



Zpráva z výzkumného projektu MZV ČR

**Twinningové projekty**  
**– Analýza zkušeností „starých“ států EU a zhodnocení přínosu**  
**Twinningu out pro Českou republiku**

**Twinning Projects:**  
**Analysing the Experience of „Old“ EU Member States and**  
**Evaluating Benefits of Twinning Out for the Czech Republic**

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## Table of Contents:

Glossary of Acronyms .....	3
1 Introduction.....	5
2 Background.....	8
2.1 Enlargement Instruments and Commission Strategy .....	8
2.2 Twinning – Description of an Instrument.....	9
2.3 New Developments, Plans and Priorities of the Commission .....	12
2.3.1 Further accession negotiations and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) .....	13
2.3.2 Complementarity of TWO and TAIEX .....	14
2.4 Aims of Twinning and Theoretical Underpinnings .....	15
2.4.1 Learning and Socialisation.....	15
2.4.2 Institutional Change .....	17
2.4.3 Mutual Learning and Adaptation .....	18
3 Report Methodology .....	19
4 Presentation of Findings .....	22
4.1 NCP models .....	23
4.2 Preparation .....	37
4.3 Contracting.....	42
4.4 Domestic Resources.....	43
4.5 Implementation .....	44
4.6 Evaluation .....	48
5 Benefits, Costs, Risks and Opportunities of Twinning.....	51
5.1 General Benefits and Drawbacks of Twinning.....	51
5.2 Benefits and Drawbacks of Twinning Out for Provider Countries.....	53
5.3 Risks and Constraints of Twinning Out.....	54
6 Recommendations.....	56
6.1 General Recommendations for New Member States.....	56
6.2 Recommendations Specific to the Czech Republic .....	58
6.2.1 Czech Republic: Priorities, Prerequisites and Scope Conditions.....	59
6.2.2 National Contact Point Location.....	62
6.2.3 Suggestions for Improved Performance in Twinning Out Coordination.....	66
6.2.4 Models for Czech Involvement in Twinning Out .....	67
6.2.5 International Twinning Out Seminar .....	70
Acknowledgements.....	71
References.....	72
Appendix 1 – Questionnaires	
Appendix 2 – Data Collection Overview	
Appendix 3 – List of Respondents	
Appendix 4 – NCP Location and Organigrams	
Appendix 5a – European Commission – Twinning: Key Facts and Figures	
Appendix 5b – European Commission – Twinning Implementation – MEDA and TACIS	
Appendix 6 – Summary Report from the Annual Meeting of Institution-Building Instruments (Twinning/TAIEX)	
Appendix 7a – Návrh věcného záměru zákona o zahraniční rozvojové spolupráci a humanitární pomoci poskytované do zahraničí	
Appendix 7b – Stávající a návrh nového institucionálního uspořádání zahraniční rozvojové spolupráce České republiky	
Appendix 7c – Předkládací zpráva k návrhu věcného záměru zákona o ZRS	

## Glossary of Acronyms

AO	Administrative Office
AEI	<i>Agentur für Europäische Integration und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung</i> (Austria)
AP	Accession Partnership
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BC	Beneficiary Country (beneficiary of PHARE/Transition Facility, CARDS, TACIS or MEDA assistance)
BMW	German Federal Ministry of Economics
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CARDS	Community Assistance For Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation for Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, including Kosovo, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)
CBC	Cross Border Cooperation
CC	Candidate Country
CEECs	Central and Eastern European Countries
CFA	Centre for Foreign Assistance
CFCU	Central Financing and Contracting Unit
CR	Czech Republic
DG	Directorate General ( <i>within the European Commission</i> )
DIS	Decentralised Implementation System
EC	European Commission
EDIS	Extended Decentralised Implementation System
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy (Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine)
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instruments
ERFA	Danish expert network
ESC	Economic and Social Cohesion
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro(s)
EVD	Dutch Agency for International Business and Cooperation
FIIAPP	<i>Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas</i> (Spain)
GIP ADETEF	<i>Groupement d'Intérêt Général Assistance au Développement des Technologies Economiques et Financières</i>
GIP FCI	<i>Groupement d'Intérêt Général France Coopération Internationale</i>
GTZ	<i>Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit</i> (Germany)
IB	Institution Building
IBs	Intermediary Bodies ( <i>Structural Funds bodies</i> )
IE	Interim Evaluation
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession
IPA	Institute of Public Administration (Ireland)
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
KfW	<i>Kreditanstalt of Wiederaufbau</i> (Germany)
LFA	Logical Framework Analysis
LFM	Logical Framework Matrix
MEDA	the principal financial instrument of the European Union for the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, West Bank and Gaza Strip)
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MR	Monitoring Report
MS	(EU) Member States
MTE	Mid-term Expert
NAC	National Aid Co-ordinator
NAO	National Authorising Officer
NCP	National Contact Point
NMS	New Member States
NPAA	National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis

OMS	Old Member States
PAA	Pre-Accession Advisor
PAO	Programme Authorising Officer
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PF	Project Fiche
PHARE	<i>Pologne-Hongrie, Aide à la Restructuration Economique</i> - Community programme providing pre-accession assistance to countries from Central and Eastern Europe (originally: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, as of 1 May 2004: Bulgaria and Romania with specific financing arrangements for Turkey; as of 1 January 2005 also Croatia)
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PL	Project Leader
PRAG	Practical Guide to Contract Procedures ( <i>issued by the EC's EuropeAid</i> )
PSI	Private Sector Input
REC / DEC	Representation / Delegation of the European Commission
RTA	Resident Twinning Adviser
SFs	Structural Funds
SGAE	<i>Secrétariat Général des Affaires Européennes</i>
SGCI	<i>Secrétariat Général du Comité Interministériel pour les questions de coopération économique européenne</i>
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIGMA	Support for Improvement in Governance and Management in Central and Eastern European Countries
SPO	Senior Programme Officer
SPP	Special Preparatory Programme
STE	Short-term Expert
TA	Technical Assistance
TACIS	Technical Assistance to 12 countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia – the Commonwealth of Independent States (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan)
TAIEX	Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office
TC	Twinning Covenant / Twinning Contract
TF	Transition Facility (Cyprus, Malta, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia)
ToR	Terms of Reference
TW / TWL	Twinning / Twinning Light
TWI	Twinning In
TWO	Twinning Out

# 1 Introduction

Twinning has become the cornerstone of the European Union's assistance to Acceding, Candidate or Potential Candidate Countries. Recently, Twinning has also started benefiting countries included in the programme of enhanced co-operation<sup>1</sup> (European Neighbourhood Policy countries). The original aim of Twinning was and largely remains to be the building of capacity of these countries to adopt, implement and enforce the full *acquis communautaire* before joining the European Union (EU).

Being the instrument of choice for the European Commission (EC) in assisting Beneficiary Countries with their accession-related duties, Twinning helps the EU applicants and potential joiners to:

“reform, adapt, and strengthen their public institutions in order to apply well the EU rules and procedures (...) and benefit fully from membership of the Union” (European Commission 2006: 4).

Twinning was first launched in May 1998 and has become one of the key tools of *institution building* assistance within the larger context of enlargement initiatives. Twinning is a close and specific cooperation between a Beneficiary Country (BC) and a Member State (MS) to help BCs to develop modern and efficient administrations capable of applying the *acquis*.

Twinning works on the basis of specific, clearly defined projects with concrete operational results. A Twinning project is conceived as a joint venture of a Member State and a Beneficiary Country, a two-way street with credible commitments and responsibilities taken on by both Twinning partners.

Irrespective of the above-suggested prominence of Twinning, relatively few studies so far have dealt with the analysis and evaluation of this mechanism (e.g. Grabbe 2001; Tulmets 2003c, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006; Königová 2003, 2004; Papadimitrou and Phinnemore 2003a, 2003b, Bailey and de Propris 2004). Moreover, these studies and other independent evaluations (Birker et al. 2000; MZV ČR 2001; Cooper, Johansen 2003; WM Enterprise 2006; BMWi/GTZ 2006) have

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<sup>1</sup> Acceding, Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries as well as countries benefiting from the European Neighbourhood Policy are all referred to as Beneficiary Countries. **Acceding Countries** are Bulgaria and Romania; **Candidate Countries** include Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; and **Potential Candidate Countries** are currently listed by the European Commission as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, including Kosovo. **Neighbourhood countries** are Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia, and Ukraine. Furthermore, Twinning assistance will continue to be provided to New Member States (funded from the Transition Facility budget). From 2007 on, the Acceding, Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries will benefit from the Instrument of Pre-Accession (IPA) and the neighbourhood countries plus Russia from the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instruments (ENPI) – see Chapter 2.3.1.

focused mostly on the impact Twinning has had on Beneficiary Countries. In spite of several overall evaluation reports commissioned or undertaken by the European Commission (DG Enlargement/OMAS 2001; DG Enlargement/EMS 2004, EG Enlargement 2006), the EU as the initiator and sponsor of this assistance tool has *no comprehensive analysis of the benefits and drawbacks of Twinning for the providers*, i.e. for the “Old” Member States, even though some EU countries have been seeking to make these analyses domestically.

When the European Commission introduced the instrument in 1997/1998, it had to convince the representatives of Member States to start providing Twinning Out (TWO).<sup>2</sup> These representatives, in turn, had some convincing to do in terms of getting experts from their national administrations and institutions involved in institutional Twinning<sup>3</sup>. This report actually rehearses some of these arguments but has the incomparable benefit of drawing upon almost nine years of experience with Twinning Out to find out about the positives and negatives, about the benefits and costs, and about the risks and opportunities for Twinning Out assistance providers.

The primary aims of our project have been threefold:

- Collecting information on the actual mechanisms of Twinning projects as provided by institutions and experts from Old Member States of the EU;
- Identifying the benefits and highlight possible risks related to Twinning Out for the Czech Republic on the basis of the experience of Old Member States; and
- Drafting, on the basis of the findings and conclusions made, recommendations for the Czech Republic’s effective, efficient and economical involvement in Twinning Out projects.

In order to do so, we analysed and evaluated the data collected through questionnaires and interviews, drew upon several Twinning and Phare evaluation studies, and reviewed a number of quarterly, final and monitoring reports (for a detailed description of the methods used, see Chapter 3). This analysis is preceded by a short outline of the evolution of Twinning and the contextualisation of this instrument in the process of enlargement. We describe both the past and future uses of Twinning in the European Union’s external relations policy, focussed specifically on the organisation and coordination of TWO. This includes the set-up and operation of National Contact Points (NCPs); the preparation activities; domestic resources used to motivate and support public administration institutions as TWO expertise providers; the contracting and implementation processes and procedures, as well as TWO evaluation. It was on the basis of this data evaluation that our research team sought to identify the major opportunities and threats related to Twinning

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<sup>2</sup> Twinning In (TWI) is a term used for Twinning projects from the perspective of Beneficiary Countries. Twinning Out (TWO), on the contrary, refers to Twinning assistance from the point of view of providers, i.e. the Member States.

<sup>3</sup> There are also Twinning on a regional basis - between towns and cities. This study does not deal with this type of Twinning and focuses on institutional Twinning only.

Out projects in general and with a particular focus on the Czech Republic. This data interpretation and evaluation formed the basis for *thee major recommendations* to Czech decision-makers.

First, considering the administrative and resource situation in the Czech Republic, we present five models of Czech participation in Twinning Out:

- 1) The Czech Republic as a single applicant and provider of Twinning Out projects;
- 2) The Czech Republic as a Lead Partner in a Twinning Out consortium;
- 3) The Czech Republic as a Junior Partner in Twinning Out consortia;
- 4) The Czech Republic as a Strategic Junior Partner of certain Old Member States; and
- 5) The Czech Republic as a provider of individual experts for Twinning Out consortia.

Besides outlining the positives and negatives of each model and indicating the prerequisites for successfully putting them into practice, we also assign each model with a probability rate. Given Czech Republic's structural situation and on the basis of initial research among Czech TWO actors, models number three and five are given high probability rating. In other words, *the Czech Republic is expected to provide Junior Partner services and the expertise of individual experts on a most regular basis*. These two models also suit best the current capacities of and the level of commitment by Czech TWO actors and shall be what the Czech Republic should particularly focus on in short- to mid-term perspective.

Second, the report comes with six possible scenarios for the coordination and organisation of TWO in the Czech Republic:

- 1) NCP as a special unit based at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA);
- 2) NCP based at the MFA but delegating the operational and administrative tasks to a special agency outside the MFA;
- 3) NCP based at a special agency;
- 4) NCP as a special unit based at the Ministry of Finance (MF);
- 5) NCP based at the MF but delegating the operational and administrative tasks to a special agency outside the MF; and
- 6) NCP at the Government Office.

Considering the recent policy and legislative developments in the country, especially the draft legislation for setting up a special Development Assistance Agency, *we suggest that Czech policy-makers explore the third, agency-based scenario as the potentially most beneficial, effective and economical one*, with the second scenario being the second best option.

And finally, *we recommend organising an international Twinning Out seminar in Prague where the finding of this report could be explored further and which would allow for sharing of experience and transfer of know-how* from some Old Member States to the New Member States in general and the Czech Republic in particular.

## 2 Background

Twinning is a temporary secondment of public administration experts from EU Member States to the countries identified under relevant EU assistance programmes as beneficiaries (see Footnote 1). The objective is to assist Beneficiary Countries in building and strengthening their domestic institutions in order for them to have the capacity to implement the *acquis communautaire* in an effective and efficient manner. Some actors even go as far as referring to Twinning as to the most effective transfer of the “European” know-how abroad. In theory, Twinning could be a textbook example of socialisation which, in reflection of European integration, can contribute substantially to the *adaptation of domestic institutions to the implementation of the acquis*.

This chapter seeks to outline the key characteristics of Twinning, setting it within the larger context of enlargement and sketching out some new developments of the instrument, including the extended coverage and broader purpose of the instrument. The chapter closes by framing Twinning within the framework of institutional change and European integration studies, showing the strengths and innovative aspects of Twinning as a tool serving the EU and Beneficiary Countries.

### 2.1 Enlargement Instruments and Commission Strategy

The Copenhagen summit (1993) introduced three criteria for those seeking the membership in the European Union:

- 1) stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, respect for and protection of minorities (*political criteria*);
- 2) the existence of a market economy capable of coping with competitive pressures and market forces inside the Union (*economic criteria*);
- 3) the capacity to assume the obligations of accession, and notably to subscribe to the objectives of political, economic, and monetary union (*legal criteria* or the ability to adopt the *acquis communautaire*).<sup>4</sup>

A fourth criterion (the enlargement happening only if and when the EU has the capacity to absorb new members without threatening the momentum of European integration) does not concern the Candidate or Accession Countries but the Old Member States and the institutions, mechanisms and operation of the European Union.

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<sup>4</sup> For the Conclusions of the Copenhagen Summit see [http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/73842.pdf](http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/73842.pdf).



The 1995 Madrid Summit added another element to the above criteria: institutional capacity. This meant that Candidate Countries had to have administrative and judicial institutions which would be able to implement the *acquis*. This requirement underlined the conditionality of EU aid that was provided to Candidate and Accession Countries and marked a new phase in the EU enlargement process in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The principal instrument of technical assistance through which the EU has supported Candidate Countries from Central and Eastern Europe during pre-accession has been PHARE.<sup>5</sup> Some pilot projects on administrative capacity were introduced in Poland and Hungary between 1995 and 1997, but most of them failed due to the fact that consultancy was provided by private companies. In 1997, the European Commission (EC) issued its “Agenda 2000” (EC, 1997) and proposed to dedicate 30% of assistance to institution-building<sup>6</sup> and 70% to investment. The European Commission started searching for an effective external cooperation tool which would encourage and promote the build-up and strengthening of the administrative and judicial capacities of Beneficiary Countries. In 1998, PHARE procedures were reformed and the Commission came up with a new instrument called *Twinning*.

