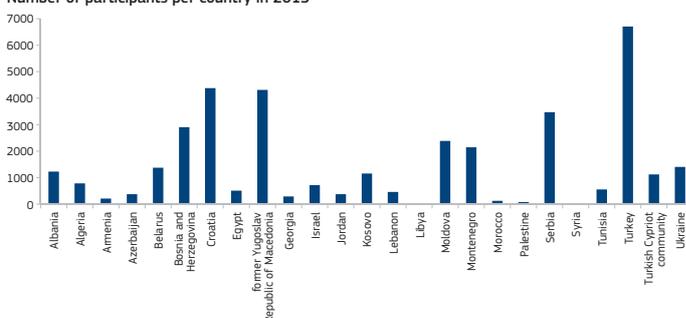
TAIEX also supported the initial assessment of Montenegro and Serbia's compliance with the EU *acquis* (i.e. the body of common rights and obligations which bind all the Member States together within the EU), the so-called screening, a key element of the EU accession process. Finally, TAIEX organised several assessment or peer review missions chiefly aimed at providing feedback on the legislative, institutional and administrative state of play in defined sectors of a beneficiary country.

TAIEX participants

TAIEX events reached almost 38 000 participants, confirming a positive trend seen in previous years. Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia benefited the most from TAIEX assistance with more than 6 000 Turkish participants (6702) and more than 4 000 from each of the other two Balkan countries (4380 and 4313).

Number of participants	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	37680	41126	29067	32178	38620

Number of participants per country in 2013



TAIEX experts, the instrument's driving force

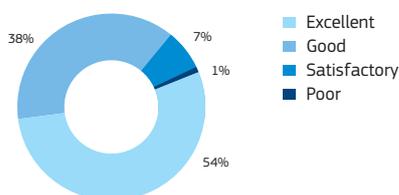
TAIEX shares the expertise of EU Member State officials with beneficiary countries, fostering the development of networks among key actors. The knowledge and competence of the experts continuous to be highly appreciated by participants of TAIEX events, as evidenced in regular evaluations undertaken.

In 2013, more than 4 500 experts were involved in the delivery of TAIEX assistance; the largest share of experts came from the United Kingdom, Slovenia, Italy and Germany. Croatian experts joined the pool of TAIEX experts this year for the first time - their expertise being particularly welcomed in western Balkan countries.

Number of experts

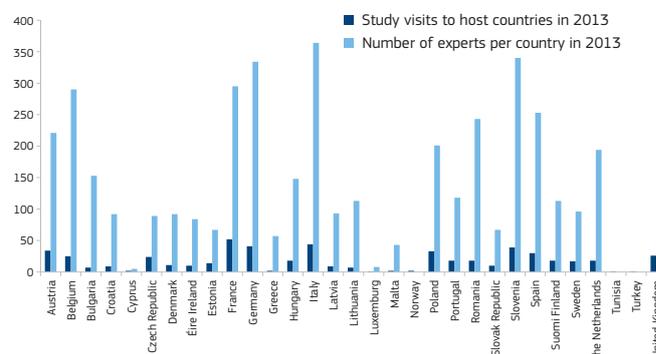
2009	5477
2010	5847
2011	4963
2012	4949
2013	5316

Quality of Experts



Study visits to Member States (host countries)

TAIEX study visits depend on the availability of EU national administrations to host beneficiaries. In 2013 an overall number of 543 study visits took place. The institutions that received most participants were located in France, Italy and Germany.



TAIEX Success stories

Personal data protection



the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Background

Protection of personal data is one of the EU's fundamental rights and it has been regulated at the EU level through a directive since 1995. One of the requirements of this directive is to set up an independent authority at the national level, mandated to supervise compliance with data protection legislation. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia established this authority in 2005, the same year in which the law on personal data protection was adopted. The Directorate for Personal Data Protection is responsible for examining complaints from citizens regarding violation of the right to data protection, as well ensuring that both public authorities and private companies respect data protection rules, for example by carrying out inspections and promoting awareness for this right through training courses and workshops.

