

TWINNING NEWS No 25

BUILDING EUROPE TOGETHER

Meeting of National Contact Points for Twinning and Taixex

On 31st May and 1st June, the Annual Meeting of National Contact Points for Twinning and Taixex was held in Brussels. The event, co-organised with DG EuropeAid, gathered around 200 representatives from the administrations of the Member States (including the New Member States), Candidate Countries, Western Balkans and the European neighbourhood area. The morning of the first day was devoted to the policy perspectives related to Enlargement and the European neighbourhood initiative; the afternoon was fully focused on Twinning with presentations of both Twinning Teams - DG Enlargement and DG EuropeAid -. All presentations will be distributed to participants via email. The second day focused on the Taixex instrument.



Catherine Day, Secretary General of the European Commission, opening the meeting



Around 200 representatives

Alain van Hamme explained that Twinning has been integrated into the new structures of the rationalized Community external assistance with the fact that the Twinning Manual is now explicitly mentioned in the IPA Implementation Regulation. This fact represents an important step to the confirmation of Twinning as a fully fledged Institution Building

instrument which early had only been introduced by reference (in the conclusions of the European Council of Luxembourg of 1997, and in the pre-accession strategy assistance).

Twinning has developed thanks to the Commission's creativity and to the commitment of all Twinning stakeholders.



Alain Van Hamme, Twinning Team, DG Enlargement

The Common Twinning Manual ² is a streamlined version; but it is not a completely new Manual. The Common Twinning Manual ² intends to promote a more consistent application of Twinning rules. As we are working in different areas with different management modes, the need for applying common rules is still more evident. Since 2005, DG Enlargement and DG EuropeAid have been working together to enhance harmonization in the areas where this was possible. A good balance between consistency and flexibility is needed. The main changes to the Twinning manual will be the following:

- Change in terminology IPA and ENPI and improvement of templates
- Data protection
- New emphasis on Sustainability
- Expenditure verification report
- Rule of Budgetary Changes

The Manual is, at this moment, being approved by the different hierarchical levels in the respective Directorates General. We expect that the Manual will be published before the summer break and will be applicable to all Twinning projects for which the official letter of notification of selection will be issued as from 1st of September 2007.

Whereas the Commission has stated that the Enlargement Strategy is characterised by the 3 Cs (conditionality, consolidation and improved communication) Twinning also has a 3 Cs "slogan": Creativity, Cooperation and Commitment. With these three Cs, the instrument will be able to continue to develop.

Laia Pinós Mataró presented the latest statistics on Twinning projects. The overall number of projects for Phare, Transition Facility and Cards reaches 1300 projects. The review of 2006 showed that for Phare and the Transition Facility, the countries with the highest number of Twinning projects are Romania, Turkey and Poland respectively. In the Western Balkans, the countries with the most Twinning projects in 2006 are Serbia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In 2006 (for all projects programmed and circulated in 2006 – round not concluded yet) for Phare and Transition Facility, the European Commission received 246 proposals of which 43 were from Germany, 28 from France and 26 from Austria. For CARDS, the Commission received 27 proposals, of which 5 were from Germany, 3 from France and 3 from United Kingdom. These figures are not final and several 2006 Twinning projects for the Western Balkans still have to be circulated.

The data on the Member States' involvement reflect that the number of consortia between Member States consistently decreased in both areas – Phare and Transition Facility and Cards-. This fact looks surprising; particularly when the number of Member States is higher than in the past and the competition is clearly stronger. Referring to the 2007 programming exercise, a list of potential Twinning projects was circulated to the National Contact Points. The Twinning Team will continue to update the table and will inform accordingly.

In the subsequent discussion, member States raised the following issues/ problems:

- the need to evaluate systematically the Twinning projects
- the problems caused when the Member State(s) partner (s) decide(s) to withdraw: the solutions are different depending on when the withdrawal occurs; before the negotiation of the contract - the project fiche may be recirculated; After starting the project: the termination of the contract should follow the rules established in the general Conditions of the Twinning contract. Penalties are not common as the Twinning instrument is based on the good cooperation between partners and does not involve a commercial partnership.
- the replacement of a RTA after the selection of member State(s) partner(s)

- Evaluation Grid: The institutional structure of the Member State administration should also be an element of evaluation

Stronger cooperation between Twinning stakeholders should be promoted, for example through a website forum where exchange of best practices could take place

- co-financing; often it only consists in quantifying the amount of the contributions in kind

Twinning DVD

2007 marks the tenth anniversary of Twinning. The European Commission produced a documentary video on Twinning in order to continue promoting this instrument in the Member States' administrations.

Twinning relies entirely on the efficient administrative co-operation of the Member States with their counterparts in the beneficiary countries. It is clear that Twinning could not have achieved the success it has today without the relentless support of the Member States and their Administrations. Videos are available upon request to the Twinning Coordination Team.



Presenting the Twinning DVD

Mandated Bodies: University experts

Twinning is a public sector Institution Building Instrument that organises the transfer of administrative expertise in order to ensure the correct implementation of Community acquis in the beneficiary countries. The difference between Twinning expertise and classical technical

assistance lies precisely in the hands-on, practical expertise provided by civil servants from peer administrations.

To preserve this distinctive quality of Twinning it is essential that the experts proposed by the Member State administrations for the implementation of Twinning projects are administrative practitioners. University scholars and professors even from public universities, researchers or private lawyers do not belong to the administrative services entrusted with legal implementation of the acquis.

Universities or research institutes are only to be proposed in very exceptional cases (for instance in highly specialised and technical fields) for ad hoc Twinning mandates and surely not for general Twinning mandated body status.

FLASH NEWS

Bulgaria: EDIS accreditation expected for mid July

Steering Committee Consultations - deadline: In order to guarantee that binding opinions on draft Twinning Contracts by the Twinning Steering Committee at headquarters are finalised and available before 03 August, we would need the draft Twinning contracts to be submitted to the Twinning co-ordination team by 29 June.

Kosovo; In view of possible Twinning operations, a provisional Contact Point for Twinning has been appointed in Kosovo: Mr Ahmet G. KASUMI (Office of the Prime Minister -Kosovo - ahmet.kasumi@ks-gov.net).

The Twinning Team wishes you a nice summer break.

The next twinning news will be issued in September