## 2.2 Twinning – Description of an Instrument<sup>7</sup>

The goal of institutional Twinning is a direct provision of expertise and transfer of experience with the functioning of public administrations implementing the *acquis* in different member states to public servants in Beneficiary Countries. This move by the Commission came in recognition of the varied institutional histories, patterns and trajectories in Europe.<sup>8</sup>

Traditionally, though involved in and organising many debates on public administration reform, the EU, as Olsen (2002: 5) reminds us, has not been particularly attentive to and focused on administrative issues. It was much rather policy making and substantive results than administrative arrangements that ranked top in Brussels, no less for the limited legitimacy of the Commission and its modest administrative capacities for this task. In spite of the Commission keeping an intentionally low profile, the EU has paid great attention to the institutional capacities of applicant

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<sup>5</sup> Council Regulation 3906/89. Originally aimed at helping Poland and Hungary only, the PHARE programme has been later on extended to cover other CEECs as well (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Romania).

<sup>6</sup> TAIEX is the first Phare institution-building instrument and was introduced by the European Commission in 1995. For the differences and linkages between Twinning and TAIEX see Chapter 2.3.2.

<sup>7</sup> This section draws on Königová 2003 and 2004.

<sup>8</sup> “[Twinning] brings the candidate countries into wider contact with the diversity of practice inside the EU.” (*Twinning in Action*:5). See also Grabbe 2001: 1023. Diverse diffusion of norms and standards as well as varied adaptation and only limited convergence in member states was also reported by Olsen and Peters (1996)

states and has exerted a strong pressure on the candidates to modernise their administrations (Grabbe 2001; Lippert, Umbach, Wessels 2001).

There is no well-developed encompassing public administration within the EU, no “institutional blueprint” for domestic administrations to adapt to, no shared understanding(s) of a distinct “best practice” in terms of *structure and procedures* (Sverdrup 2000:18), though the *White Paper on European Governance* (European Commission 2001b) seeks to set *performance* standards. The lack of a clear overarching public administration model and the relatively weak European powers for the imposition of *specific* changes in domestic administrations might be also considered as a factor for facilitating European integration (Sverdrup 2000:44).

Since 1998, the Twinning procedure has continuously been modified to reflect the practical experience and there have been numerous editions the Twinning Manual. The Twinning rules in force now (Twinning Manual, April 2005) can be briefly summed up in the following way: The competent authorities of Beneficiary Countries prepare Twinning project fiches on the basis of their bilateral agreements with the EU (Accession Partnership, Association and Stabilisation Agreement or Action Plan). These detailed fiches contain all of EU directives and regulations to be applied; identify the reforms already carried out and future needs, pre-defining to some extent the *benchmarks* that will have to be met. After getting approved by the EC Delegation, the project fiches are sent to the Commission’s relevant DG (DG Enlargement and/or AidCo) and then circulated among Member States’ National Contact Points (NCP). The NCPs distribute the “calls for participation”, i.e. the project fiches, to the competent authorities and relevant managers, who later send propositions via the NCP to the relevant Commission units. The EC Delegation is then charged with organising presentation meetings for these proposals in the Beneficiary Countries: the PLs and the PAAs/RTAs present their bids to their future colleagues from the BC, usually in English. The bids are then assessed by the BC. During the presentation, four to five members of the jury, generally officials of the ministry planning the Twinning, have to fill in a standard evaluation form containing specific criteria in order to judge the oral presentations and the written proposal of each Member State. They look at command of the project working language, the technical competences, and the expert’s past experience, his/her open-mindedness, and his/her will to find solutions adapted to the situation. Finally, jury members score the presentations on the basis of the evaluation form and of these general appreciations. The representatives of the BC send their decision to the EC Delegation.

A project can bring together a consortium of experts from two to three Member States, one of them taking up the role of a Project Leader / Lead Partner. Once the “model” is chosen, the future cooperation is planned in a Twinning contract between the partners. The “targets” of the project—called “mandatory results”—are defined in the contract. The PAAs/RTAs have to report on their activities, sending detailed quarterly project progress reports. They have to constantly refer

to the mandatory results defined under the Twinning contract and on the way they have been achieved so far. The Beneficiary Countries also evaluate their performance in project reports against benchmarks agreed in the Twinning contract.

The objective of Twinning is to make the BC's organisations fully functioning, effective, financially self-sufficient, sustainable and dynamic after the series of Twinning projects end. This is a distinct shift in the conception and implementation of EU assistance. Twinning is conceived as no direct and immediate "delivery without the demand" but as a "tailor-made project" with allowing for slight changes in cut and design right on the client,<sup>9</sup> though the change mechanism is rather clumsy and protracted, as we will show in Chapters 4 and 5. Clearly, the Commission has not opted here for a "single best way of organising administration" while recognising that the definitions of "good administration" always hinge upon specific, time- and place-bound ends, purposes and values (Olsen 2002). What is new here is the idea of permanent co-operation of the partner administration. The aim is to build long-term relationships between MS and BCs, their public administrations, agencies and bodies on national, regional and local levels and in a cross-section of sectors, foregrounding a favourable environment for future interactions within the enlarged EU framework for smooth governance.

While Twinning may be able to deliver all of the above, facilitating mainly the transfer of technical assistance from Member States' administrators to Beneficiary Countries' officials, there have been several obstacles and limitations, as pointed out by several evaluations and studies (see e.g. Cooper, Johansen 2003; Königová 2003, 2004; Bailey, de Propris 2004; Tulmets 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006; WM Enterprise 2006).

First of all, the Beneficiary Countries have often lacked sufficient capacity to absorb the assistance provided. This relates both to human capital and financial constraints (or lack of commitment). Moreover, where EU Member State partners failed to deliver agreed assistance, e.g. due to the shortage of expert staff to provide the desired input, the beneficiaries (and the European Union Delegations/Representations) had only few tools and little power to influence their performance (Papadimitrou, Phinnemore 2003a, WM Enterprise 2006, Bailey, de Propris 2004 etc.).

Second, the sustainability of intervention after Twinning has been another source of concern (Papadimitrou, Phinnemore 2003a; Cooper, Johansen 2003; Bailey, de Propris 2004 DG Enlargement/EMS Consortium 2004). This is related both to the remaining politicisation of Beneficiary Countries' public (especially central government) administrations and the huge turnover of staff in civil service in these countries. Even though follow-up Twinning or Twinning-Light projects seek to prevent that, it remains a major challenge to the effectiveness of Twinning.

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<sup>9</sup> Projects may be adjusted to the course of events and unforeseen changes during the implementation phase.

Third, Twinning was initially perceived as something that was imposed on the Candidate Countries (Königová 2004, Cooper, Johansen 2003; DG Enlargement/EMS Consortium 2004). Some Pre-Accession Advisers from the first generation of Twinning had to struggle with the image of “spies” appointed by the European Commission. This only documents how critical it is to explain the philosophy of any aid programme to the beneficiaries in a comprehensive and clear way, being fully aware of cultural sensitivities and seeking the acceptance and commitment from the recipient country and its institutions first.

Fourth, both the first and the second generations of Twinning and Twinning Light are marked by an extensive administrative load and substantial delays in the preparation (especially approval) and implementation of projects.<sup>10</sup>

“This reflected the generally slow process of learning for all actors (EC, EU Member States, Candidate Countries) and the difficulties sometimes experienced in terms of the development of a partnership between the two sides at all stages of preparation and implementation.” (WM Enterprise, 2006).

However, with years, Twinning as an instrument has developed and the early start-up problems have been overcome in many respects, though not completely. This has motivated the European Commission to extend the scope and geographical coverage of this assistance tool and to explore further complementarities of Twinning and TAIEX.

### **2.3 New Developments, Plans and Priorities of the Commission**

Since Twinning was launched in 1997, the European Commission gradually adapted this instrument to further assistance programmes. In 2001, a Twinning Manual was elaborated for the CARDS programme delivering assistance to the countries of the Western Balkans<sup>11</sup>. From 2001 to 2003, Twinning also enabled similar projects in the form of the Institution-Building Partnership Programme in the TACIS programme, but “without any real success” (Interviews, DG AidCo, April 2006)<sup>12</sup>. In 2003-04, Twinning was introduced in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). In order to harmonise Twinning rules and procedures, the Commission worked on the elaboration of a common Twinning manual which was issued in June 2005<sup>13</sup> and applies to the Instrument for Pre-

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<sup>10</sup> The “first generation” of Twinning refers to projects started in 1998. These projects were affected by early teething problems and the issues mentioned as obstacles were very prominent. The “second generation” of Twinning (Twinning since 1999) managed to overcome some of these problems even though the administrative load and the delays still continue to hamper performance and reduce effectiveness and efficiency (cf. DG Enlargement/EMS 2004).

<sup>11</sup> CARDS (Council regulation 22666/2000): Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation.

<sup>12</sup> In the years 2002-03, the EU has launched calls for proposal for a total of 68 IBPP projects in the context of the TACIS programme (Russia 40, Ukraine 16, Armenia 5, Georgia 3, Kazakhstan 4).

<sup>13</sup> Manual accessible online at:

Accession (IPA) (replacing PHARE<sup>14</sup>, CARDS and the assistance to Turkey) and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instruments (ENPI) (replacing TACIS and MEDA<sup>15</sup>).

### **2.3.1 Further accession negotiations and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)**

Twinning has become one of the main instruments used by the Commission in order to explain how European norms, values and *acquis* can be taken over, adapted to the national context, and implemented. As mentioned earlier, Twinning was originally designed for Candidate Countries that had to meet specific accession criteria in order to be accepted as EU Member States. Today, however, Twinning concerns also Potential Candidate Countries and those neighbouring countries that are interested in enhancing their cooperation with the EU and the Member States in several policy fields. The European Commission also decided to continue providing Twinning assistance to the New Member States from the 2006 budget (Transition Facility). Twinning projects with New Member States as beneficiaries have been geared more towards shorter-term aid (Twining Light) rather than longer-term “fully fledged” Twinning.<sup>16</sup>

Various analysts and institutions, among which the European Commission, believe that EU’s new member states (NMS) have a specific role to play in the framework of further accession negotiations and the ENP. NMS can rely on a recent experience of democratisation, transformation and, finally, accession which can be very useful for Candidate Countries and for countries undergoing democratisation and transition.

The number of Twinning projects implemented in Candidate Countries has been increasing especially since Twinning was evaluated as a positive and useful instrument during the enlargement of 2004 (European Court of Auditors, 2003). According to the figures presented at the annual NCP meeting of June 2006 and more recent statistics (cf. report in Appendices 5a,b), the database elaborated at the Commission since 1998 on Twinning in PHARE, CARDS and the Transition Facilities registers 1245 projects for the period of 1998-2006. PHARE and the Transition Facilities alone represent 1163 projects (1998-2006). A large part of the projects took place in the field of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) (260 projects). For CARDS, 82 projects were launched for the period of 2000-2006. 34 projects concern JHA, 16 public finance and Internal market and 11 agriculture and fisheries.

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[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/financial\\_assistance/institution\\_building/Twinning\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/financial_assistance/institution_building/Twinning_en.htm).

<sup>14</sup> PHARE (Council regulation nb 3906/89): *Pologne-Hongrie, Aide à la Restructuration Economique*.

<sup>15</sup> TACIS (Council regulation nb 1279/96): Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States. MEDA (Council regulation nb 1488/96) and MEDA II (Council regulation nb 2698/2000).

<sup>16</sup> Twinning Light (TWL) refers to projects with the involvement of STEs and/or MTEs which last up to 6 months only (or 8 months, in exceptional cases). The total budget of TWL can be no higher than EUR 250,000. More responsibility is shifted on the Beneficiary Country. „Classical“ Twinning projects last between 12 to 18 months or, in some cases, even longer and they rely on the person of a Resident Twinning Adviser (RTA) residing in the Beneficiary Country. STEs and MTEs are also involved in classical Twinnig and the budget exceeds EUR 250,000.

In 2003, the European Union launched the “Wider Europe Strategy”, renamed European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2004<sup>17</sup>. The Commission proposed to include Twinning in the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), a new framework for assistance that is to replace TACIS and MEDA after 2007. Since 2003, Twinning NCPs have been operating in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Ukraine, Moldova and Azerbaijan. The approach is mainly “demand driven”, which means that the partner should progressively develop a sense of ownership of the instrument according to their own experience. It should favour Twinning projects along the priorities defined in each Action Plan, which generally cover the following sectoral priorities: Internal market, Justice and Home Affairs, energy, transport, communication, environment, research and innovation as well as social policies.

Approximately 80 Twinning projects are currently planned or under way. In the ENP, however, the temporal and political constraints linked to accession are absent and the EU’s attractiveness is weakened. Since 2005, the Commission organised two main workshops to inform the ENP countries about Twinning as well as to present the experience of New Member States: one in Cairo (Egypt) and one in Kiev (Ukraine). In May 2006, a number of Twinning projects were agreed with these two countries, which reflects the importance of such awareness-raising activities. Other countries are also interested in Twinning (e.g. Moldova and Azerbaijan). There is no association agreement yet with Syria and the EU has difficulties to define its relationship with Libya. Due to the political character of some projects and the perspective of accession absent in the ENP, the introduction of Twinning projects mainly depends on the political will of the governments to accept them. As mentioned earlier, experts were often perceived as “spies of Brussels” even during pre-accession and the risk that they are seen as such in the ENP is higher without the “carrot” of accession (Interviews, DG Enlargement, 2004; DG AidCo, 2006).

### **2.3.2 Complementarity of TWO and TAIEX**

In 1995, the Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office (TAIEX) was created to assist the Candidate Countries in taking over and implementing the *acquis* in the field of Internal market. TAIEX provides information from a database on the *acquis* and supports the sending of independent experts for short-time missions to Candidate Countries. Advice is provided for example on standardisation, certification, services, movement of capital, company law, competition law, environmental law, market supervision, protection of intellectual and industrial property rights, anti-piracy counterfeiting fight, customs, state aid control or public procurement. The experts

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<sup>17</sup> The countries included in the ENP are: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.

mainly work for consulting companies and their experience and per diems differ greatly from the ones of Twinning RTAs.

As the ENP offers “a stake in EU’s internal market”, since June 2006, TAIEX has also been used to implement the ENPI. As the experience of transition towards democracy and market economy particularly varies among countries of EU’s neighbourhood, complementarity between Twinning and TAIEX, i.e. between expertise from the public and the private sectors, has recently been thought through. Short-term missions of TAIEX experts should help to identify the deficiencies of public administrations and back-up local civil servants during the preparation of project fiches for Twinning light or Twinning.

In general, TAIEX and Twinning should encourage learning and socialisation processes in terms of EU norms and procedures, and thus to encourage enhanced cooperation between the EU and third states in various sectors.

## **2.4 Aims of Twinning and Theoretical Underpinnings**

Although Twinning has existed for almost a decade, the academic production on Twinning is still rather scarce (Grabbe, 2001; Phinnemore, Papadimitriou, 2003a, 2003b; Tulmets, 2003a, 2003b, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; 2006; Königová, 2003, 2004; Drulák, Königová 2005). Originally, Twinning was designed to facilitate learning about and socialisation into the transposition and implementation procedures as part of the accession process, focussing mainly on the *acquis* in Candidate Countries. The chief purpose of Twinning is to promote best practices at the level of administrative and judicial capacities where there is no *acquis* to provide for guidance. As pointed out earlier, the instrument has recently been extended to cover European Union neighbourhood countries. The expected result is a transfer of experience and of institutional knowledge from Member States to third countries to drive reforms towards institutional changes. Twinning is part of a policy supporting positive conditionality (reforms are rewarded) rather than negative conditionality (lagging behind in reforms is punished). As pressure is exerted through a process of “naming and shaming” with the elaboration of evaluation reports, learning and socialisation play a central role in driving institutional changes (Schimmelfenning, Sedelmeier 2004). Therefore, the theoretical literature employed so far is rather a sociological one, whose concepts have been adapted to the field of international relations (Tulmets, 2003a, 2005c; Königová, 2003, 2004).

### **2.4.1 Learning and Socialisation**

A large body of literature already exists on **learning** and **socialisation** at the national level, but emerged only recently on organisational learning and socialisation at the regional or international level. As learning at the national level identifies **several types of learning** (individual, organisational, inter-organisational) (DiMaggio, Powell, 1991), learning at the international level refers to individual learning as well as to collective learning, but a general emphasis is put on collective or organisational learning (Checkel, 1999, 2001). Other strands of literature focus more specifically on policy learning, which “occurs when policy-makers adjust their cognitive understanding of policy development and modify policy in the light of knowledge gained from past policy experience” (Stone, 2004: 549; also Rose, 1993). One may say that Twinning fosters individual, collective and organisational learning in specific policy fields (Drulák, Königová 2005).