TAIEX action

Since 2009, TAIEX has organised around 50 events on personal data protection for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in order to assist the authorities to bring their legislation and practices in line with EU rules. In 2013 alone, TAIEX managed 15 data protection events for the Directorate for Personal Data Protection on topics ranging from data protection in the context of biometrics and social networks, to data processing for law enforcement purposes. In all, more than 500 participants attended TAIEX workshops on data protection issues organised in Skopje during 2013. In addition, staff of the directorate exchanged first-hand experience with their counterparts in the Member States through study visits on inspections and audits, as well as data protection aspects of cooperation with Eurojust, Europol and the Schengen information system.

Achievements

- A series of three workshops on establishing video surveillance systems in schools in compliance with data protection standards organised from 24 to 26 April in Skopje reached a total of more than 300 employees of primary schools from all over the country.
- The first country report on the implementation of the personal data protection provisions was submitted to the data protection officer of Eurojust by the public prosecution offices of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in coordination with the directorate.
- The launching of a procedure to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Interior aimed at establishing mutual procedures for handling complaints related to personal data abuse on social networks.



Customs reform



Albania

Background

Support in the area of customs falls under the priority sector 'public administration reform' as identified by the multiannual indicative planning document (MIPD) 2011–13.

As regards administrative and operational capacity, important developments have taken place. On one hand, Albania has joined the EU customs 2013 programme and, on the other hand, the Tax and Customs Academy has started working with the customs' training strategy as part of its programme. In addition, the new Tirana customs terminal has been inaugurated and the infrastructure at border-crossing points has been improved.

TAIEX action

The staff from the Directorate-General of Customs of Albania benefited from a series of 11 events (three multi-countries events, one workshop, five study visits and two expert missions), contributing further to the Albanian legislation reform.

The TAIEX actions allowed the beneficiary to come across the technical and practical implementation of the EU legislation in the field of customs. TAIEX assistance combined on-the-spot training in various Member States as well as advice and lessons learned from European experts.

The events aimed at reforming the Albanian customs administration by improving its procedures. This included improving the customs controls systems, the communication to stakeholders on relevant issues related to customs and the implementation of international conventions.



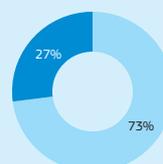
Achievements

- Identification of key priorities that should be addressed in order to improve the performance of the Albanian customs administration.
- Adoption of an internal regulation on security policy for the customs IT system.
- Ratification of the Regional Convention on Pan-Euro-Med Preferential Rules of Origin.
- Implementation of the ATA Convention on Temporary Importation.

Tracking TAIEX performance and impact

The transfer of knowledge and expertise can and should lead to more tangible and meaningful effects for the beneficiary administration. With the aim of measuring both the effectiveness and the final impact of TAIEX assistance, a new evaluation system was put in place in 2012. Six months after the implementation of an event, applicants are asked to provide a synthetic, online feedback on the specific assistance delivered and its impact on organisational changes, drafting of new laws or internal procedures.

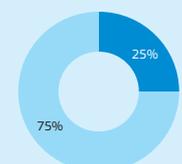
Organisational changes - creation of departments/units/positions



Draft of a new law/act or modification of an existing one (either presented or adopted)



Improved internal working procedures



■ Yes ■ No

TAIEX Success stories

Croatia, new border of the European Union



Croatia

Background

EU controls on third country imports require a system of border inspection posts (BIPs) according to EU standards at external borders with non-member countries.

The effectiveness and consistency of sanitary and phytosanitary controls on imports of food, feed, animals and plants are key to maintain animal and public health safety. Following the approval of these checks at the first border-crossing point into the EU, animals and products can in principle circulate freely in the internal market.

As the EU's new external frontier, Croatia needed to ensure that its BIPs were finalised in time so that they could be accredited by the Commission and operate in full compliance with the *acquis* by the date of its accession.

