



# TAIEX and Twinning 2016 Highlights



Johannes Hahn  
European Commissioner  
for Neighbourhood Policy &  
Enlargement Negotiations

*Dear Institution Building Friends,*

*Novelties and modernisation have been the motto for TAIEX<sup>1</sup> and Twinning in 2016: we cut red tape, strengthened the incentives for Member States public officials to participate in peer-to-peer assistance and aligned the Institution Building activities with our key political priorities in the European Neighbourhood and Enlargement regions. TAIEX is now even better placed to contribute to implementing the European Neighbourhood Policy's (ENP) economic dimension and to help creating closer synergy between policy work and financial assistance programming. Similarly, the recently finalised Twinning reform will significantly increase the instrument's added value in promoting the ENP's structural reform efforts. In the enlargement region, TAIEX supported important policy activities such as the vetting process of Albanian judges and prosecutors in active service, while Croatia, still benefitting from Twinning projects as a very new Member State, was for the first time awarded a contract to implement itself a Twinning Light.*

*I am convinced that 2017 will see an even stronger alignment of the Institution Building instruments with the political priorities of the EU, helping our partner countries to extend their administrative capacities, improve their democratic and human rights standards and thus move even closer to the EU. TAIEX and Twinning are key in fostering change, thus paving the way for political reforms and enhanced cooperation among countries – the essential ingredients for a future of common stability, prosperity and security.*

*We count on your continued support and interest in TAIEX and Twinning!*

## TAIEX and Twinning, public administrations fostering change

There are many ways to promote democracy and stability, the rule of law and good governance as well as economic development and prosperity in the Neighbourhood and Enlargement regions. Since the start of their operations, TAIEX and its longer-term sibling, Twinning, contributed to achieving these goals by strengthening capacity and supporting the work of public administrations.

National institutions face similar challenges when it comes to implementing laws and safeguarding the values they embody. By mobilising experts from the EU Member States to help, TAIEX and Twinning assist Enlargement regions in transposing and implementing the EU legislation on their path to accession, and Neighbourhood ones in harmonising their laws in the framework of Cooperation and Association Agreements with the EU. On top of that, the two instruments are an excellent channel to support mutual understanding among those countries and the EU and to encourage the fundamental reforms that are needed both in the Enlargement and in the Neighbourhood regions. After all, politics and administration are two sides of the same coin; when the latter works effectively, it can also help to catalyse political reforms.



In 2016, more than 1400 TAIEX activities took place and on average seven new Twinning projects were launched per month.

“ .....  
• Administrative questions are not political questions. Although politics sets the tasks for administration [...]. Policy does nothing without the aid of administration.  
..... ”

*The Study of Administration, Woodrow Wilson, 1887*

Neighbourhood  
and Enlargement  
Negotiations

<sup>1</sup> TAIEX is the "Technical Assistance and Information Exchange" instrument.

# TAIEX Activities in 2016

## TAIEX in short

- It is peer-to-peer assistance from EU Member States to neighbouring countries<sup>2</sup>
- It targets central public administrations, judiciary and law enforcement authorities, parliaments and their civil servants, representatives of social partners, trade unions and employers' associations
- It provides three main types of short-term activities: study visits, expert missions or workshops (single or multi-beneficiary)
- It is funded from the EU budget and managed by the European Commission
- It can be a demand-driven (classic TAIEX) or a policy planning (TAIEX strategic) tool
- It has a TAIEX Expert Database gathering public experts' profiles

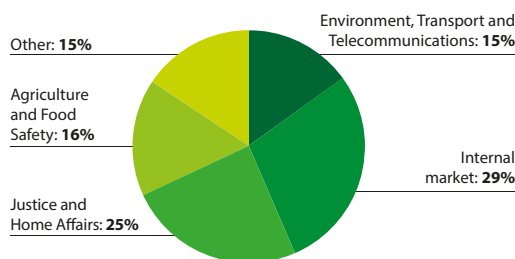
## TAIEX numbers in 2016



Pick any Monday in 2016. By the time you came home for dinner, an average of five TAIEX activities had taken place in different countries and regions. By the weekend, over 60 experts had provided their expertise to peers. By the end of the year, there were enough participants to fill in a sizeable football stadium. In 2016, 46% of TAIEX activities were expert missions, 25% were study visits and 25% were workshops<sup>3</sup>.