A way to gain knowledge on policy development is through socialisation. **Socialisation** was already present in the neo-functionalist work of Ernst Haas, the author of “The Uniting of Europe” (1968). Inspired by the functionalist David Mitrany, who believed that economic integration could lead to a spill-over effect on the political, Ernst Haas advocated that socialisation among elites could create integration within specific fields of activity. With the absence of spill-over effect in the European Political Cooperation (EPC), neo-functionalist approaches kept on being criticised by intergovernmentalists. At the end of the 1980s / beginning of 1990s, European integration gained momentum again with the creation of the internal market, the launching of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), with the communitarisation of part of the third pillar in 1997 as well as with the launching in 1999 of the Euro and of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). For some authors, these steps forward were possible due to socialisation among European elites and actors on common values in specific policy fields (Smith, 2004, see also Haas, 1990). The open method of coordination adopted in the fields of employment policy in 1997 and of social policies in 2000 also aims at socialising actors with different institutional and national backgrounds in order to elaborate common values.

Socialisation also plays a growing role in the countries targeted by EU’s external relations, although it may be seen more like a one-way process. Similar to international activism promoting democracy at the international level (Finnemore, Sikkink, 1998; Risse, Ropp, Sikkink, 1999), EU’s policy of political conditionality mainly aims at socialising Candidate Countries and third states into the EU’s conception of Human Rights (Checkel, 2001) and political and normative culture. The policy of enlargement to Eastern Europe contributed to export EU norms through conditionality, socialisation and persuasion (Schimmelfennig, 2001; Schimmelfennig, Sedelmeier, 2004). Twinning projects participate in this process of exporting norms and values in extending EU’s internal policies abroad and socialising actors from third countries into EU’s sectoral norms (Tulmets, 2003a, 2005c; Königová, 2004). Twinning can be seen as an attempt to supplement conditionality by a policy-dialogue approach (Checkel 2000:5), which helps to build political



support and consensus for reforms through consulting a spectrum of stakeholders even outside the institution in sectors and policies where conditions and the very nature of the issues allow so. The importance of “low politics” in EU’s external relations has recently been acknowledged in other fields of EU’s external relations, mainly in the European Neighbourhood Policy:

“We already have an impressive range of policy instruments, including development aid, diplomacy, trade policy, civilian and military crisis management, and humanitarian assistance. We also need to do more to recognize and utilise the external dimension of the EU’s internal policies. Thanks to globalization, most internal policies now have an international element.”  
(Ferrero-Waldner, 2006a)

### **2.4.2 Institutional Change**

Analyses studying the impact of EU norms abroad often rely on neo-institutionalism (DiMaggio, Powell, 1991) as well as on the literature on policy transfer (Dolowitz, Marsh, 1996; Rose, 1993) to examine **institutional changes** in third countries. According to DiMaggio and Powell, institutional changes can take place in three various contexts and forms: through coercion, mimetism and normative adaptation (DiMaggio, Powell, 1991: 65). Thus, change can result (a) from formal and informal pressure exerted in a coercive way by institutions on other institutions (e.g. conditionality); and it can also take place (b) in a situation of uncertainty, where copying (intentionally or unintentionally) other institutions can represent a solution to a problem. Finally, change can happen (c) in a situation of professionalisation. Professions are subject to similar coercive and mimetic pressures than organisations, either through education (legitimation of a specific knowledge) or through the creation of professional networks. These networks link together institutions of a same profession and thus contribute to disseminate relevant knowledge for the profession.

The third case particularly applies to Twinning, which aims at building networks among civil servants and in specific policy sectors between the EU and third countries. Networking is a key word used at each annual NCP meeting to foster transfer of knowledge and support institutional change. The transfer of knowledge on policies (policy transfer) is generally defined as:

“the process by which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political system (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political system” (Dolowitz, Marsh, 1996).

In Twinning, policy transfer never took place in a void and very often enabled institutional adaptation through a mix of past and new practices, which one may call adaptation or hybridisation.

Richard Rose defines policy adaptation as the process of “adjusting for contextual differences a program already in effect in another jurisdiction” and making a hybrid as the process of “combining elements of programs from two different places” (Rose, 1993: 30). Without institutional mix, reforms would stay very costly and the new policy would often lose legitimacy. Policy adaptation and hybridisation are therefore a way for third states to optimise resources and to ensure sustainability.

### **2.4.3 Mutual Learning and Adaptation**

As pointed out earlier, Twinning is not a one-way process directed from the EU to Candidate Countries or partner states. Besides, it also aims, as far as possible, at **mutual learning and adaptation** (European Court of Auditors, 2003; BMWi/GTZ, 2006; also Tulmets, 2005b, 2005c; Königová, 2003, 2004). Various Twinning reports and documents from enlargement indicate that not only did beneficiaries learn substantially from EU experts, but that the EU experts also learned a lot from and in Candidate Countries. Experts interviewed explained that Twinning contributed to enlarge their knowledge of the Beneficiary Countries and sectors they have been working in, but also, thanks to Twinning consortia, the *acquis* implementation solutions used other Member States. Occasionally, the solutions found in Candidate Countries to implement the *acquis* constituted positive lessons for MS experts. Some of these lessons were taken back to the EU as good practices from future Member States.

### 3 Report Methodology

Aiming to provide an evaluation of the experience so far of the Old Member States with TWO, this report relies mainly on primary data collected through questionnaires and personal interviews with OMS National Contact Points, Project Leaders (PLs), Resident Twinning Advisers (RTAs), Short- and Mid-Term Experts (STEs/MTEs).

The first version of questionnaires was piloted on a few experts and the NCPs in France and the United Kingdom. The NCP questionnaire as well as the questionnaires for experts involved in TWO and TWI (see Appendix 1) were then abbreviated and used for mailing out and personal interviews. The questionnaire included both multiple choice and open questions and we encouraged the respondents to add any information or comments they felt were necessary. In interviews, additional questions were also asked to get more specific answers or make deeper explorations.

In spite of the initial decision to focus primarily on the most active and successful providers of TWO assistance (see Appendices 5a,b for statistics), i.e. Germany, France and the United Kingdom, the research team had to extend the scope and refocus the geographical coverage on the basis of the first experience with the (un)responsiveness and accessibility of experts from these three Member States.<sup>18</sup> Also, after the initial phase of desk research and early fact-finding and background interviews, we decided to zoom in specifically on countries with some structural similarities to the Czech Republic, i.e. countries with similar populations, sizes and comparable public administration capacities (though not necessary structures and traditions). That is also why Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, and Sweden rank among the major data providers for our research (cf. Appendix 2).

To get some cross-check of the data we would get from Old Member States (OMS) and the European Commission, we decided to mail out another set of questionnaires to the New Member States (NMS) and Turkey in order to verify some information and validate the responses by providing the recipient perspective.<sup>19</sup> In several cases, we were able to get answers (in personal

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<sup>18</sup>To compensate for the very low reaction rate (not to be mistaken with the response rate – see Appendix 2), the French NCP gave to us a valuable document that the French NCP prepares every year and sends to the EC before the NCP meeting in Brussels. The document (“Questions posées par les autorités françaises”) sums up all the comments of French PLs and experts. Similarly, we could offset the UK’s low response rate by drawing upon background interviews and findings from previous research (Königová 2003, 2004).

<sup>19</sup> In general, answers from three types of experts were collected in NMS: 1) persons who have been involved in Twinning as beneficiary, generally until 2004-06 (TWI); 2) persons who have been involved as beneficiary and provider (TWO/TWI); and 3) persons who have been involved only as provider, since 2004 (TWO). Despite the small rate of answers (see Chapter 4 and Appendix 2), they are quite representative of the different types of experience with Twinning as they come from Twinning NCP, project leaders / managers and experts, as our background interviews and Twinning evaluation reports confirmed.

interviews or via questionnaires) from experts from both the MS and the Beneficiary Countries who have been working on the same project.

In order to secure the highest possible return rate which would be both manageable in terms of data interpretation and evaluation and representative of the experience of OMS, we used three ways of sending out questionnaires and asking for interviews: (a) the first version of the European Commission database of all Twinning projects and contacts since 1998<sup>20</sup> (EuropeAid / DG Enlargement 2005), (b) contacts given to us by OMS NCPs, and (c) personal contacts from previous research done by two members of our research team (Drulák, Königová 2005; Königová 2003, 2004; Tulmets 2003b, 2003c, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006). Importantly, interviews with the Czech National Contact Point and the administrators from the CFCU as well as interviews with Senior Programme Officers (SPOs), TWI and TWO contact persons and heads of EU departments in Czech ministries were conducted to study the situation in the Czech Republic and establish the grounds for our recommendations (see Chapter 6).

Out of the 15 NCP questionnaires sent to Old Member States National Contact Points, 13 came back (the Spanish and Portuguese NCPs did not react to any of our repeated requests for cooperation) and 7 have been discussed in more details during in-depth interviews with the NCPs in Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United-Kingdom.<sup>21</sup>

During the data collection phase, our team had to deal with several methodological challenges. First, due to the high turnover of staff in some administrations, contacts in the Commission's database were not up-to-date in quite a few cases, so asking NCPs to send the questionnaires out to their updated mailing list was a way to compensate for the shortcomings in the first way of circulation. Second, requesting help from NCPs meant another challenge in that some of them did not react to our request for PL, RTA and STE contacts while some other NCPs did not forward the questionnaire to a large enough number of persons (that explains the small rate of answers for some countries, e.g. Estonia, Hungary).<sup>22</sup> That is why we used some personal contacts from previous Twinning-related research projects to offset this shortcoming. (For the return success rate and the absolute figures see Appendix 2). Third, some respondents skipped some questions in our questionnaire due to the lack of knowledge of the specific issue and/or the lack of time. These answers were rated as "don't know" / "other" or "no difference" (see Chapter 4).

In our original research plan, we intended to mail-out and classify the questionnaires according to the most prominent TWO sectors and sectors identified as priority fields by the Czech NCP (cf MFČR and MZV ČR 2006). Following initial interviews piloting a longer version of the

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<sup>20</sup> This database is currently updated and a second version will be released shortly.

<sup>21</sup> Due to the quite limited involvement of Belgium, Greece, Italy and Luxembourg in TWO (see statistics in Appendices 5a,b), we did not seek any additional information on and from these Member States.

<sup>22</sup> Several NCPs contacted by our team promised to send us a list of experts who might be contacted by us for the purpose of this research. Up until the cut-off date for this project (20 October), however, no lists came from some of them.

questionnaire, however, we decided to drop this variable since it was not bringing any relevant data in terms of sector-specificity. More importantly, though, our research project was aimed at project management and organisation issues which would be of value to all sectors and could be a basis for a successful TWO strategy for the Czech Republic, rather than providing sector-specific advice.

Given all the above, it is possible to consider the sample of over 160 respondents (see Appendix 3) as quite representative of the “Twinning community”. Also, considering the limited period of time for data collection, interpretation and evaluation, the small size of our research team and the related financial limitations, it would have been quite difficult to reach more persons and work with a larger sample.

Our research team also drew upon several Twinning evaluation reports and on a number of quarterly and final reports. However, we did not carry out any systematic analysis of project reports since (a) this was the method used in the evaluations we drew upon so we could rely to a large extent on these findings; and (b) we wanted to capture and evaluate the immediate experience of TWO actors, i.e. PLs, RTAs/PAAAs, STEs/MTEs and NCPs and learn more and in a more targeted way than we could from Twinning project reports. Last but not least, we made use of Twinning-related policy documents, legislation and methodological guidance provided by both the European Commission and individual Member States.

Following the data collection phase, we proceeded with data interpretation and qualitative and quantitative analysis of both the primary and secondary data gathered (see Chapter 4). Our team has studied and categorised various TWO organisation models, focussing particularly on National Contact Points and their operation and involvement in various phases of the TWO cycle (Chapter 4.1). Following the study of the TWO project phases (preparation, bidding, contracting, implementation and evaluation), the hands-on experience of Old Member States was analysed (Chapters 4.2 to 4.6). The evaluation of this experience, along with the advice given by the respondents to New Member States, formed the basis for our formulation of the basic TWO success criteria from the perspective of TWO assistance provider. The benefits and drawbacks, as well as risks, constraints and opportunities were then identified (Chapters 5.1 to 5.3). Considering the structural conditions and the political situation in the Czech Republic, a series of recommendations was then made, along with some more general ones, for a successful TWO strategy in the Czech Republic. Czech specificities, capabilities, areas of expertise, strengths and weaknesses and, above all, resources (both human and financial) were taken into account (Chapter 6.2). The recommendations and the cost-benefit analysis then served as a basis for the formulation of five models of Czech TWO involvement (Chapter 6.2.4).

## 4 Presentation of Findings

The following results rely on two sets of questionnaires and personal interviews: first, we sent a special NCP questionnaire (see Appendix 1) to all National Contact Points (NCP) of the Old Member States and were able to organise in-depth interviews with 7 NCPs (Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom), which provided us with a lot of additional data and insight. Second, this chapter relies on data from questionnaires sent to PAAs/RTAs from some Member States (cf Chapter 3 – Methodology).

As for the NCP models, section 4.1 of our report presents information about the location, organisational and communication arrangements, operation and support activities of NCPs in those countries we could get enough information about. This section of our report is, by design, quite descriptive. This is because our interviews with NCPs in both Old and New Member States revealed that NCPs have, by and large, rather limited knowledge and understanding of other countries' TWO organisation. Therefore, in order to meet the need for more information about other MS NCPs, indicated also by the Czech NCP staff, while responding to the requirements of the Czech Foreign Ministry's terms of reference for this project, we seek to give a brief outline of the history, structure, staffing, tasks, activities, communication and financial arrangements of these OMS NCPs. And it is largely on the basis of these NCP models that we make conclusions and recommendations on the location, functioning and services provided by the Czech NCP (Chapter 6.2).

However, no matter how much a well-functioning NCP can be a major asset and a key player in a country's successful Twinning Out strategy, it is mainly the approach of and procedures used by "twinners", i.e. PLs, RTAs, STEs and MTEs that play a vital role in Twinning and, along with the commitment, capacities and capabilities of Beneficiary Institutions, largely determine the success or otherwise of TWO projects. Sections 4.2 to 4.6 therefore present the findings from our exploration of the OMS experience with the preparation, contracting, use of resources, implementation and evaluation of TWO projects. This information is also complemented by insights from NMS as receivers of TWO assistance and, once again, provides the basis for our recommendations, both general and those made specifically for Czech authorities (Chapter 6). This part of the report closes with general advice to New Member States.

## 4.1 NCP models

With the introduction of new management rules for EU programmes in March 1998 (Council regulation nb 622/98 of 16 March 1998) and, most importantly, the launch of Twinning in the same year, each Member State created a National Contact Point (NCP) responsible for the coordination of European assistance programmes and communication with the Commission in the framework of enlargement. NCPs channel information to Member States' ministries and other relevant administrative bodies and advise them on the process and development of TWO administrative issues while providing general support throughout the preparation, bidding, contracting and implementation phases of the TWO cycle.

NCPs are located at different levels of the Member States central government. As one interviewee at the German NCP pointed out:

“the location of the NCP particularly reflects the importance assigned to European policies at the national level: if located at the Prime Minister's Office, it shows that these questions are seen as political in all sectors; if located at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they are seen as belonging to the domain of international relations; if created at the Ministry of Finance, it indicates that European financial issues are of particular importance, if at the Ministry of Economy, that greater priority is given to trade and economic issues”.

The way NCPs have been created in Old Member States thus mainly depends on already existing institutional legacies. Yet, the NCP location may and does change over time in some countries, depending on national political constellations and new priorities for the allocation of “European” competences.

The following section of the report describes the location, organisational set-up, operation, communication as well as the tasks carried out and support services provided by the NCPs in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.<sup>23</sup> In order to avoid the classic classification of centralised versus federal states and not to focus only on the ministries where NCPs are seated, the variety of institutional experience has been classified among two groups: 1) NCPs with an agency adding strong infrastructure and operational support, and 2) NCPs without agencies (cf. Table 1).