For that purpose, seven EU veterinary BIPs (two seaports, one airport and four road points) were approved in Croatia, according to a plan of rationalisation prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management. All consignments of animals or animal products entering the territory of Croatia must be checked at one of these inspection posts.

TAIEX action

The rules governing veterinary checks at the borders in Croatia were not in full compliance with those of the EU, and an upgrading of the physical structures at the veterinary BIPs at the borders was deemed necessary.

Two series of events were organised in this regard: the first before accession and the second in July right after Croatia became the 28th EU Member State.

The aim of the assistance was to train border veterinary inspectors at BIPs on best practices of import/transit veterinary controls for them to be able to perform veterinary checks fully in line with EU legislation.

Achievements

- Better understanding of import and transit rules according to EU requirements.
- Effective performance of veterinary checks at the borders.
- Alignment of veterinary inspection procedures with EU legislation.



Advanced wireless Internet access



Kosovo

Background

Better access to wireless Internet is key to the development of the digital economy. High-speed data transmission enables the improvement of Internet services such as e-commerce or e-government. In order to do so, the EU has adopted a regulatory framework harmonising the electronic communications networks and services. The independent national regulatory authorities (NRAs) are notably responsible for managing the radio frequencies for electronic communication services. Such radio frequencies must be allocated in a public process, like auctions, to operators on the basis of objective, transparent, non-discriminatory and proportionate criteria.

The Regulatory Authority of Electronic and Postal Communications in Kosovo requested TAIEX assistance in order to learn more about EU best practices in opening frequency bands to faster wireless Internet access.

This expert mission's main aims were first to analyse the situation and law in place in Kosovo, and second to advise on the best licensing practices for operators and on drafting the necessary rules. These tasks were carried out in two steps by a Member State civil servant from the Public Utilities Commission of Latvia.



TAIEX action

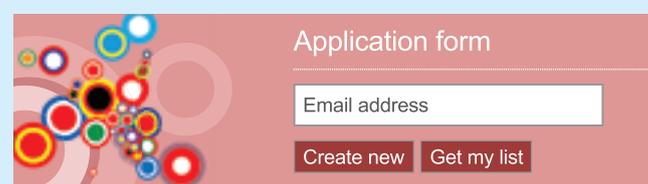
The TAIEX expert first became familiar with the law in place and the history of broadband wireless access developments in Kosovo. She further presented the different systems in place in the EU on how to allocate frequency bands to interested operators. The beneficiary selected the auction as a tool to identify the winning operator who bids for the rights on public frequency bands. The expert gave recommendations on the drafting of rules for the auction as well as on the determination of conditions included in the public tender documents.

Achievements

- The beneficiary has reached approval and enforcement of the newly drafted rules for the auction which regulate the frequency bands auctioning. The very first auction organised by the authority was announced through a call for expression of interest in all electronic and written media on 18 November 2013.
- Thanks to the advice and support of the TAIEX expert, the auction took place in December 2013. The highest bidder has won the rights on the open frequency bands and will start to put in place all requirements for an advanced Internet access in Kosovo.

New application form, keeping up with the times

A new online application system was put in place in 2013. This web-based application replaces the old form and allows the applicant to have access to all his/her previous requests. It also makes it possible to share draft applications with colleagues, hierarchy or the national contact point for consultation or prior approval. The system is based on a unique identifier (URL address) which can be easily passed to the relevant stakeholders.



TAIEX Activities in 2013

Freedom, security and justice



In 2013, **civil and criminal law matters** topped the agenda in the justice and home affairs sector, alongside police cooperation issues such as crime scene investigations, forensics, the training of police officers and public order maintenance.

TAIEX also continued to provide extensive assistance for the **fight against organised crime** such as the trafficking of human beings and drug trafficking.