In 2016 Montenegro in the Enlargement area, Israel in the Southern Neighbourhood and Ukraine in the Eastern Neighbourhood had the most TAIEX activities. With respect to 2015, the most significant increases in TAIEX assistance were recorded in Armenia (+160%), Tunisia (+75%) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (+71%). Activities strongly decreased, however, in Azerbaijan and Morocco (-45%) and in Lebanon (-31%). When it comes to activities with cross-cutting regional participation, in 2016 TAIEX organised 85 multi-country activities, for example a TAIEX International Forum for Prosecutors on Fighting Organised Crime which brought together prosecutors from all over the Enlargement and Neighbourhood regions to exchange knowledge and experiences on arms trafficking, trafficking of human beings and the fight against terrorism.

### Which policy areas?



**3368** experts

**92%** of participants rated TAIEX experts in 2016 as excellent or good

**25447** participants



“Analysing EU legislation on competition and relevant case-law is important for judicial reform in our country, especially for the Ukrainian system of economic courts. Thanks to a TAIEX Workshop, judges in our economic courts learned about valuable instruments in the field of competition law and exchanged views with colleagues from EU Member States on concepts such as dominant market positions and cartel enforcement. Learning from peers who face similar problems can definitely help to improve the implementation of national justice.”

Bogdan Lvov, Chairman of the Supreme Economic Court of Ukraine, on a TAIEX activity carried on in Kiev

<sup>2</sup> Besides Enlargement and Neighbourhood countries and regions (represented on the map), TAIEX also provides assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community (also represented on the map), to EU Member States through a cooperation agreement with the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, and to countries elsewhere in the world covered by the EU Partnership Instrument.

<sup>3</sup> The remaining 4% includes work from home and screenings.