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<sup>23</sup> As suggested in Chapter 3 – Methodology, we have not received any information on the Portuguese and Spanish models in spite of several written and telephonic requests for data. Also, in spite of receiving a completed NCP questionnaire filled in by the Greek NCP, we could not really make a comprehensive picture of the Greek NCP function since the data provided was very sketchy and we could not really retrieve any additional information about this NCP from any other sources we had access to.

**Table 1: Location of NCPs in Old Member States:**

	Prime Minister's Office	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Ministry of Economy / Finance	Agency / Support Structure
Austria		X		AEI
Belgium		X		
Denmark		X		
Finland		X		
France	X			
Germany			X	GTZ
Greece		X		
Ireland				X - IPA
Italy		X		
Luxembourg		X		
Netherlands		X		EDV
Portugal		X		
Spain		X		FIAPP
Sweden				X - SIDA
UK		X		

Source: Interviews with NCPs, NCP questionnaires and the DG Enlargement list of NCPs ([http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial\\_assistance/institution\\_building/current\\_ncpms\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial_assistance/institution_building/current_ncpms_en.pdf))

## I. National Contact Points assisted by a special agency

These NCPs are located within a Ministry (of Foreign Affairs, of Economy, of Finance). The agencies have generally a private status (association, company with non-for-profit activities), are financed from the state budget and may be either independent or located directly at the Ministry where the NCP is based. In two cases, that is in Ireland and Sweden (see Table 1), the entire NCP functions have been delegated to agencies.

### **AUSTRIA**

In Austria, the NCP was first established in 1997-98 at the Office of the Prime Minister (*Bundeskanzleramt*) before being moved to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where it is still located. It is composed of one person in charge of the NCP, generally a diplomat. This civil servant is assisted by an intern / short-termer. The person in charge of the NCP deals with Twinning, TAIEX, CARDS and IPA.

#### *Organisation and coordination*

The Austrian NCP works in close cooperation with all ministries and their mandated bodies (see Appendix 4) to which it distributes all project fiches and from which it collects bids. A special platform, the Agency for European Integration and Economic Development (AEI, *Agentur für Europäische Integration und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung*), was created in 2003 at the Ministry of Finance to assist mandated bodies in preparing their Twinning projects. The Agency is officially an



association (*eingetragener Verein, e.V.*) working for the government: mandated bodies have to become AEI members and pay a symbolic fee in order to benefit from the AEI's assistance. Since 2006, almost all ministries and their mandated bodies have been AEI members. The AEI outsources some of its activities (accounting, project management) to a private company, the FAA holding. Austria being a federal country, project fiches are also circulated to the regions (*Länder*) when their expertise is needed (e.g. projects on structural funds). Some regional experts are registered in the database of the AEI, but the involvement of Austrian *Länder* in Twinning stays rather low.

#### *Support services*

The NCP is assisting all actors interested in Twinning. It also circulates project fiches in a targeted way. It directly contacts mandated bodies if the expertise they can provide corresponds with the profile of a specific project. The AEI has a database of about 350 experts (not all from Austria). Sometimes, a specific expert is directly contacted and informed about the project. Personal or phone contacts are generally preferred and considered more efficient. The NCP occasionally organises in-house seminars to discuss Twinning experience with PLs, RTAs and a Commission representative. The Agency for European Integration (AEI) is supporting the NCP by circulating the project fiches to all of its members and helping mandated bodies with bid preparation activities.

### **GERMANY**

The German National Contact Point (NCP) was created in 1998 when Twinning was launched. It was first located at the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technologies (BMWi), responsible for the coordination of European Affairs, and its mandated body *Kreditanstalt of Wiederaufbau* (KfW), already in charge of the financial coordination of the German programme of assistance to Eastern Europe (*Transform*). When Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (SPD) came to power in September 1998, the competences for European Affairs were moved to the Federal Ministry of Finance (BMF), led by Oskar Lafontaine. The German Twinning NCP moved to the ministry of Finance, with a delegation office of the *Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit* (GTZ), the biggest German development agency. After Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) came to power in September 2005, the European competences moved back to the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technologies (BMWi) and so did the NCP and the GTZ office a few months later. It is now situated at the Department for Europe in the Ministry of Economics which also deals with the *Transform* programme (see organigram in Appendix 4). The German NCP is composed of one director, one desk officer and two contracted persons. The GTZ office has two staff and some interns. Only 3% of the NCP tasks deal with TAIEX, which is managed by the GTZ TAIEX office in Brussels. The

NCP has its own intranet Twinning website, accessible only to the German “Twinning community”.<sup>24</sup>

### *Organisation and coordination*

The German NCP is in charge of circulating all project fiches and collecting all Twinning bids. It is assisted in this task by the GTZ office in Berlin. Due to the federal structure of the German state, project fiches are circulated to Twinning coordinators at federal ministries, which forward the fiches to mandated bodies, and to institutions in charge of European affairs at the regional level of the *Länder* (State Chancellery, the Ministries of European Affairs, and Ministries of Economy), which forward the fiches to the relevant regional ministerial functions. As *Länder* have competencies in issues like economy, environment or police and justice, most of the German expertise on the *acquis* in these fields is located at the regional level. Thus, German *Länder* are strongly involved in Twinning: almost 40% of the projects with German participation are implemented by *Länder* administrations. The Twinning website is used to inform about new project fiches which are listed (but not available with all details from) the website.

### *Support services*

The GTZ office in Berlin is the main body assisting the NCP in its communication and coordination tasks. The *Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit* relies on a long project management record in development and assistance policy. The GTZ office plays a central role in updating the database of experts (similar to the TAIEX database), in circulating the project fiches and posting them on the web, giving advice on the way to present project proposals and preparing Twinning contracts. The GTZ office relies on its database to find experts and contact ministries and mandated bodies. It supports fact-finding visits and assists in the preparation of project presentations. The GTZ office also organises at least twice a year a preparatory seminar, usually with a guest from the Commission, for RTAs where the rules of the Twinning manuals are presented and experienced RTAs invited to share their past experience in Twinning.

## **NETHERLANDS**

The Dutch National Contact Point (NCP) was created in 2000. It was first located at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within the Directorate General for European Cooperation. In 2004, the location was changed to the Southeast and Eastern Europe and Matra Programme Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to promote synergies with the bilateral Matra cooperation. The Matra Programme, a central point of the Dutch international cooperation strategy, was launched in 1994 as an

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<sup>24</sup> More information on the German NCP and GTZ Twinning Office at <http://www.bmwi.de> (BMWi) and <http://www.gtz.de/en/unternehmen/2555.htm> (GTZ Office).

instrument that has since been used by the Dutch government to promote public administration reforms encourage the dialogue between civil society organizations and state institutions in Eastern and Central Europe. During the first programme period (1994-1998), cooperation focused mainly on civil society and local government. In 1998, a pre-accession facility was added. In 2004, the Matra programme changed, partly because of the enlargement of the EU and the European Neighbourhood Policy. Twinning is now a component of Matra for European Cooperation (Matra and the National Support Center for EU Twinning).

### *Organisation and coordination*

The Dutch Twinning coordination has always relied on a close cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (where the NCP, a civil servant, is responsible for policy and strategy and diplomatic contacts, chairs the interdepartmental meetings, seminars, etc.) and the EVD (Agency for International Business and Cooperation). EVD is also represented within the Twinning Unit by the “deputy” NCP (a programme manager in EVD) and project officers and administrators at EVD (working part time for Twinning) (see organigram in Appendix 4). Mandated bodies and ministries find their own experts and partners and the NCP has not established any database of experts. Nevertheless, the NCP keeps in contact with acting RTAs during their assignment by inviting them to a special RTA day in The Hague once a year.

### *Support services*

EVD is a state Agency, a part of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, and its mission is to promote and encourage international business and international cooperation. EVD works for various governmental authorities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with the Ministry of Economic Affairs being the EDV major clients. In Twinning projects, EVD acts as a coordinator within the domestic network.<sup>25</sup>

## **SPAIN**

The Spanish NCP was created at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is now situated at the Secretariat General for the Coordination of General Affairs of the EU. It is assisted by a mandated body specialised in the field of international cooperation and development, the FIIAPP (*Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas*).<sup>26</sup> The agency was originally created to assist countries of South America and, over time, diversified its activities to

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<sup>25</sup> Information of the Dutch MFA can be found at [www.minbuza.nl](http://www.minbuza.nl); Twinning information is available from [http://www.minbuza.nl/en/europeancooperation/subsidies,the\\_Twinning\\_programme](http://www.minbuza.nl/en/europeancooperation/subsidies,the_Twinning_programme). The EVD has a special website at [www.evd.nl](http://www.evd.nl). Information about the Matra programme can be found at [www.minbuza.nl/en/themes,european-cooperation/the\\_matra\\_programme\\_file/index.html](http://www.minbuza.nl/en/themes,european-cooperation/the_matra_programme_file/index.html).

<sup>26</sup> [www.fiiapp.org](http://www.fiiapp.org).

cover and, since the 1990s, also CEECs and other world regions. In the 1990s, Spain launched a national assistance programme to the PHARE, CARDS and TACIS countries called “Programa de Hermanamientos” (Programme of Brotherhoods/Assistance): more than 150 projects have been implemented and more than 7,000 experts mobilised in this framework. The FIIAPP is building on this experience in its participation in Twinning projects and assistance to the Spanish NCP with coordination and management tasks.

## **SWEDEN**

The Swedish NCP was established in 1998 and located at the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). In January 2001, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) took over the Swedish NCP function for PHARE Twinning.

This move reflected the change in the emphasis: originally, the political aspect was emphasised and that is why the MFA role was key to TWO organisation in Sweden. When the TWO tasks became more project-oriented, the MFA was not able to provide adequate services, as having neither the appropriate capacity nor the experience with this type of activities. One of the MFA staff was transferred to SIDA, working along the new NCP and ensuring the transfer of the “Twinning know-how” (Dixelius, Haglund 2003). The NCP was placed at the Baltic States and Central Europe division both because of the geographical focus of Twinning prior to the 2004 enlargement and the idea that TWO projects in these countries might work well with the parallel bilateral activities (ibid). The MFA continues to provide political leadership and advice on priority countries while SIDA provides for operational management and expert knowledge. However, due to the “minimalistic” government and agency/authority-based approach, the MFA has limited powers over agencies in terms of whether Twinning projects are given priority, as proclaimed by the Swedish government.<sup>27</sup>

### *Organisation and coordination*

Since 2002, the NCP function has been partly downsized to the equivalent of first 1.55 and now 0.95 of a full-time job. The Swedish NCP deals both with TWO and TAIEX in PHARE, MEDA and TACIS countries.

The NCP at SIDA has been responsible for the co-ordination of Twinning activities, mainly involving Swedish authorities / agencies. The NCP role is to promote the Twinning instrument, distribute new fiches, assist in the preparation of proposals and help authorities with contracting. The Swedish NCP has several promotion materials and seeks to gain support from the management of state agencies. Due to the relatively weak direct authority of the ministries over the operation of

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<sup>27</sup> Sweden has relatively small ministries, compared to other European countries. These ministries are policy-oriented and the regular administrative tasks are carried out by authorities (agencies).

agencies, the Swedish NCP mentioned the difficulty with prioritising Twinning by the management of some agencies in the daily operation of agencies and the agencies claim that their actual costs are not covered when implementing EC financed Twinning.

#### *Support services*

Besides forwarding relevant project fiches to the respective authorities and keeping in touch with them with regard to ongoing project bid preparations, the NCP at SIDA places all circulated TW and TWL fiches at a special Twinning-dedicated website.<sup>28</sup> The website also contains information about EU and Swedish Twinning rules and procedures, Twinning newsletters,<sup>29</sup> technical and practical information (including current rates of per diems, project templates, project proposal examples, contact lists, glossaries of key terms, model CVs etc.). Whenever the site is updated, for example when new circulations or recirculations of project fiches are made, the NCP e-mails this information if needed to the relevant officers at relevant authorities, highlighting the ones that might or should be of special interest to the addressees. The NCP holds annual RTA and PL meetings and training seminars.

The financial resources allocated to the NCP (namely to support the work of Swedish officials from agencies) have so far been taken from a special allocation for Twinning within SIDA East's regular budget. SIDA is thus able to pay for training, seminars and workshops held for future experts. In addition SIDA finances the time when bids and contracts are prepared as Swedish agencies can not use their core budget for international cooperation (to supplement the recently introduced preparation costs coverage from Brussels).

SIDA had a major evaluation of its performance done in 2003. This evaluation (Dixelius, Haglund 2003) formed the basis for some organisational and operational changes and improvements translating into improved performance, the creation of the website and rearrangement of some tasks.

### **IRELAND**

The Irish NCP was created in 1999. It was first located at the Ministry of Finance but later on was transferred to the Institute of Public Administration (IPA). The IPA serves as NCP for Twinning, TAIEX and other EU programmes like the MEDA public administration network. Two persons work at the NCP as permanent employees of the IPA. The Internal Market Section at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment is the NCP for TAIEX for Ireland. Two civil servants in the Section work on TAIEX issues on a part-time basis. In addition, there are Departmental Contact Points for TAIEX in all other Departments (except the Department of the Taoiseach [Prime Minister]).

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<sup>28</sup> [www.sida.se/euTwinning](http://www.sida.se/euTwinning).

<sup>29</sup> These are regular newsletters sent by the Twinning and SIGMA Co-ordination Team (Institution Building Unit, Directorate-General Enlargement).

### *Organisation and coordination*

The Institute of Public Administration (IPA) communicates regularly with its counterparts in line ministries (departments) and public agencies as well as with colleagues from the Department of Foreign Affairs. General information on Twinning and TAIEX is also provided on a website. Initially, the IPA encountered some difficulties in mobilising Irish experts and building a contact database. The main reason behind the small number of Irish Twinning assignments lies in the small number of civil servants and the fact that the organisation of the Irish public administration does not really allow for secondments or time spent abroad on Twinning assignments. Ireland has recently undergone a significant reform of its public administration, which led to significant streamlining of its HR, emphasis being put on cost-effectiveness and budgetary performance of its operations. Hence, the Irish public sector is, by comparison with larger countries, a very lean organisation with very few staff overlaps.

As far as TAIEX is concerned, the number of experts from the Irish administration participating in TAIEX activities continues to grow. However, pressure of work is and will always be a factor. A certain amount of information is circulated on the website of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

### *Support services*

The IPA organises regular presentations on the role, extent and purpose of Twinning arrangements so to increase the response rate of Irish civil servants and mandated bodies employees. It also provides ad hoc information to interested units while promoting Twinning within the Irish Public sector networks coordinated by the IPA. The NCP for TAIEX forwards each request to Department contact persons.

## **II. National Contact Points Without Agency Support**

The NCPs in the second group of OMS are located either at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or at the Prime Minister's Office. They are in direct contact with line ministries, which have a more important management and communication role than in the case of NCPs supported by agencies.

### **BELGIUM**

The Belgian NCP was created in 1998 and was located at the former Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the current Belgian Federal Public Service of Foreign Affairs, External Trade and Development (Directorate General for European Affairs and Coordination). Situated at the federal level, the NCP

also acts as a coordinator and contact point for regions and communities. There is only one person working at the Belgian NCP, responsible for both Twinning and TAIEX.

#### *Organisation and coordination*

Due to the Belgian state structure, the decision was taken to establish a coordination system (coordination between federal level and regions and communities). The responsibility for this coordination structure is one of the main tasks of the Directorate General for European Affairs and Coordination. The NCP established a database of experts grouped according to their competencies. It has also organized information and mobilisation meetings for experts, informing them about the procedures and benefits of both Twinning and TAIEX. The Belgian NCP has no special Twinning website.<sup>30</sup>

### **DENMARK**

The Danish NCP was set up in 1997. Ever since then, it has been located at the Danish MFA. It has now become a section in the Department for the Neighbourhood Programme Department which also administers bilateral aid programmes for EU candidate countries and neighbour countries as well as for Ukraine and Russia. The Department is part of the MFA's South Group where Danish development cooperation in general is located. (see organigram in Appendix 4 or at [www.um.dk/en/menu/AboutUS/Organisation/OrganisationChart](http://www.um.dk/en/menu/AboutUS/Organisation/OrganisationChart)). The Danish NCP uses TAIEX and Twinning as complementary instruments. The Danes tend to use TAIEX for smaller projects (and spin-offs of Twinning projects) and see the opportunity for some Twinning projects to evolve from certain TAIEX activities.