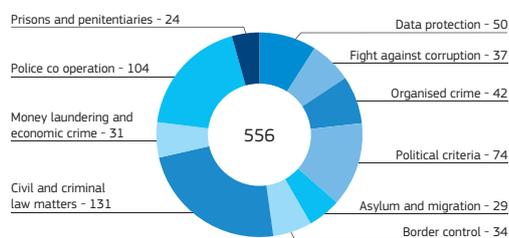
Topical issues such as **data protection, cybercrime and child pornography** remained priorities while continued support was granted to numerous assistance requests centred on the combating of corruption and terrorism, money laundering and other forms of economic crime.

Events on **asylum, migration** as well as **border control** were organised on a regular basis.

Several series of events were held such as seminars on domestic violence in Turkey and on the implementation of the 5-year national judicial reform in Serbia, as well as asset-recovery seminars throughout the western Balkans.

The year 2013 also saw a sharp increase of events related to the Copenhagen criteria with a particular focus on the rule of law principles.

Events per sector



Internal market



Some 383 events were organised in 2013 in the field of internal market - 12 % more than in 2012. The main growth came from Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) beneficiaries (17 %), while the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) beneficiaries slightly increased their levels from 2012.

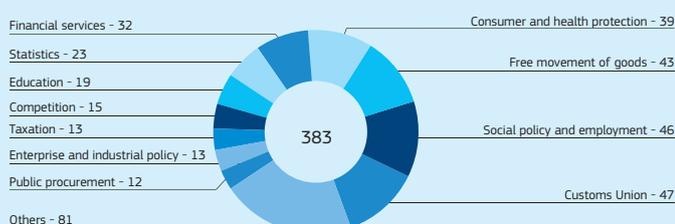
In 2013, the greatest demand for assistance was in the field of **customs union** with 47 events, up 34 % from 2012, covering topics such as implementation of common transit procedures, rules of origin, classification of goods and customs control. To support the introduction of the EU authorised economic operator concept, a multi-country event was organised in cooperation with the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) Secretariat for the customs administrations from the western Balkans and Moldova.

A high growth of TAIEX assistance was also registered in the field of **social policy and employment** - 21 % more events tackling subjects like labour market policies, youth employment, social dialogue, social security, social services, rights of persons with disabilities, occupational health and safety. A multi-country workshop on the functioning of public employment services took place in Ohrid to strengthen their capacity and to promote the regional cooperation.

The **free movement of goods** remains one of the key areas for TAIEX beneficiaries; 43 events were organised to support mainly the approximation in standardisation, metrology, accreditation and conformity assessment. To help the Mediterranean neighbouring countries to bring their legislation and standards closer to the EU legislation, a workshop on accreditation and conformity assessment was organised in cooperation with the Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry.

In the area of **consumer and health protection**, 39 events were held to underpin the capacity-building efforts of TAIEX beneficiaries in the fields of market surveillance, cosmetic products, consumer awareness, good manufacturing practice, medical devices, blood, tissues and deceased donation and transplantation.

Events per sector



Environment, transport and telecommunications



In 2013, TAIEX provided assistance in the field of environment, transport and telecommunications, as well as energy, climate change and research and innovation.

As in the previous years, beneficiaries' public administrations demonstrated great interest in the field of **environment** (more than 30 % of the assistance). Member State's experts shared best practices notably in the field of waste management, air and water quality and wildlife protection.

High-level technical knowledge was also transferred on **information and communication technologies (ICT)** and their market regulations. The number of TAIEX activities significantly increased in that field. Events were organised on various topics such as safer Internet, telecom services and radio frequencies.

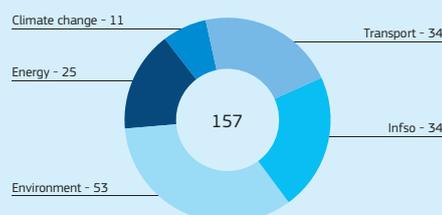
As regards **transport**, the focus was again on road transport, and several activities were organised in the fields of railway and aviation.

In the field of **energy**, the focus was on energy efficiency and renewable energies.

Specific activities took place on how to tackle **climate change**, for example the EU emissions trading scheme (ETS).