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

# Twinning Activities in 2016

## Twinning numbers in 2016



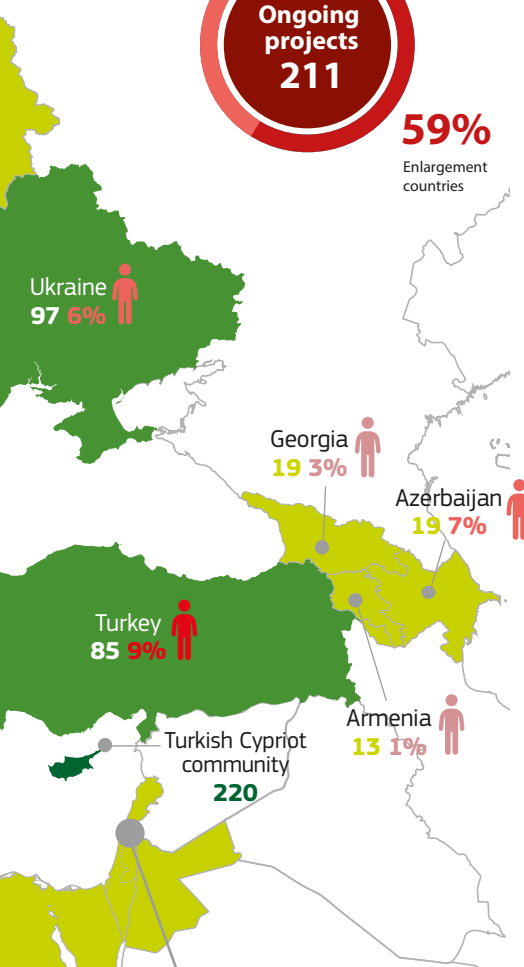
41%

Neighbourhood countries



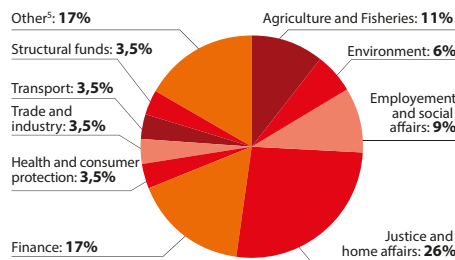
59%

Enlargement countries

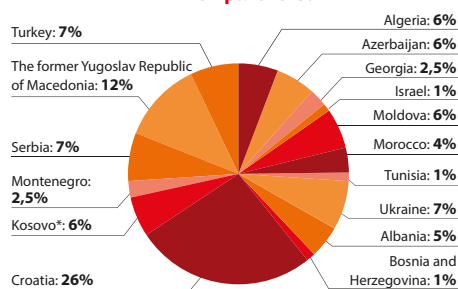


## 84 new projects awarded

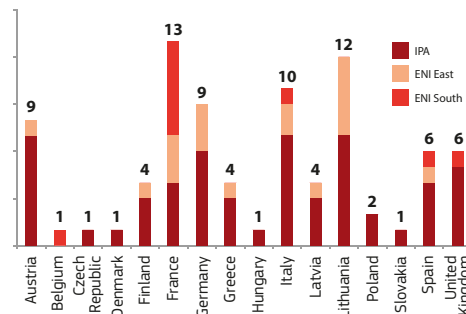
### Which sectors?



### Which partners?



### Which EU country is leading the project?



## Twinning in short

- It is a peer-to-peer administrative cooperation tool from EU Member States to neighbouring countries<sup>4</sup>
- It targets public administrations
- It takes the form of long-term, on-the-ground cooperation
- It achieves concrete, mandatory results
- It is funded from the EU budget and co-implemented by the Member States and the partners
- It is demand-driven
- It relies on a Network of EU Member States' National Contact Points and EU Delegations or Offices.

In 2016, 211 Twinning projects were ongoing across the Enlargement and Neighbourhood regions. As regards the 84 new projects awarded in 2016, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia<sup>6</sup> among partners in the Enlargement area, Ukraine in the Eastern Neighbourhood and Algeria in the Southern Neighbourhood had the highest number of projects. Among the EU Member States, France was awarded the most new projects both in general and across French-speaking countries of the Southern Neighbourhood; Austria lead in the Enlargement region and Lithuania ranked first in the Eastern Neighbourhood. As in 2015, Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) were the preferred policy area of new projects in all regions accounting for 26% of the newly awarded projects, a clear sign of the continued importance this thematic area has among the EU's neighbours.

## How does it work?

Once a partner country in consultation with the EU Delegation or Office decides that a Twinning project can provide added value for its modernisation process, a call is launched simultaneously in the 28 EU Member States through the National Contact Points. After receiving the **proposals**, a selection committee (on which the partner and EU Delegation or Office are represented) will award the project to a single EU Member State or a consortium of EU Member States as described in the winning proposal. Once the project is implemented, it is managed by two project leaders, one on behalf of the leading Member State, the other on behalf of the partner. In standard Twinning projects, a Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA) is seconded to the partner institution for the duration of the Twinning project which usually lasts from 12 months to 36 months. "Twinning Light" is designed to offer a more flexible approach (over a period of six to eight months) without the need to deploy a RTA from the lead EU Member State. Interim and final reporting and review missions ensure monitoring of the project and assessment of its impact in the medium term.

“ This Twinning project has helped our institution and our stakeholders to strengthen our overall capacity for the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). It has increased food security, market stability and competitiveness of our producers within the agricultural and fishery sectors and has ensured the quality of products and services for our citizens.

Matilda Copic, Director General of the Croatian Paying Agency



<sup>4</sup> Both in the Enlargement and in the Neighbourhood regions.