#### *Organisation and coordination*

There are two officers at the Danish NCP (the National Contact Point and the NCP Assistant). Both of them are doing partially also bilateral work. Until recently, the Danish NCP, Carl Balle Petersen, was the most experienced NCP in the EU.

Denmark being a small country, the Danish NCP has to be very active in motivating national TWO actors. This is done through meetings of the NCP with top management of Danish government departments/ministries, by encouraging the participation in awareness-raising activities such as expert network meetings, seminars etc. The NCP provides background information, if possible, on concrete projects, distributes project fiches and forwards proposals, and Twinning newsletters (national edition). It provides guidance and recommendations and ensures regular updates of the website.

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<sup>30</sup> General information can be found at [www.diplomatie.be](http://www.diplomatie.be).

### *Support Services*

The NCP provides national TWO actors strong advisory service, especially in the pre-bidding (preparatory), bidding and contracting phases. It provides further guidance and recommendations to 60-70% of all proposals, modifying the drafts to comply with Twinning rules before the final bid is submitted. It also offers national financing of preparatory costs not covered by the EU funds (using a facility in the MFA bilateral assistance funds). As bid presentations are extremely important, the Danish NCP rehearses the presentations with new RTAs/institutions and offer their advice in terms of restructuring of presentations etc. Danish diplomats – from the NCP or the local embassy – will also participate in presentation meetings, if so wished.

The Danish NCP has no database of experts since it would be difficult to maintain it and keep it updated. The scarce availability of experts and special requirements make it necessary to announce for RTA candidates and often head-hunting is needed. The Danish NCP operates a special Twinning website<sup>31</sup> as part of the MFA website, providing general information on Twinning, including a Twinning brochure (now partly obsolete), the latest Danish Twinning status, Danish and EC Twinning rules, links to relevant websites, a questions and answers section, information on expert network (ERFA) meetings and other general meetings, listing of TWO projects submitted to the MS with deadlines for submission of proposals to the MFA, an overview of programmed projects as well as the Danish newsletter “Twinning News”, Commission “News” and various updates and clarifications concerning Twinning rules and regulations. The NCP regularly organises bimonthly ERFA meetings ( ERFA for “erfaring”, the Danish word for experience) where mainly PLs discuss issues and hosts an annual joint meeting for RTAs and PLs.

The Danish NCP has not made any overall evaluation of Danish TWO projects, but has had an external independent evaluation of the national procedures for Danish participation in EU Twinning has been commissioned by the MFA and focussing mainly on financial mechanisms.

### **FINLAND**

In Finland, the National Contact Point (NCP) was established in 1998. It was firstly located at the Ministry of Finance. The Twinning unit was one of the three units of the Department for Public Management Development. The Ministry of Finance consists of 7 Departments and the Public Management Department is responsible for organisational and management development of central state administration. Now, the NCP is located at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As in other EU states, the Twinning activities have been extended to cover the EU ENP countries.

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<sup>31</sup> [www.euTwinning.um.dk](http://www.euTwinning.um.dk).



### *Organisation and coordination*

The Twinning Unit within the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a small operation coordinating Twinning and TAIEX projects (4 members altogether – three permanent civil servants and one intern).<sup>32</sup> The NCP itself is responsible for marketing Twinning opportunities within the Finnish public administration. Information on individual projects is sent directly to the bodies concerned. Additionally, all projects open for tendering are made available on Internet – Twinning website which includes also guidance for preparing the proposal. The NCP has not established any database of experts. Two to three times a year, all contact persons as well as civil servants working in the Twinning projects are invited to Twinning information meetings/workshops. The NCP also gives presentations on Twinning in various ministries and other institutions.

### *Support Services*

The Finnish NCP does not have any support organisation for Twinning projects. The MFA Twinning team assists authorities with bid preparation, selection meetings and advises them on the application of the Twinning Manual during the whole life cycle of Twinning projects.

## **FRANCE**

The French National Contact Point (NCP) was created in 1998 when Twinning was launched. It was based at the SGCI, (*Secrétariat Général du Comité Interministériel pour les questions de coopération économique européenne*), an institution set up in the 1950s to co-ordinate ministerial activities related to European affairs. This institution has ever since been responsible for communication between the French Permanent Representation in Brussels, on the one side, and the French ministries and their related agencies, on the other. After the negative referendum on the European Constitutional Treaty in France of May 2005, the government decided to make European affairs more prominent and understandable at the national level and thus to change on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2005 the name of the SGCI into SGAE (*Secrétariat Général des Affaires Européennes*). The NCP is still situated there (see organigram in Appendix 4).<sup>33</sup> The French NCP consists of a civil servant in charge of the NCP and a long-term assistant. There is no special Twinning website.

### *Organisation and coordination*

The French NCP is in direct contact with all ministries and mandated bodies, all of them featured on the NCP's mailing list. As far as support and implementation structures are concerned, external

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<sup>32</sup> Information about the Finnish NCP and Twinning can be found at:

<http://formin.finland.fi/public/?contentid=50320&contentlan=1&culture=fi-FI>.

<sup>33</sup> For more see e.g. Bouquet 2006.

cooperation activities mainly concentrate around two ministries: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a co-ordination centre for all non-financial and non-military projects, and the Ministry of Economy and Finance responsible for financial assistance activities. After the 1998 reform initiated by the left-wing government of Lionel Jospin in the field of international cooperation<sup>34</sup>, these two ministries institutionalised new pools for the coordination of sector-oriented expertise in 2001. Line ministries working with the ministry of Foreign Affairs are now linked to the GIP FCI (*Groupement d'Intérêt Général France Coopération Internationale*), those around the ministry of Economy and Finance are linked to the GIP ADETEF (*Groupement d'Intérêt Général Assistance au Développement des Technologies Economiques et Financières*) (see organigram in Appendix 4). Both structures aim at representing the French interests at the European level and in international organisations (the World Bank and United Nations). Official documents and persons interviewed in 2003 at these two organisations clearly indicate the major role played by Twinning in the restructuring of the French cooperation policy. Other ministries also have their own GIP or important mandated body. Project fiches are circulated by the NCP to the GIP, the relevant coordinators situated at the ministries, and to mandated bodies.

#### *Support services*

The GIP FCI (*Groupement d'Intérêt Général France Coopération Internationale*), located at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the GIP ADETEF (*Groupement d'Intérêt Général Assistance au Développement des Technologies Economiques et Financières*), situated at the ministry of Economy and Finance, both assist their home ministries and other ministries cooperating with them in the preparation of proposals and the selection of experts. Further smaller GIP and mandated bodies fulfil a similar task at other ministries (e.g. Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Affairs, etc.). Personal contacts with Twinning coordinators within the relevant ministries and mandated bodies play an important role to get proposals and to find quickly a suitable expert. At least one annual meeting is organised in the framework of the “club des jumelages” to get PLs and RTAs together to share and discuss their Twinning experience, with a representative of the Commission present.

#### **GREECE**

The Greek NCP was founded in 1998 and has been located at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>35</sup> There are currently three persons working at the Greek NCP: one NCP and two assistants (civil servants).

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<sup>34</sup> For a contextualisation of this policy shift see Tomalová 2005.

<sup>35</sup> The Greek NCP provided us only with the bare minimum of information. No further relevant information could be found at [www.mfa.gr](http://www.mfa.gr).

### *Organization and coordination*

The NCP's main functions are distributing information on both Twinning and TAIEX, coordinating the network and organizing meetings. The NCP has established Contact points responsible for the mobilisation of sectoral experts at all ministries and mandated bodies. The NCP also organizes quarterly meetings with institutional Contact Points and RTAs. There is no Greek database of experts at the moment.

### **ITALY**

The Italian NCP was created in 1998 and has been located at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>36</sup> The NCP is composed of two civil servants in charge of Twinning and TAIEX.

### *Organisation and coordination*

The NCP posts all project fiches on its website and then contacts, directly by e-mail or phone, the Italian administrations that might be interested in bidding. The NCP mentions that it is much easier to mobilise STEs/MTEs than RTAs. Usually it is the authorities themselves that are able to find suitable experts, but the Italian NCP office relies on its own database as well. The NCP also elaborates statistics on Twinning. The Ministries of Economy and Finance, Agriculture, Environment, Health and some Italian regions are among the most active Italian TWO actors and those who are contacted most frequently.

### *Support services*

The NCP runs a web site where overall information on Twinning/TAIEX is provided and project fiches are circulated. It also organizes meetings with the Italian administrations, regions and mandated bodies, who refer to the NCP on the results and the problems they have faced during the implementation of the projects. Usually there is one annual meeting with all administrations, regions and mandated bodies and several meetings with RTA and experts that are preparing proposals or have problems during the implementation of the projects.

### **UNITED KINGDOM**

The UK NCP was established in 1998. Ever since it started operating, it has built its organisation and activities around clearly defined Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) priorities. There are no formal FCO or any other rules and procedures for Twinning, apart from the rules and requirements set out by the Commission. The UK approach is also marked by effectiveness- and

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<sup>36</sup> [www.esteri.it](http://www.esteri.it).

efficiency-driven, strongly competitive practices. At the same time, the UK tends to rely on informal procedures.

### *Organisation and coordination*

The UK “community of interest” approach is quite unique in the EU in the way that there is a frequent and direct contact between the NCP and all levels of TWO project implementation. This is due to the fact that hierarchies in the UK, as a rule, are rather flat and that local and regional actors as well as all mandated bodies are treated just as central government departments are (see organigram in Appendix 4). The UK NCP acts as a hub for all other national Twinning actors to build partnerships and exchange experience. Also, the UK NCP make extensive use of British embassies in Beneficiary Countries.

### *Support services*

The UK NCP is preparing a Twinning website, due to launch in 2007, and is in frequent e-mail, phone and personal contact with all UK public sector bodies and mandated bodies (the NCP e-mail distribution lists are very comprehensive). They circulate a Twinning Newsletter every two to three weeks with a list of all “live” fiches (fiches in circulation, bids submitted, projects won) and any other items of news of interest, including letters from RTAs, to the UK Twinning Community in the UK and Posts abroad. Besides providing the addressees with all important news and distributing Commission materials, the UK NCP e-mails various practical documents such as audit templates and model documents (soon to be carried on the web site). Regular steering committees where all UK public sector bodies, local, regional and central government departments and mandated bodies are invited to the FCO are among the communication, planning and best practice sharing tools used by the UK NCP. At these Steering Committee Meetings, the FCO reports on progress on EU enlargement and the political background to Twinning, and other departments make presentations on topics of general interest such as TAIEX. At least once a year, the Steering Committee meeting is followed by a “nuts and bolts” workshop session at which best practice in the practical aspects of Twinning, such as preparation of budgets, is exchanged. Apart from this, the NCP gives presentations and is a central actor at various informal interdepartmental and regional discussion groups, meetings and conferences. It has a small fund from which it provides support to UK authorities involved in Twinning in the bid preparation and contracting phases for items such as travel expenses and translation.

The above description of different NCP models, far from being exhaustive, combined with the organigrams attached in Appendix 4, not only provides a picture of different institutional solutions of Twinning Out involvement but also shows how structural conditions, administrative legacies and

foreign policy focus and priorities are decisive in organising, coordinating and administering Twinning Out activities. Still, no matter how critical NCPs are for the success or otherwise of Twinning Out efforts, they are only one, though very large and important, piece in a much larger TWO mosaic. The following section of the report seeks to complete the picture with our findings about the activities and issues related to the preparation, contracting, resources, implementation and evaluation of Twinning Out.

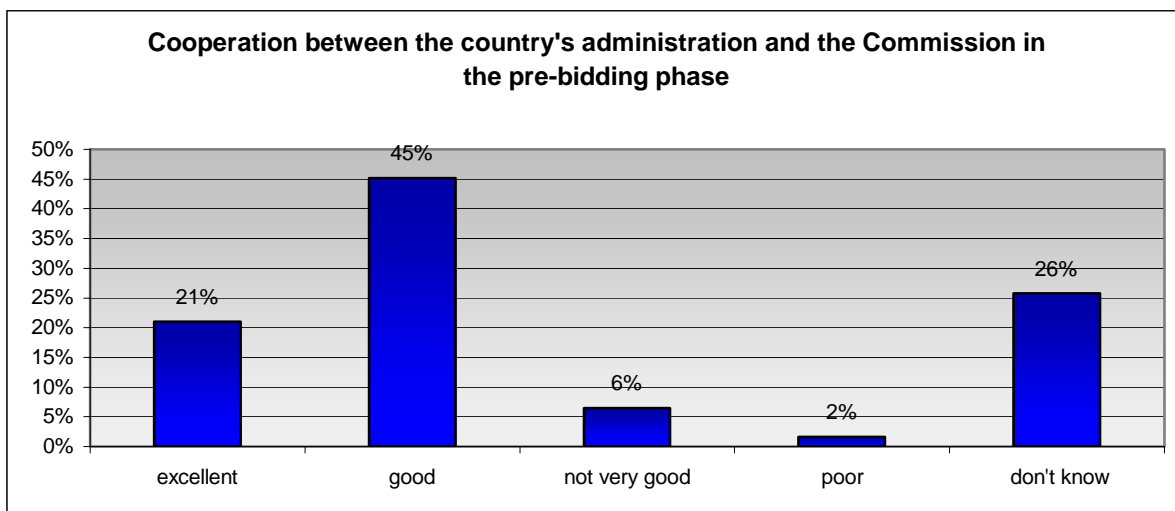
## 4.2 Preparation

Preparation is a decisive phase in every project and Twinning is no exception to this. The questionnaires sent to and interviews held with experts in Austria, Denmark, Finland, Greece, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom indicate similar perceptions and experiences. Furthermore, they also reveal some general positive and negative tendencies. The below figures are taken from statistically significant samples of Denmark, Germany, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom (see Chapter 3 - Methodology and Appendix 2) but are generally representative of the whole population considered for our research.

Most *PAA/RTAs* in our sample were or have been *involved in Twinning* for 2 to 4 years, often also as STEs/MTEs or PLs. Some of them included the long time of preparation of the project (from 4 months to 2 years) into their experience of Twinning. In the best case, it took about 30% of civil servants' working time to prepare projects within 4-5 months. Very often, RTAs/PAAAs had experience with several TWO projects as well as with international bilateral co-operation and could therefore compare the benefits and downsides of Twinning as compared to other co-operative arrangements and assistance programmes.

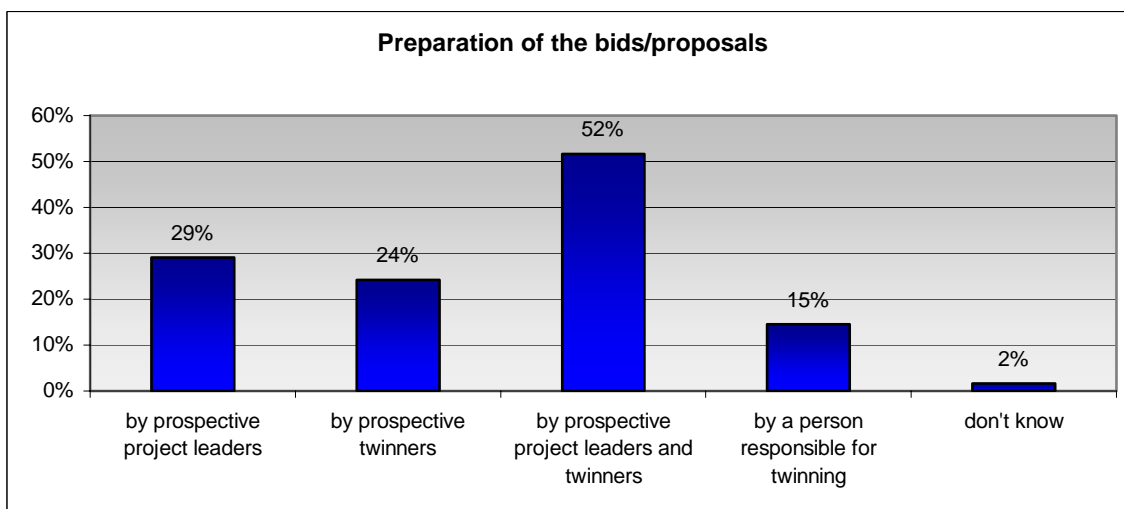
More than a half (66%) of the RTAs rated the *cooperation between the country's administration and the Commission* in the pre-bidding phase as good (45%) or excellent (21%). A relatively high number of answers (26%) indicate that, not having been involved in the pre-bidding phase (generally taken care of by NCPs), RTAs had no contact or experience of co-operation with the Commission, besides the RTA training provided by the EC (see below).