The countries involved in the enlargement process benefitted from some 75 % of activities within TAIEX assistance, mainly related to environment, followed by transport and ICT sectors. Public administration of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Croatia were the most active partners. The implementation of the EU acquis has concerned a wide range of legislations with a concrete impact on citizens, such as better quality of air or improvement of electronic communications.

Events per sector



Agriculture and food safety



In 2013, the activities in the area of **agriculture** covered a wide range of topics, such as common rules for agricultural markets, known as CMOs (common market organisations), quality policy as well as inspections and controls. Moreover, an important share of the requests for TAIEX assistance focused on organic farming, rural development measures and the Leader initiative.

Concerning **food safety**, topics related to official controls and hygiene package ranked high in the assistance provided. Subjects such as food contact materials, labelling and packaging and health claims also attracted significant interest from the beneficiaries.

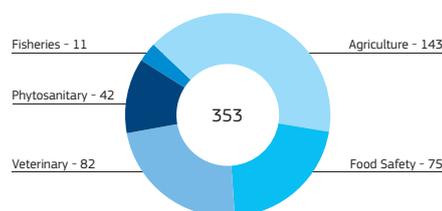
Veterinary assistance prioritised animal diseases (classical swine fever, rabies, African swine fever, foot and mouth disease) and measures to take in the event of outbreaks as well as how to better coordinate disease surveillance.

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs), harmful organisms, pesticides, the plant passport system and seed testing in laboratories were the most requested topics in the area of **phytosanitary**.

In the **fisheries** area, assistance focused mainly, on one hand, on data collection and quotas in the framework of the common fisheries policy and, on the other hand, on aquatic animal health and aquaculture.

The **programmatic approach** in the agriculture and food safety area was strengthened in 2013. In addition to the traditional demand-driven component of TAIEX, pre-accession countries were requested to prepare a training map identifying their priorities in four areas: agriculture, food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary. This document sets out a mid-term planning of TAIEX activities with high impact on their further progress towards the alignment of their legislation with EU laws.

Events per sector



Twinning Activities in 2013

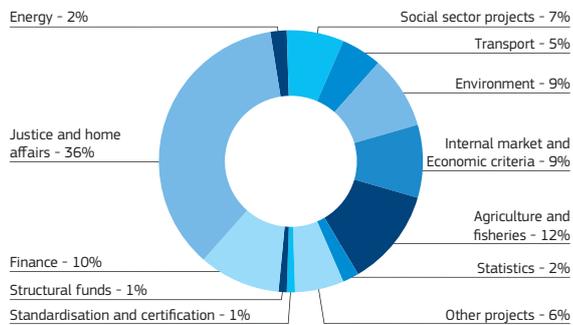


Launched in May 1998, Twinning is an instrument for the cooperation between public administrations of EU Member States and of beneficiary countries. Beneficiaries include candidate countries and potential candidates to EU membership, as well as countries covered by the European neighbourhood policy.

More specifically, for the pre-accession countries, Twinning aims to provide support for the transposition, implementation and enforcement of EU legislation.

It also strives to share good practices developed within the EU with beneficiary public administrations and to foster long-term relationships between administrations of existing and future EU MS.

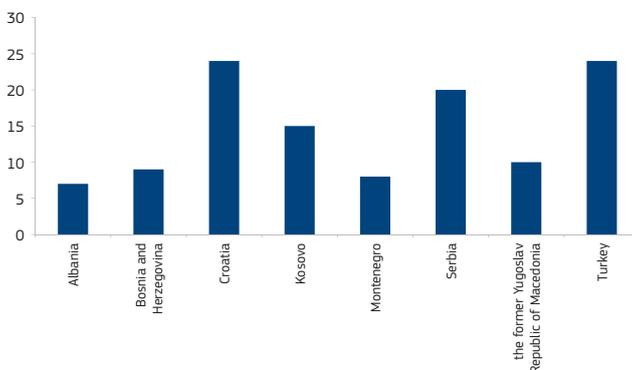
Distribution of projects per sectors in the Pre-accession region



Twinning projects are built around EU policy objectives agreed between the public authorities of the beneficiary country and the Member States. They include a broad variety of activities implemented by experts from Member States, leading to the achievement of mandatory results.