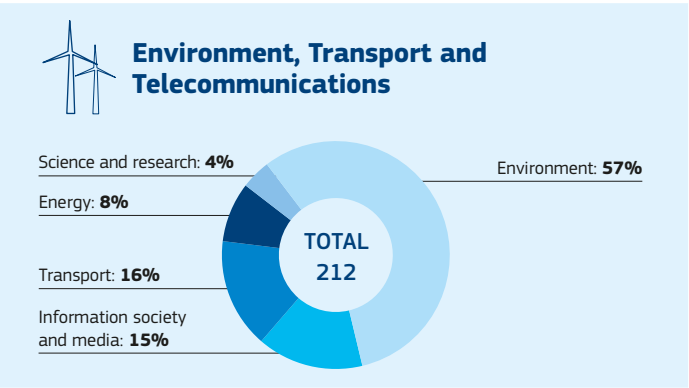
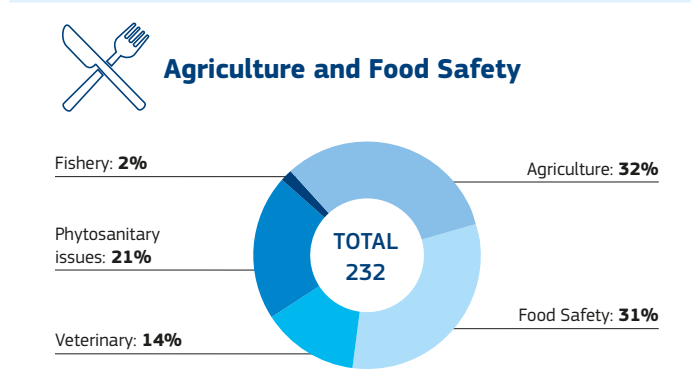
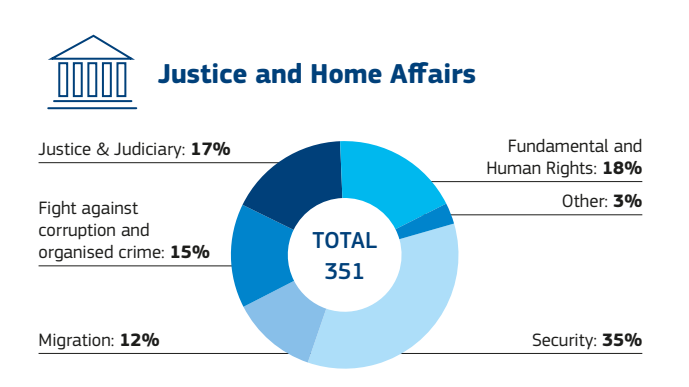
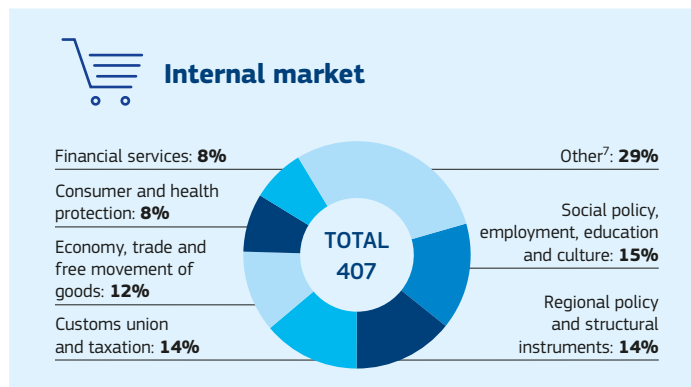
<sup>5</sup> "Other" includes: standardisation and certification, statistics, nuclear safety, energy, Public Administration Reform, culture and telecommunications.

<sup>6</sup> Strictly speaking, Croatia benefited from the most of the awarded Twinning projects in 2016. As a new EU Member State, Croatia was still eligible, until 14 January 2017, for Twinning assistance.

\*\* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

# TAIEX 2016 in depth

## TAIEX activities per sector



## TAIEX delivers on EU policy priorities


Throughout 2016 TAIEX organised a series of activities on migration, internal and external security, and on economic governance – areas which EU leaders placed high on the EU policy agenda in Bratislava in September 2016. At the same time, TAIEX continued to address other important areas, in particular reinforcing the role of the EU as a global actor and promoting efforts to boost employment, growth and investment in the EU and neighbouring countries and regions.