Figure 1



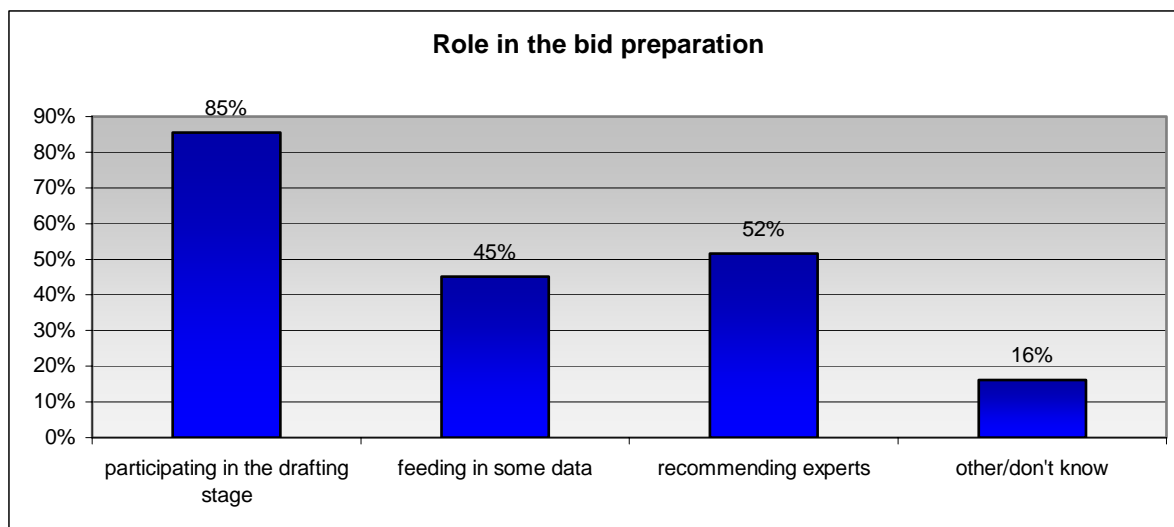
As Figure 2 shows, most PAAs/RTAs (52%) indicated that *Twining bids have been prepared* by prospective Project Leaders and RTAs, with some involvement of STEs/MTEs, especially in terms of technical input and *acquis* expertise.

Figure 2



As Figure 3 clearly reveals, most PAAs/RTAs and PLs have been involved in the preparation of the proposals at the drafting stage (85%). Nevertheless, well over a half of the respondents gave us multiple answers since most of them have also been involved in recommending experts and sometimes also in feeding in some data on the sector and/or the beneficiary country. A number of our respondents indicated that they helped elaborating work plans, time tables, contributed to the strategic and design aspects of the bid, contributed to the financial arrangements, helped to identify the *acquis* to be covered on top of the project fiche request and prepared workshops and brainstorming sessions as a background for legislative analysis.

Figure 3



In general, *PAA/RTAs have been contacted* by a person/unit responsible for Twinning at the ministry/mandated body in their sector of specialisation (63%). Some of them indicated that the person responsible for Twinning at the ministry/agency was often the future PL and that they were selected for their specific expertise. Sometimes, the NCP contacted them directly. Interestingly, competitive selection (18%) was mentioned by UK and German respondents only.<sup>37</sup>

Figure 4

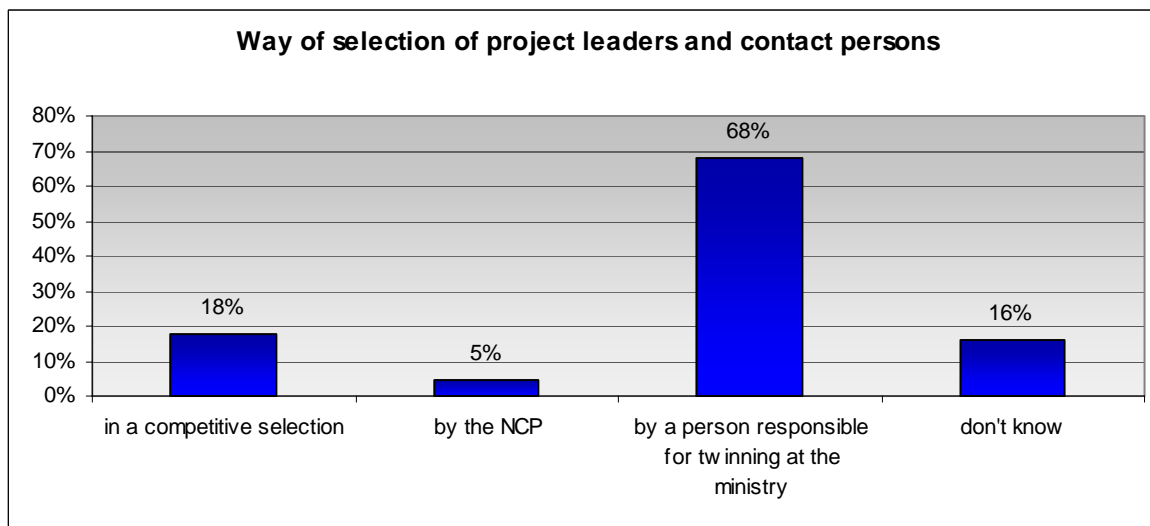
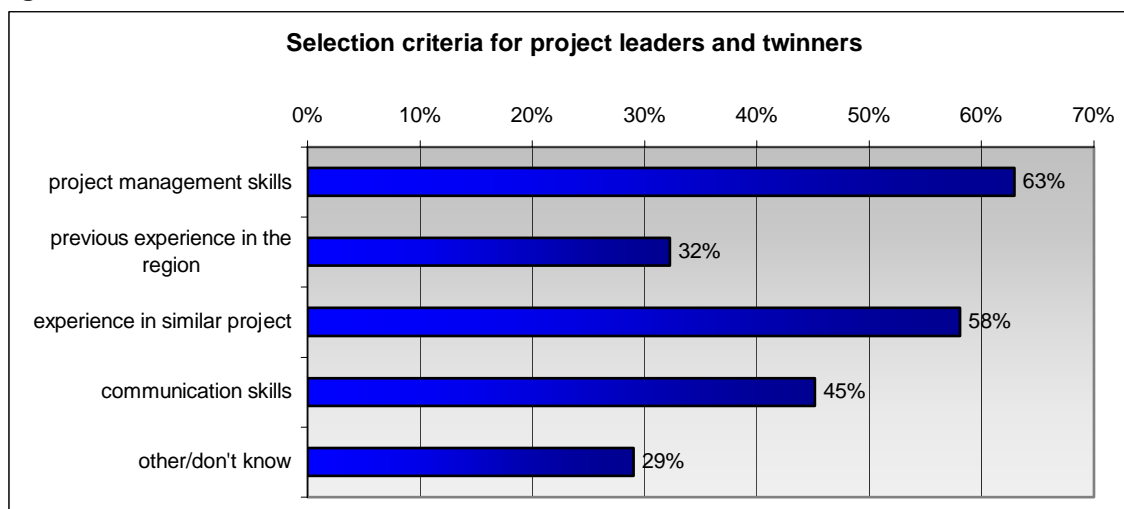


Figure 5 shows that the most important *criteria in the selection of Project Leaders and twinningers* were project management skills (63%), experience in similar projects (53%) and communication skills (45%). Several additional answers indicate that technical skills and expertise also played a role in the selection process. Several interviewees also mentioned language skills and suggested that

<sup>37</sup> Competitive selection was also mentioned by some New Member States respondents (e.g. in Estonia).

this will be of growing importance in the next generation of Twinning and that NMS, especially with Slavic languages, might have some advantage in the TACIS region.

**Figure 5**



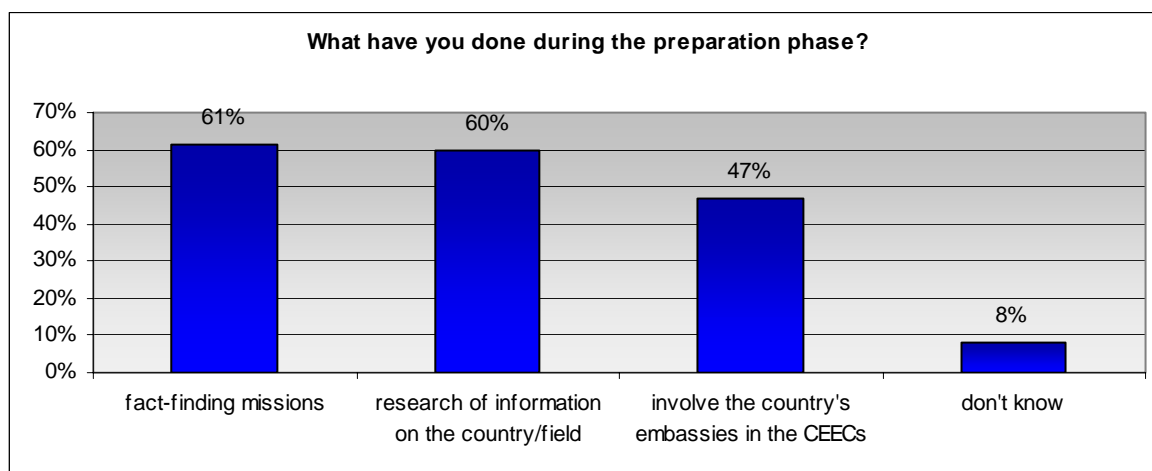
Most PAAs/RTAs and project leaders noticed some *differences between past, recent and current projects*, mainly at the level of the organisation of bid preparation (27%) and of the management of implementation (24%). In terms of the organisation of the preparation, future participants are more involved, experts are selected more strictly, and there is closer cooperation between the project RTA, PL, the ministry and Twinning partners. Some institutions now have contract templates and customise their CVs for individual bids (e.g. the Danish School of Public Administration or some Dutch organisations), relying on an established network of partners and experts. As for implementation management, changes were also noticed. There are new or modified management tools, better selection of STEs/MTEs, flexible project implementation, new utilisation of financial resources, more institutionalisation and involvement of professional providers of financial and/or accounting services. Also, experts are now much better trained in the Logical Framework Approach and in “EU administration”. These changes are also linked to the modified EC rules and requirements for TWO preparation and execution. A large number of respondents (42%) however did not see any difference or gave no answer to this question, especially since they only had experience with fairly recent projects.

Figure 6 shows that most PAAs/RTAs and PLs combined one to three different *sources of information* to prepare the Twinning project. Fact-finding missions have been organised in the form of workshops and missions, allowing PAAs/RTAs and sometimes also PLs to contact their future project partners (61%). Reports on previous (bilateral and EU projects) have also been used. MS embassies in BCs have often been involved (47%) during fact-finding missions and, chiefly, before the presentation of the proposals in the beneficiary country. Especially the Netherlands,



France and the UK make full use of their embassies in BCs and are generally happy with their services.

Figure 6



Following some earlier research on Twinning (Tulmets 2003a,b; 2004a,b,c; 2006; Königová 2003, 2004; Drulák, Königová 2005) and information gathered during previous data collection periods, we asked our respondents whether they knew about any *deal-making between Member States* (and/or with BCs) before, during or after bid presentation. Even though the majority answer was no, almost every interviewee mentioned that he/she heard the rumours and a number of respondents had direct experience with this phenomenon. Some interviewees indicated that deal-making did not happen before or during but after presentations. Also, respondents in several countries mentioned that some countries' embassies and/or MS officials were far too keen to make sure that the BC institution appreciated their bids.<sup>38</sup> Also, experts from smaller states, like Finland, the Netherlands and Denmark, share the opinion, that small countries “have limited resources and cannot compete with big MSs”. Countries with a strong sense of fair-play and countries with a rather weak culture of lobbying also find it difficult to lobby for their bids.

As far as *international partnerships* (i.e. the functioning and relationships in TWO consortia) are concerned, answers varied quite largely. Where evaluated as “good and easy”, based on “a trustful and demand-driven approach”, they often happened on the basis of previous bilateral or multilateral contacts and experience or using an already existing network. Some countries seem to be more open to international cooperation (e.g. the UK) and some tend to stick to preferred and proven partners (e.g. Denmark or Sweden preferring Scandinavian MS, Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland and the UK). Even though previous agreement on a joint bid is always the first choice, if

<sup>38</sup> Invitations for officials from the beneficiary institution who were selecting the bidding winner to visit some countries that were pitching for the Twinning contract were mentioned, especially by some interviewees from New Member States who renounced these practices and said that this “overlobbying” was paradoxically detrimental to the countries seeking to support their bids in this way.

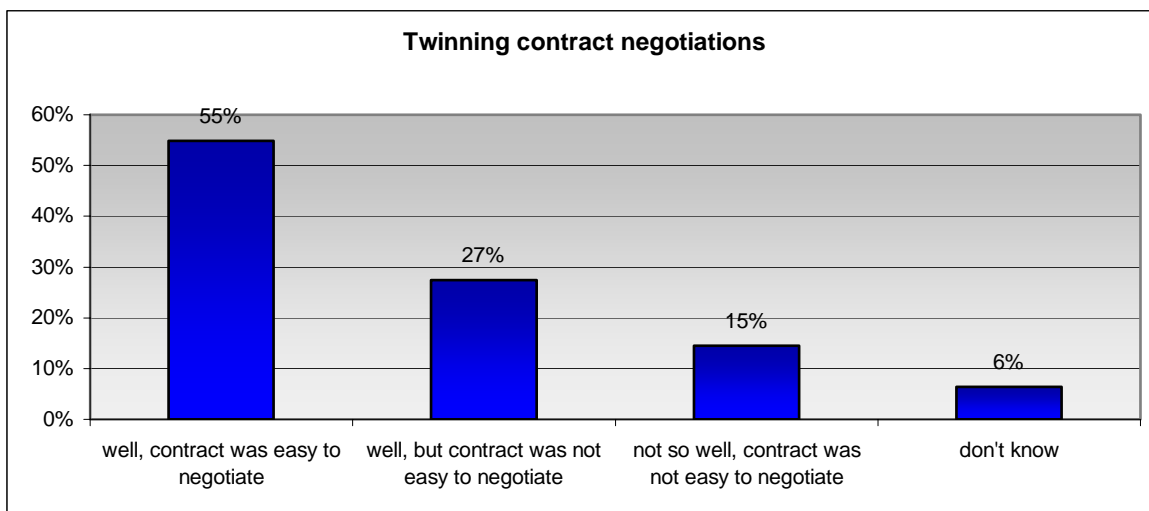
that is possible and necessary for good chances of the proposal, some “forced marriages”, as some respondents called consortia put together upon the suggestion made by the Delegation and/or the BC receiving institution, worked very well. That, however, was not the rule and even the Commission and previous Twinning evaluation reports acknowledged the difficulties with the management of international consortia, especially when having more than two members and when involving different public administration styles and traditions (e.g. some projects involving Scandinavian and South European MS). The most often cited cause of failing international partnerships was the lack of consensus on the questions of leadership, accountability and budget and the lack of commitment to a genuine partnership.

When asked about any *previous knowledge of the beneficiary country, sector or previous projects*, respondents agreed that, on average, this was not required by Beneficiary Countries (even though in Poland, for example, recent fiches often included a note that “command of the Polish language” or “previous project experience in Poland” are welcome). Nevertheless, almost all respondents agree that previous knowledge of the beneficiary country / sector / project outputs is definitely a major advantage. Some respondents suggested that whenever this was highlighted in experts’ CVs and pointed out during presentations, the feedback from recipient institutions was very positive and it made a real difference. Some RTAs/PAs/PLs even said that it was central in the preparation phase.