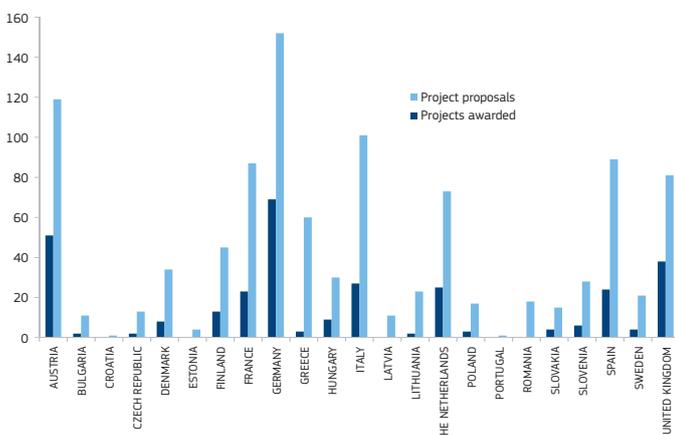
Two project leaders (one on behalf of the Member State leading the project, the other of the beneficiary administration) and a resident Twinning adviser (RTA) are the backbone of Twinning projects. The RTA coordinates the project and is seconded from the lead MS to the beneficiary administration for a minimum of **12 months**. The work plan of a Twinning project usually foresees expert missions, training events and awareness-raising visits.

117 Twinning projects in 2013



'Twinning light' is designed to offer a more flexible, mid-term approach (up to **6 months**) without the presence of an RTA permanently located in the beneficiary administration.

Proposals submitted and projects awarded as Lead MS - CARDS & IPA (2000-2013)



SUCCESS STORY

Twinning and Croatia - on the road to EU

Effective management of the EU Cohesion Fund

Background

The Twinning project 'Enhancement of capacity for effective management of EU cohesion policy funds' (HR 08 IB SPP 02) successfully provided assistance in an important sector, the management and use of EU Structural Funds and in particular of the Cohesion Fund — indeed a key topic for Croatia as a new Member State.

The project, which lasted for 27 months, was implemented by the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds and the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Croatia in cooperation with partners from Lithuania and Hungary — the Ministry of Finance and the Central Project Management Agency of the Republic of Lithuania and the National Development Agency of the Republic of Hungary.

Project objectives

The main goal of the project, worth EUR 2 million, was to increase capacity for the overall coordination and use of Structural and Cohesion Funds (SCFs) and provide support to Croatia in:

- processes of coordination, programming, monitoring, information and publicity of the SCFs;
- efficient implementation of financial management and control and preparation for compliance assessment for the SCFs.

Achievements in 2013

- The 2007–13 programming documents were submitted to the European Commission, which approved the national strategic reference framework and three operational programmes.
- The management and control system for EU Structural Funds 2007–13 was set up and positively assessed by the nominated body (compliance assessment completed).
- The capacity of the beneficiary country in the management of EU Structural Funds has been significantly improved on a sustainable basis, i.e. about 800 people were trained in total and 14 training modules were created.
- A solid starting basis for the period 2014–20 has been laid: the main priorities for national development for the next 7 years were discussed with a wider public and presented in the draft partnership agreement and operational programmes were elaborated and agreed with institutional and socioeconomic partners.



VISIT THE TAIEX WEBSITE

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/taieux/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/overview/taieux_en.htm

VISIT THE TWINNING WEBSITE

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/tenders/twinning/index_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/overview/twinning_en.htm

or CONTACT THE INSTITUTION BUILDING UNIT DIRECTLY

Tel.: + 32 2 296 73 07

Fax: + 32 2 296 09 72

elarg-taiex@ec.europa.eu or

elarg-twinning@ec.europa.eu

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