For example, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia TAIEX experts worked on bringing national legislation on asylum

procedures in line with EU standards and on strengthening institutional capacities in that area. In Serbia, TAIEX helped to assess the national Integrated Border Management Strategy in order to better respond to security threats and risks. TAIEX also helped the Western Balkans and Turkey with their Economic Reform Programmes and provided expertise on digitalisation, Interconnectivity (ICT) skills and e-commerce.

Every week in 2016, an average of five TAIEX activities focused on migration, security and economic governance.

“ Thanks to TAIEX, Montenegro drafted a Law on Asylum aligned with EU asylum standards. Fundamental rights of asylum applicants – including the most vulnerable ones – are guaranteed while at the same time ensuring faster determination procedures. Moreover, asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection will benefit from user-friendly multilingual brochures on their rights and obligations. Such activities supported by TAIEX could be a model for other countries facing similar challenges. ”



Cédric Dartois, Belgian Asylum Expert, on a series of activities carried out in Montenegro

## ♀♂ Working for gender equality

Gender equality is at the core of European values and enshrined in the EU legal and political framework. In 2016 TAIEX renewed its long-term commitment to gender equality with many different actions. In January, for example, Belgian, Croatian and Swedish experts shared their expertise on combatting gender stereotypes in the media with Montenegrin colleagues. In November officials from Belarus drew inspiration from the experience of the Portuguese Public Prosecution Service for their legislation on the prevention of domestic violence.

As for gender balance in TAIEX activities, there is still room for improvement with 46% of female and 54% of male **participants** attending TAIEX events. It is however among the Member State **experts** mobilised by TAIEX where the gap is more significant, as only one third are women. To respond to this challenge, TAIEX is designing specific strategies to support women’s registration in the TAIEX Expert Database and it is stepping up efforts on the gender dimension of statistics and reporting.

<sup>7</sup> \*Other\* includes: statistics; Public Administration Reform; competition; budget and audit; intellectual property; public procurement; parliaments; free provision of services.

# TAIEX 2016 Success stories

## Building an innovation ecosystem in Serbia



Innovation has a key role in growth and investments and is supported by the EU enlargement policy. The government of Serbia has increasingly recognised the importance of developing a knowledge-based and innovative economy and it has progressively taken measures to support an innovation-supporting environment.

In this context, in November, officials from the Innovation Fund of the Republic of Serbia visited the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation in Helsinki. Finnish experts provided practical advice on the establishment and operation of an innovation ecosystem in line with EU best practice, on performance and impact indicators and on evaluation mechanisms for nationally funded start-ups. The study visit succeeded in bringing together experts from one of the best performing EU Member States according to the European Innovation Scoreboard, with colleagues from Serbia seeking exactly that expertise.

## Supporting the reform of the judiciary in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The fight against corruption and organised crime is one of the cornerstones of the EU accession process. Thus it is key for countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is currently undertaking reform of the judiciary system.

To support its efforts to build a more independent and accountable judiciary, in

September 2016, TAIEX sent officials of the Bosnian High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council (HJPC) to Rome on a study visit. The participants *“had the opportunity to exchange best practice with colleagues from the Italian Superior Council of Magistrates and other key judicial institutions”*, as Admir Suljagic, one of the participants, recalled, and *“to learn from the Italian experience in combatting organised crime and terrorism”*.

As a result, a series of follow-up TAIEX activities was organised in Bosnia and Herzegovina so as to continue supporting the country's EU integration process.



## Ensuring coordination on food safety in Lebanon



Food safety is a major concern for Lebanon and its citizens. In recent years the country has tried to develop a well-rounded system to undertake checks on foodstuff by putting in place a number of laws and regulations as well as a database of food establishments. However, responsibilities in the food safety domain are split among nine ministries, thus causing some

degree of inefficiency.