### **4.3 Contracting**

In general, most PAs/RTAs/PLs (55%) indicate that *contract negotiation* went well, although all of the respondents did not fail to point out the sometimes unbearable delays in the contracting phase, be these caused by the personalities of recipient country’s PLs, turnover of staff in BC institutions, protracted and fragmentary EU commenting procedure where each function of DG Enlargement send their comments separately and at various times. Several respondents mentioned the first generation of Twinning as a particularly painful experience in that respect.

**Figure 7**



#### 4.4 Domestic Resources

The following section of the report sums up comments made by both NCPs and experts in respect of human and financial resources of their countries. While there are some general tendencies, which are outlined below, there is a clear difference between small and larger states (and public administration structures) in terms of human resource availability, capacity to participate, expert mobilisation strategies and mechanisms as well as financial support given to cover especially preparation costs.

Project leaders and RTAs are typically civil servants or retired civil servants or persons from mandated bodies. More rarely, civil servants from regional administrations act as RTAs. In some cases, independent private advisors who used to work in public administration are invited to work as RTAs or as STEs/MTEs. Sending institutions often rely on the experience from bilateral assistance to find experts to send abroad<sup>39</sup> and on complementarities between Twinning and national means.

The language (mainly English) is not a problem for the North European countries, even though a few of them mention having very little chance to win TWO contracts in the MEDA countries without partnerships with the French. On the contrary, respondents from France and the NMS mentioned the often-poor command of foreign languages by French experts who have often very good technical and management skills but language clearly is a limitation for some of them.

For smaller administrations, such as the Austrian, Belgian, Danish, Dutch or Swedish ones, which have only limited financial and human resources, it is often quite difficult to participate in Twinning projects. As the respective country's NCPs indicated, it is, in general, not easy for

<sup>39</sup> Germany, for example, was initially able to draw upon an established and well-developed network of organisations involved in the national *Transform* programme assisting Eastern Europe to find and mobilise experts for Twinning. For more on this see Tulmets (2002).

administrations to send their best experts for a long time abroad. It is not a big problem to find a Project Leader, but RTAs and MTEs are often very difficult to find. Therefore, experts from these countries typically show more interest in the TAIEX instrument, thanks to the short term expertise required and flexibility of the arrangement. This makes motivation activities by NCPs in smaller countries even more important and guarantees of cost recovery (though not complete in many cases) to the sending institutions<sup>40</sup> even more decisive than in big member states with larger pools of experts and greater resources. What seems to be of particular help are regular and frequent meetings with top management of ministries and mandated bodies to convince them of the strategic and operational importance and benefit of TWO projects.

Bigger countries with larger administrations, such as France, Germany or the UK, on the contrary, can rely on quite extensive networks of administrative institutions and mandated bodies. However, the danger in more centralised states, like France, is that no matter how big they are, experts tend to be selected primarily from central government bodies. Larger states, however, can also benefit from the fact that technical assistance has traditionally played an important role in their international cooperation arrangements. Last but not least, experts from large countries seem to be quite willing to travel and stay abroad for longer periods of time. In some countries, the way RTAs are contracted presents various disadvantages in a career and it finally turns out that civil servants take a real risk in accepting to go abroad for a longer time. Interviews in France and with Commission officers, for example, revealed that French civil servants have to be officially employed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the duration of the Twinning project. As a consequence, they often encounter difficulties in reintegrating into their “home institution” and their experience abroad is not really appreciated when they come back. The Commission believes that Twinning should be estimated higher in these countries and considered as a valuable career experience of civil servants. This approach will also help to professionalise twinningers’ performance (Interview, DG Enlargement, February 2006).

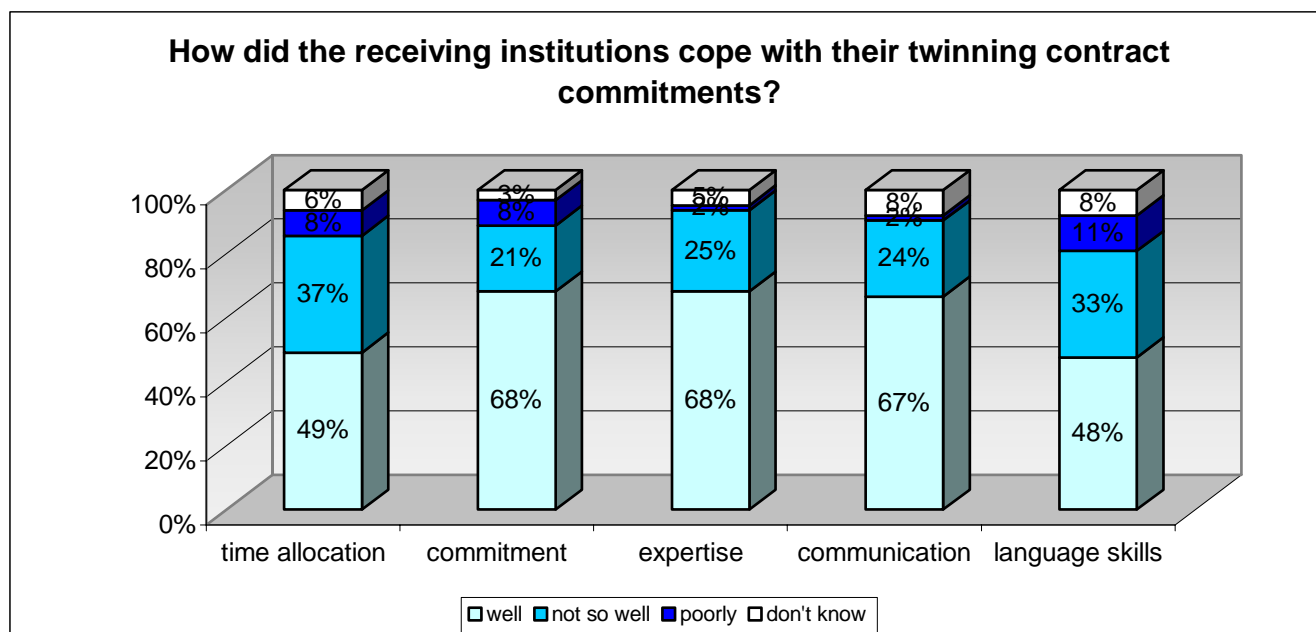
## 4.5 Implementation

The *quality of project implementation* varied according to persons, sectors and countries. In general, the beneficiary ministries or institutions have been evaluated as coping rather well with their Twinning contract commitments.

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<sup>40</sup> For example, Danish experts, due to their national salaries and labour cost prices in general in Denmark, are among the most expensive RTAs and STEs in the EU and have a special arrangement regarding fees with the Commission. Cost recovery for their home institutions where they have to be either replaced or they must work on both Twinning and their home tasks is a key variable in deciding about their participation.

Figure 8



As evident from Figure 8, time allocation was one of the main constraints, even though the reasons for that were sometimes outside the powers of BC experts. BC expertise was evaluated as generally good, but communication and language skills varied a lot according to persons and working conditions. In general, BCs/receiving institutions could cope quite well with their commitments, although in some cases the commitments were hardly met in reality. Also, the pressure of accession being gone, several interviewees mentioned the disinterest and lacking commitment in NMS.

Our research also shows that while some MS administrations welcome *the idea of sending* their own *experts abroad*, other do not. This was not a problem if the expert was already retired or if the project was seen as strategic due to the geographical proximity of the BC (e.g. the German *Länder* Saxony and Bavaria were keen on getting involved in Twinning projects in Poland and the Czech Republic). Sending an expert for a longer period was seen as an opportunity for developing long-term contacts between neighbour countries or regions. Yet, other administrations reacted rather negatively, mainly since by sending an expert abroad, they were losing one at home. Sometimes they even did not have any expert on the subject.<sup>41</sup>

From the PAAs/RTAs' point of view, the receiving country's officials quite welcomed *professional twinning*. The subjective reasons for that were that "trustful relations developed between the officials", partners were "glad about having professional twinning, as [they] know what it means to have unprofessional ones" or that the PAA's expertise and experience was valued. Cooperation went particularly well during contracting. Some experts had more negative experience,

<sup>41</sup> Respondents pointed out that "they have 'lost' a specialist", there was "a gap in the staff", the situation was unfavourable because of administration cuts, administrations were not supporting projects and STEs had to "take holidays" for their missions abroad, "because the [administrations] have mostly no experts available and ask them later from the administrations they compete with" etc.

mainly due to the fact that in some cases the BC experts learned about the RTA fees and, doing most of the Twinning project work without any remuneration and sometimes outside their working hours, as interviewees in Slovakia, for example, revealed.

As far as the *preparation of twinningers* is concerned, future PAAs/RTAs took part in a 3-day preparatory seminar on Twinning at the EC DG Enlargement. Sometimes they were also trained via preparatory seminars organised by their NCPs. Some experts had time to collect information on the country a few weeks in advance, others judged that they had no other preparation than reading the Twinning manual. Many PAAs/RTAs indicated that the preparation was not sufficient. The Danish, Dutch and UK respondents, however, agreed that their NCP and home institutions were very helpful in providing them with assistance and methodological guidance throughout the whole project cycle.

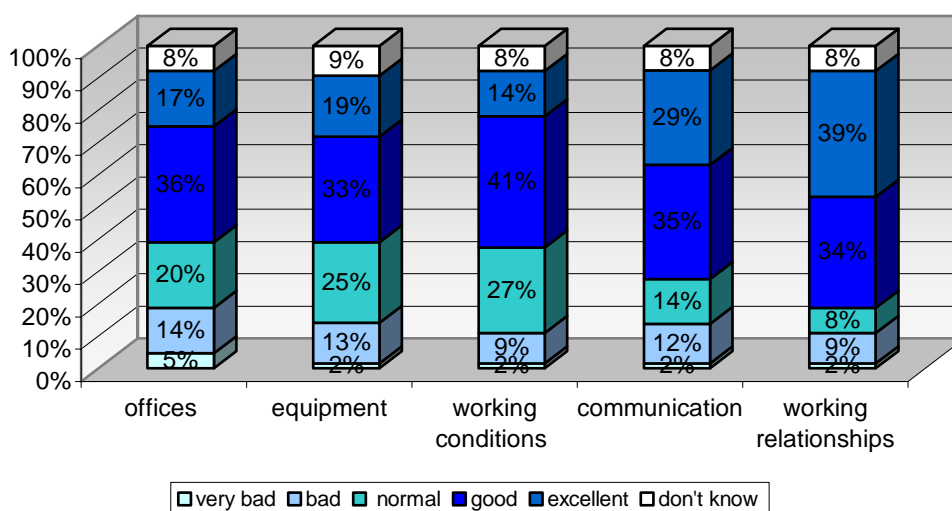
The *working conditions and environment in the Beneficiary Country* were perceived in a very different way, depending on the country, the period of project implementation (there was a huge difference between the first and second generations of Twinning), and the personalities of partners. Interestingly, in many cases we came across mixed assessments: either working conditions (offices, equipment) were good and personal contacts (communication, working relationships) were bad, or the other way round. In general, however, communication and working relationships got better assessment, with almost no differences among BCs.<sup>42</sup>

## Figure 9

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42 As for working and living conditions, general comments indicate that BC were sometimes not prepared to provide adequate office space, equipment and working conditions for RTA, PL and experts, that offices were too small or loud, or that the Twinning team had to bring their own equipment. Furthermore, PAAs/RTAs were losing time by looking for a place to live. In some cases, this took more than four weeks “even with the help of the EC Delegation” (a German interviewee). As for personal contacts, relations with the PLs were generally better than with persons below them. In some countries, there was almost “no communication and relationship”, sometimes also due to communication difficulties on both sides. The command of languages played a major role in facilitating or inhibiting personal contacts.

### Working conditions and environment in the receiving country



Differences were noticed in the degree of commitment between Candidate Countries, which are now NMS, current Candidate Countries (mainly Croatia, Turkey), and Neighbourhood Countries. Although some PAAs/RTAs made very good experience in the past with former CCs / current NMS, they were more sceptical about some current Candidate Countries. Language skills were also described as making a key difference in the quality of the partnership between BCs and MS. PAAs/RTAs often had to work with documents in English and in the BC' languages, which is impossible without the help of a good assistant and of interpreters/translators: “no PAA is able to master at the same time practical experience and legislative details in a foreign language”.

As far as the implementation of Twinning is concerned, PAAs/RTAs gave a more or less positive evaluation of the *transfer of knowledge, of rules, norms and standards as well as of technology*. The sustainability of the transfers, the “continuity” and the “long-term effects”, however, are a moot point. In terms of the *transfer of knowledge*, Twinning was considered as an important instrument to deliver the necessary knowledge on the *acquis* and was generally judged as very successful, in particular when the partners were interested in the project (“openness to get new ideas and incentives”). The transfer was in particular noticed when knowledge from one Twinning project was positively used or discussed in the framework of a follow-up project. In some cases, however, the knowledge could be used only for a short period due to staff turnover and other constraints. The transfer of *rules, norms and standards* was rather limited. Finally, the *transfer of technology* was largely seen as a spin-off and an add-on, moreover not applicable to some projects.

## 4.6 Evaluation

In some Member States, like Sweden and Germany, general evaluations of Twinning have been done. Sweden has evaluated its participation in Twinning in concentrating on the efficiency of its own National Contact Point (Dixelius, Haglund, 2003). The German NCP and the GTZ office evaluated the implementation of some Twinning projects in CCs (BMW/GTZ, 2006). In general, EU Member States do not take time or invest resources to evaluate their Twinning activities abroad.

When asked if the *quarterly reports* have been relevant enough and provided a true picture of the project implementation, the majority of PAAs/RTAs gave positive answers. Some PAAs/RTAs even reported weekly on the project to show the gradual evolution of implementation. Sometimes, reports had to be carefully discussed between the contracting parties as there were arguments over some issues. Some respondents answered that the reports were only a formal exercise and that many practical difficulties that actually mattered a lot and hampered the projects' implementation and/or success were left out or formulated very carefully. Also, reports were often written under time pressure and BC Project Leaders indicated that some elements described in the reports perhaps reflect the state of the art in terms of institutional changes and legislative reforms, but do not provide information on the shortcomings of implementation. What also plays a role, as suggested in one interview in Denmark, is that some RTAs wrote the reports knowing that they would be read back home and their further career growth might be stalled if failures were admitted.

When asked if the *targets, benchmarks and mandatory results* of projects were easy to measure, PAAs/RTAs and PLs answered that this was indeed the case in many projects. The more experienced respondents said that it was due to the fact that attention was paid to this in the preparation phase and that clear definition of benchmarks and targets was crucial. A well-designed project fiche submitted by the BC is often decisive. In some cases, however, targets were not easy to define and quite often not easy to evaluate, especially in project components with no or little *acquis* involved or in relation of training or "general improvement of competencies".

*Project evaluation* has been largely used to prepare further Twinning projects. Sometimes, but not as a rule, lessons learned and feedback loops were taken into consideration by the management of sending institutions. Some projects have also been evaluated by the Commission and this had some impact on further Twinning projects implemented by the given MS provider. The use of project evaluation tools for feedback by MS, however, was not systematic and it was often difficult to say if the BC partners had really made use of these evaluations for new project fiches. The question is whether feedback loops should be taken care of by NCPs which may use them in trainings, workshops and seminars. In quite a few cases, *feedback from the Beneficiary Country*



was provided, appreciated and considered helpful. Some RTAs in Germany even pointed out that they were receiving feedback on the project continuously ever since the project finished.

Our research reveals that only a few *national, sectoral or interdepartmental evaluations* were conducted in Member States on Twinning projects. Only the German, Swedish and Danish NCPs indicated that they made assessments of some of their Twinning projects. This is confirmed by the fact that *most PAAs/RTAs have not been interviewed or contacted for evaluations* done by the Commission or other institutions. A relatively small group of persons indicate that they have been interviewed by the contracting authority evaluation team, by someone from the EMS consortium for the interim evaluation of PHARE and Transition facilities of the Commission or that they have answered the questions of ECOTEC monitoring the Twinning project.