To help the Lebanese National Food Safety Committee in devising an efficient coordination system among the authorities in charge, TAIEX organised an expert mission in September followed by a workshop in November.

According to Alberto Mancuso and Giuseppe Diegoli, the Italian experts involved, the mission was crucial for the *“beneficiaries to identify gaps and overlaps in food safety practices”* and to devise *“a roadmap for the improvement of the food safety system and an action plan”*. These documents were discussed during the workshop, with a view to establishing a food safety authority in the future.

## Bringing Ukraine closer to the EU

In 2016 TAIEX stepped up its efforts in Ukraine through several activities.

In April and September, for example, two such expert missions brought Belgian, German, Lithuanian and Spanish expertise to assist with the national gas law and the certification of the transmission system operator for gas. In

October, Polish officials advised their Ukrainian counterparts on the establishment of volunteer fire-fighting brigades. In November French, Latvian and Polish experts arrived in Kiev to discuss rules of origin in the customs area.

These activities supported, among other things, the implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with Ukraine in the areas of customs and trade facilitation and also helped the country in its reform efforts. *“Polish experience in the field of civil protection was very valuable for us as Poland was also part of the socialist bloc. We are now using this knowledge to create a tailored-made system for Ukraine”* noted Sergii Kudin, State Emergency Service.



# Twinning 2016 Success stories

## Backing Tunisia's reform efforts on justice



Since the 2011 revolution, the EU has used all of its available instruments to support the Tunisian people and the reforms needed for democratic transition. Two Twinning projects were launched in 2015 on reforming the judiciary and modernising the prison system. Peer-to-peer activities were found to be the best approach to strengthen the

capacity of the institute responsible for the training of judges and court clerks – the “Institut supérieur de la magistrature” (ISM) – and to reform the prison administration.

The end of 2016 marked the halfway point and the projects have already achieved much in improving the conditions of Tunisian prisons and the independence of the judiciary: new organisational charts of both the ISM and the Directorate for prisons have been finalised, six new probation offices in first instance courts have been put in place and the selection and training of judicial staff has been modernised, thus making concrete steps in bringing the justice sector in line with international standards.

## Assisting Albania in efficiently using public funds



Good governance, the reform of public administration and public financial management are some of the main foci of the EU Enlargement process. The promotion of efficient, effective and transparent use of public funds is very important as the quality of public spending impacts on the quality and quantity of the services the State provides to its citizens.

Since it became a candidate country, Albania has worked on putting in place the reforms needed in this area. In 2014 a new Twinning project was launched to improve not only the efficiency and effectiveness of public financial management, but also the transparency, accountability and professionalism of the public administration.

At its conclusion in 2016, the project had achieved tangible results such as helping Albania develop significant expertise, efficient tools, improved capacity of the administration and a better legal framework to safeguard better value for money and fight misuse of public funds, fraud and corruption.

## Working with Montenegro on the Schengen *acquis*

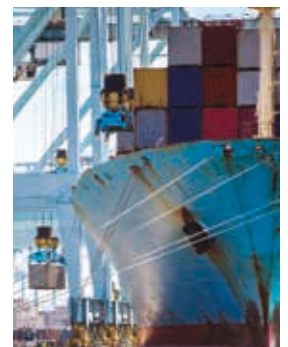


Schengen rules are one of the major achievements of the EU and are key for any country on the accession path. Being fully equipped to meet the challenges related to border management is particularly difficult in this moment, as last years' unprecedented migration flows and humanitarian emergency put a huge strain on our neighbouring countries and regions.

A Twinning project on the adoption of the Schengen *acquis* was launched in Montenegro in 2014. The country had already adopted a number of measures but much was, for instance, still left to improve the legal package related to border management.

The project addressed many of these shortcomings. When it ended in 2016, a Schengen Action Plan had been implemented, the Montenegrin Border Police had improved its capacity for performing risk assessments and the Police Directorate had improved its capacity in the field of international police cooperation. The project also paved the way for stronger cooperation with the EU on this topic through a future budget support programme, which is planned for 2017.

## Supporting Azerbaijan's World Trade Organisation (WTO) membership



Accession to the WTO is key to Azerbaijan, as it is linked to the long-term objective of supporting the country's sustainable economic development. WTO membership is also a requirement to further formalise trade links with the EU.

In this context, in 2013 a Twinning project on the development of a modern

system of standardisation and technical regulations started in the country with the aim of supporting the Azerbaijan authorities in developing a standardisation and regulatory system in compliance with EU and WTO requirements.

Finalised in 2016, the project managed to achieve, among other things, a regulatory framework for quality management and conformity assessment in line with EU and WTO requirements, which is now ready to be adopted. The specification for a database for Azerbaijan Standards was developed with an accessible online catalogue and a modern system for the sale of standards. These achievements will impact significantly on the country's ability to access world markets and bring it one step closer to achieving its WTO membership.

# Twinning 2016 in depth

## Reforming Twinning

In 2014 the European Commission started reflecting on how to steer Twinning in a new strategic direction and to promote it as part of the EU Member States' cooperation efforts with the Enlargement and Neighbourhood regions. In this context, the reform of the Twinning Manual was undertaken in such a way so as to make this unique cooperation instrument more flexible and easier to use. In September 2016 the process entered its most vivid phase when the first draft of the new Manual was presented to the EU Member States' National Contact Points in Vienna.

The fruit of an inclusive process, the reform covers, among other things, simplified financial procedures, a decrease of

the administrative burden for the EU Member States, a faster project-cycle, an increase in the minimum compensation for the EU Member State experts in order to attract the best talent from public administrations and assimilated bodies, a harmonisation of procedures between the Enlargement and the Neighbourhood regions and a reinforced section on communication and visibility. The Twinning tool was also aligned with the Commission's policies on Public Administration Reform.

The Twinning reform and the new Manual are set to enter into force on 1 July 2017.

## What differences did Twinning make in 2016

Twinning's uniqueness and success lie in the fact that, for any given contract, an EU Member State expert is seconded to the partner administration to help it to achieve specific mandatory operational results aiming, for example, at strengthening an anti-corruption department or at reorganising a veterinary agency.

*The result of the Twinning project targeting the Court of Auditors in Algeria is undoubtedly enabling the Court to refine and consolidate its working methods with a view to producing more efficient audit work. The Court will for sure play an important role in the national control system of public finance.*

Mohamed Salim Benanmar, Secretary-General of the Algerian Court of Auditors

*Thanks to this Twinning project Ukraine successfully finalised the implementation of its model for the management of electronic equipment waste. We managed to find common ground with all stakeholders involved in the sector and we are now working together with our European colleagues on developing proper legislation in line with EU law.*

Maksym Barinov, Ministry for Regional Development, Construction, Housing and Municipal Services of Ukraine

*Thanks to the Twinning Project high visibility was given to the role of the Anti-Corruption Agency in Serbia in its efforts to prevent corruption, encourage reforms and harmonise its set of laws with EU legislation and values. The project definitely increased awareness on corruption in Serbia.*

Filippo Romano, project leader and Eugenio Turco, Resident Twinning Adviser

## Twinning's long-term positive impact

Twinning projects show a track-record of long-term and durable results, as they rest on an in-depth assessment of and joint efforts to implement reforms needed in specific sectors.

In 2016, for example, a review mission on a Twinning project in Albania related to customs found that an impressive 98% of the Twinning recommendations were put into place and still continued to be in place two years after the end of the project. Among other things, many of the mandatory results of the project had been fully embedded within the Albanian law and a new National Strategy on Intellectual Property had been developed incorporating EU law into Albanian legislation.

*"A site visit to both the existing and proposed Customs Laboratory premises was both enlightening and useful to fully understand the huge positive developments that are occurring in this sector, with the evident political impetus and significant funding commitment"* David Webb, the expert in charge of the mission, mentioned in his report.

As the Twinning review mission on the Albanian Customs Administration shows, Twinning has a considerable long-term impact which makes it a one-of-a-kind reform-fostering instrument with sustainability.



# TAIEX from the past to the future

## Celebrating 20 years of TAIEX and TAIEX Strategic

To mark its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the success of the instrument between April and June 2016 TAIEX organised five “celebratory” workshops. The objective of the seminars was to create a platform at which EU Member States officials who experienced TAIEX in their pre-accession efforts shared their experience with the beneficiaries of today’s peer-to-peer assistance. Each seminar focused on a different topic: information society and media was covered by Lithuania, market surveillance by Malta, youth employment by Slovakia, judicial cooperation in criminal matters by Poland and marketing standards in fruit and vegetables by Croatia. The conferences promoted a fruitful exchange of experiences on the strong bond between approximation to EU legislation and TAIEX assistance and triggered several follow-up requests for assistance.

TAIEX has put down strong roots as a key capacity building tool for countries and regions which want to approximate, apply and enforce EU legislation. In recent times, the evolution of policy needs has called for a redefinition of TAIEX’s role in a more proactive sense. In early 2016 the process of TAIEX recalibration

was launched which led to the implementation of TAIEX strategic, the key objective of which is to facilitate the structural reforms necessary in the Enlargement and Neighbourhood regions as well as to catalyse reforms where possibilities arise.

Under TAIEX strategic, enhanced contribution to the fulfilment of specific policy objectives both within the Directorate-General (DG) for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations and across line DGs can be offered. Thanks to its flexible, tailor-made and responsive approach and to its very broad and well-grounded understanding of the EU legislation, TAIEX strategic can give its contribution to the forecasting and sequencing of activities in support of policy reforms and to the programming of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) and of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

Born twenty years ago as a demand-driven instrument, TAIEX is available today both in its classic and strategic forms thus giving partners and EU institutions a flexible and reliable instrument which is up to speed and up with the times.

## «How I discovered TAIEX...» Interview with Maciej Popowski

Maciej Popowski is DG NEAR’s Deputy-Director General in charge of Southern Neighbourhood, Turkey, Migration, Refugees and Security. He is also father of a daughter, an enthusiastic traveller and a fervent fan of rock music, - a passion he clearly illustrates by showcasing a collection of little guitars in his office.

When TAIEX was created, more than twenty years ago, he was a diplomat based in the Mission of Poland to the European Union. He witnessed the creation of the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Office, which immediately caught his attention as he quickly understood how such a tool could help Poland with complex pieces of EU legislation. He started promoting the instrument in his country, which he considered to be a key tool in the EU accession process. Many success stories later, Mr Popowski remembers the creation of the instrument and its evolution over time.



### In which context did you first cooperate with TAIEX?

In 1998 Poland started accession negotiations with a fairly small team of technicians. When screening of the EU law started, we needed people with the knowledge of the files, which was a scarce commodity at that time. Fortunately most of them benefited from TAIEX expertise. TAIEX worked in close cooperation with the Polish administration during this process in order to identify gaps and to provide targeted support.

### Did the results of TAIEX activities match your expectations?

The initiative was a real success story. People were hungry for knowledge but also curious to meet their peers in the EU Member States and people from the European Commission. As a natural continuation of the TAIEX instrument, Twinning was created, offering the candidate countries the opportunity to exchange best practices and to learn from the experience of the EU Member States on a longer-term basis. Even though I had no first-hand experience with Twinning, I clearly remember the significant contribution of a Dutch seconded national expert who supported the Polish Ministry of Justice in the reform of the criminal law.

### What do you think of the strategic direction TAIEX has taken today?

Today partners are different but the objective remains unchanged. TAIEX has an excellent track record as one of the best performing instruments for capacity building and public reform: fostering peer-to-peer assistance and technical exchanges among administrations. The instrument’s additional strategic approach makes sure that not only partners’ needs are catered for, but that the EU’s strategic priorities benefit from this highly flexible and efficient tool.

For more information visit our websites or contact directly the Institution Building Unit:

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