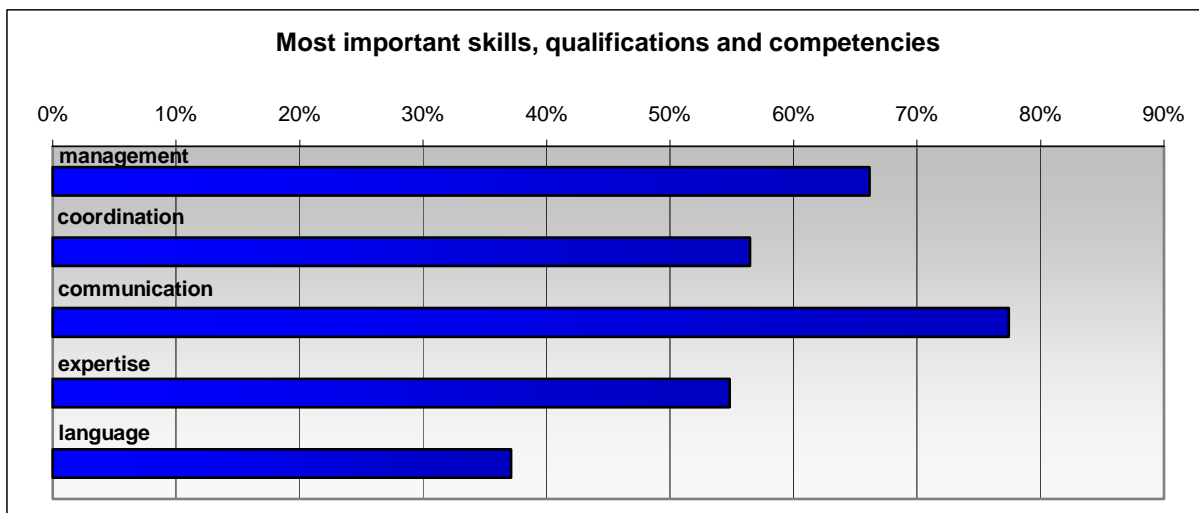
Although the aim of Twinning is to *share best practices among Member States* as well, it is surprising to notice that this mainly takes place within the scope of a consortium (“more or less, this happens only in partnerships between a Junior and Senior partners”, as noted by one German interviewee). Study visits in the preparatory phase or during implementation are also mentioned as opportunities to exchange good practices among MS. Brussels is generally not considered as a place where this exchange of experience or best practices can take place, except during annual NCP meetings (but this involves only NCPs and there is little time for this kind of exchange). Neither is there any communication between PAAs/RTAs and members of sectoral committees in Brussels.

Most PAAs/RTAs considered that management, coordination, communication, technical and language skills as *important skills* to participate to a Twinning projects. For some persons, PAAs/RTAs have to be efficient managers with good communication skills and trust the more technical expertise of STEs. Although language skills are always a plus, some consider this qualification less important as they work with bilingual assistants<sup>43</sup> and interpreters/translators. Other respondents, however, insisted that poor command of the project language (typically English) was a major obstacle in establishing good day-to-day communication with the BC administration. While management, coordination and communication were considered as more relevant for project leaders and PAAs/RTAs, the last three or two ones seem to be more important for experts / STEs.

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<sup>43</sup> RTA assistants were generally considered very important, often described as the “doorway to the receiving institution” and sometimes, as indicated by interviewees from the UK and Sweden, taking on various other roles besides providing administrative services and translating/interpreting.

Figure 10



The findings presented above provide us with large enough body of data to be able to identify the main benefits and drawbacks as well as the opportunities and risks of Twinning Out, both in general and for Member States and their institutions providing TWO assistance, as presented in the following Chapter. Also, the information and insights gained during the data collection phase and analysed together with previous Twinning evaluations and other secondary sources of Twinning information, allow us to formulate some key recommendations to the Czech administration and offer several models of Czech TWO involvement (Chapter 6).

## 5 Benefits, Costs, Risks and Opportunities of Twinning

What makes Twinning an instrument the European Commission is so keen on extending to more countries and both Beneficiary Countries and Member States are willing to continue using? This chapter seeks to answer this question on the basis of data collected during our research project and evaluated with the view of providing argumentation for Czech but also other New Member States authorities to underpin their effort to mobilise domestic resources. Given the recommendations presented in Chapter 6, we decided to present the arguments in favour and against Twinning as an instrument as well as the risks and constraints linked to this tool mainly in the form of “argument sheets” presented below.

### 5.1 General Benefits and Drawbacks of Twinning

The below lists present some of the key positives and negatives of Twinning in the context of EU external relations programmes. Far from being exhaustive, the argument sheets reiterate what our research revealed as the most important and relevant benefits and drawbacks of Twinning in general.

#### Box 1

#### General Benefits of Twinning

- A **two-way street** – a learning and communication process for both sides.
- A vehicle for the **transfer of knowledge and hands-on experience**.
- An excellent PR tool for the EU – “sells Europe” to neighbouring countries.
- A **win-win situation for all parties involved**: Beneficiary Countries get what they need (if they know what they want and learn how to put it in a project fiche) and Member States establish contacts with their colleague in the recipient states.
- An important tool to **make experts in Beneficiary Countries familiar not only with the EU legislation but also with the methods of implementation**.
- A **potentially sustainable instrument**: the work is done by the beneficiaries themselves, providers of assistance do not come to teach and preach – they come to assist them in what BCs would be doing anyway, only helping them to avoid dead ends and speeding the process up a bit.
- A good vehicle for **sharing professional knowledge**.
- A tool helping to **change structures and processes** where projects are linked specifically to the *acquis* and where projects benefit a specific unit of the recipient institution and a concrete group of people, instead of the system / institution in general.
- A **good basis for spin-offs** (follow-up Twinning / Technical Assistance / other bilateral

projects).

- A possibility to establish / extend **sectoral professional networks**.
- Focus on **hands-on experience and practical solutions**.
- An instrument for **real change in policies and understanding** perceivable in **mid- to long-term perspective**, as BC organisations grow and change, rather than after the project is wound up.
- Different from the “project industry” (commercial enterprise): what is delivered must be good since **MS work with their peers and future colleagues**.
- A **multicultural experience broadening horizons** of both sides and **fostering diversity** in the EU.
- A platform for **targeted, practical training**.
- A vehicle for **study visits** which are often the **breaking point for convincing the recipient institutions of a value of changes in attitudes / practices** proposed. Study visits are cited as a great inspiration and “eye-opener”; they also facilitate team building in and communication between BC institutions responsible for the implementation of a specific *acquis*.
- Often facilitating **cooperation between central and regional / local authorities** and actors.
- A possibility for RTAs to **get familiar with BC administrations’ real political problems** and not only with those wellknown from “Sunday speeches of politicians”

While the above benefits are recognised by both Twinning partners, acknowledged by the Commission and repeated in many different ways by our respondents, the drawbacks are acknowledged mainly by the sending and recipient institutions, even though DG Enlargement is aware of many of these issues and its revisions of the Twinning Manual as well as some of the rules under EDIS are a conscious reflection of the below criticism.

The following argument sheet lists the negative sides of Twinning mentioned most frequently by our respondents, some of them having been also pointed out in previous Twinning evaluation studies.

## Box 2

### General Drawbacks

- A **slow instrument** and a very **bureaucratic** one.
- The **Twinning Manual and procedures are rather complicated** and time consuming to read, understand and use. Also in different delegations in different countries as well in different CFCUs the **interpretation of the same rules and guidelines varies**.
- **Tight and inflexible rules**, especially with regard to minor changes to and amendments of Twinning contracts.
- **Too short if basic structures have to be changed** in the recipient country (e.g. internal management, establishment of cooperation with other ministries/institutions etc.), i.e. when ambitions are high.
- **Limited absorption capacity of BC institutions**: when the situation in the recipient country is not as expected, the BC institution’s experts are not readily available to receive all the requested assistance.

- Often **insufficient coordination between projects and national strategies**.
- The **lack of flexibility** allowing significant change to the project which would contribute to the overall reform process.
- **Participants from receiving institutions cannot be paid for any extra efforts** from Twinning budget.
- **Uncertain sustainability** due to **high staff turnover and politicisation of public administration** in Beneficiary Countries.

## 5.2 Benefits and Drawbacks of Twinning Out for Provider Countries

While many of the previous benefits are highly relevant for countries and institutions providing Twinning Out assistance to Beneficiary Countries, there are also benefits and drawbacks that are specific to either providers or recipients of this type of aid. The following two tables, similarly to the above section, sum up the most relevant benefits that might be mentioned by the Czech NCP and other Twinning Out coordinators in their communication with the top management of ministries, other public administration authorities as well as mandated bodies. Box 3 indicates that Twinning brings mainly non-material (“soft”) benefits for MS providing TWO assistance. The list, however, reveals that these soft benefits are important and pave the way for some material (“hard”) benefits in terms of economic gains and political influence.

### Box 3

#### Benefits of Twinning Out for Provider Countries

- A tool for **strengthening of the economic position of the provider country** in the Beneficiary Country / region.
- An opportunity for **establishing potential voting coalitions in the Council** formations.
- A chance to **increase the “return of investment in the EU.”**
- A way of **reinforcing or improving the country’s image and reputation**.
- A mechanism helping to **ensure stability of the European neighbourhood regions: more safety for Czech investors, more security for EU citizens**.
- A way of establishing **good working relationships with colleagues in future EU Member States** on peer positions.
- A springboard for **further bilateral / multilateral cooperation**.
- An instrument for **spreading of democracy and stability** to a wider European area.
- A tool for **creating network of contacts** (development of **sectoral professional networks**).
- An exceptional **career and personal growth opportunity for some of the twinning experts**, expanding their horizons and helping to put new perspectives on their work.

### Costs and Drawbacks for Twinning Out Provider Countries

- **Overhead costs of posted experts** for sending institutions.
- **Uncertainty and financial losses** related to **late starts of projects**.
- **Payment bureaucracy**: Many RTAs are expected to self-fund parts of their secondment until approval of funding; they must rely on “bridging funds” from their home administrations which are sometimes extremely difficult to organise for legal reasons.
- Sometimes **problematic recovery of costs related to the preparation, bidding and other activities**.
- **Loss of an expert** who is **missed back home** (especially in small countries / administrations).
- **Organisational /management difficulties** related to a posting of an expert with crucial expertise.
- **Tight and inflexible rules**, which do sometimes not allow to respond adequate to a living learning process (unlike in Technical Assistance projects)
- **Twinning project approvals may be unforeseeable**, which makes planning and preparation for the (home) government employer, experts and the family of the RTA very difficult

In order to design an effective strategy for Twinning Out, it is necessary to be aware of and deal with both benefits and costs of TWO. To be a successful provider of Twining assistance, New Member States must be able to “sell” the benefits to their home administrations and communicate them clearly and strongly enough to the top levels at ministries and mandated bodies. At the same time, however, it is necessary for them to take care of the costs and drawbacks as well as the risks and constraints related to Twinning Out preparation and implementation.

### 5.3 Risks and Constraints of Twinning Out

The red line running through all of our interviews was that the best way to deal with risks and constraints of Twinning Out was to be aware of them and try to deal with them as early in the process cycle as possible, rather than shunning them or not revealing them to the institutions providing assistance. The big advantage of NMS is that many of their Project Leaders and RTAs/STEs have had some experience with Twinning at the receiving end (Twinning In), so they are often aware of the risks. Still, in order to find solutions for either eliminating or at least mitigating them, the following list highlights some key risks and constraints of Twinning Out that have been and/or will be faced by Czech experts. This list has been drawn on the basis of input from Old Member States as well as the information provided by Czech authorities that have already started TWO preparation, bidding or implementation activities.

### Risks and Constraints of Twinning Out

- **Structural / institutional changes** (changes in administration; management changes; changes of RTAs / PLs; turnover of staff on both sides)
- **Disinterest in New Member States** (will most probably apply also to Romania and Bulgaria after their accession) **when the pressure of pre-accession assessment is gone**
- **Delays** (in preparation, project launching, contracting, provision of offices to RTAs, reports)
- **Political externalities and slowness of policy-making**
- **Staff problems** on both sides (shortage of staff; insufficient training; lack of management skills on BC side; unavailability of STEs; unsatisfactory qualifications of short-term experts)
- **Lack of interministerial cooperation and coordination** on the BC side
- **Uncertain sustainability**
- **Budget problems** (suboptimal use of project funds; budgetary underestimations; lack of BC co-financing)
- **Limited impact:** recommendations not taken into account or not implemented
- **Inability to provide planned activities** (for budgetary, organisational or other reasons)
- **Contract problems** (poorly drafted contracts; need for several addenda)
- **Conflicting priorities** between MS consortia members, MS and BC, BC institutions (especially when more than one BC institution is the recipient of TWO)
- **Training problems** (insufficient numbers of BC institutions staff; training participants being chosen just to hit the numbers and not according to their area of specialisation)
- **Limited timeframe** (need for project extension – not always approved)
- **Communication problems** (between MS consortia members, between BC institutions, between BC and MS; lack of English language skills of BC experts)

The above argument sheets summarise most though not all of the major benefits and drawbacks as well as risks and constraints related to Twinning Out. At the same time, however, these lists can serve as practical tools for the Czech NCP and the top levels of TWO assistance providers from the Czech Republic to mobilise and motivate Czech experts and their managers to get involved in TWO projects.

## 6 Recommendations

As we showed in the previous chapter, Twinning can be a very useful tool and a tremendous opportunity for assistance providers, be it from the Old or New Member States.

Nevertheless, to be able to really benefit from this opportunity, some essential prerequisites need to be ensured. Following our mapping exercise covering the organisation of Twinning in New Member States<sup>44</sup>, we concluded that there is still room for improvement and that the majority of NMS still need some substantial changes in the way they coordinate, administer, promote and support TWO on a national basis.<sup>45</sup>

Chapter 6.1 therefore brings some recommendations regarding the organisation and coordination of Twinning Out in New Member States. These are applicable to more or less all NMS as they have been often mentioned by our respondents and some of them appeared in previous Twinning evaluations. Recommendations in Chapter 6.2, however, are formulated specifically for the Czech Republic. After describing and assessing the existing Twinning arrangements in the country, we proceed with presenting six scenarios for the location and empowering of the National Contact Point. Several recommendations are then given to improve the current TWO organisation and support services. Five models of Czech involvement in TWO are sketched out in section 6.2.4 and the recommendations chapter closes with a suggestion for organising an international Twinning Out seminar where the findings of this report would be presented and where interactive exchange of experience, advice and know-how between Old Member States and New Member States could take place.

### 6.1 General Recommendations for New Member States

Based on our analysis of the data collected and information from previous evaluations, our research team has formulated the following recommendations, which have been split into several categories. We start with the most important, strategic recommendations, which are then followed by organisational and, finally, operational proposals and suggestions.

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<sup>44</sup> In this respect, we rely on data provided in questionnaires sent to us from NMS – see Appendix 2) and information about and from the “NCP workshop to promote successful donor Twinning activity” for NCPs from New Member States organised by the Hungarian NCP in Budapest, 24 – 25 November 2005.

<sup>45</sup> Some NMS, however, have seen major developments in the institutionalisation and organisation of European affairs in general and Twinning assistance in particular. For example, Poland has been inspired in its EU affairs coordination by the French SGAE (see Bouquet 2006).



### Strategic Recommendations

- Make **Twinning Out** one of the Government's European priorities and advocate the country's interests in providing TWO services (have a list of arguments ready – *we shall have such a list of benefits in our report*).
- Use **Twinning Out** and TAIEX as complementary instruments.
- Define and communicate the country's **competitive advantage and the unique area of expertise**; identify and "market" the **value that the country can add** to the Beneficiary Country's administrations and/or systems
- Create more stable **partnerships** with some countries (building on previous experience of cooperation in TWI projects, established partnerships and good track-record from other bilateral and multilateral projects); yet, remain open to cooperation with any country. Good reputation of a lead partner is key.
- Identify the country's **competitive advantage as a Junior Partner** and **market the country's recent experience with the implementation of the *acquis***.
- Make clear **Twinning Out priorities** (i.e. objectives, key regions, key areas of expertise, partnership policy etc). These priorities, consistent with the country's foreign policy focus, should be preferably summarised in a fiche-like document. Most importantly, make these priorities known to:
  - 1) National public administration bodies;
  - 2) Other MS NCPs and institutions;
  - 3) Beneficiary Countries;
  - 4) EU secretaries at NMS embassies in Beneficiary Countries.
- Recognise **Twinning Out as part of the country's national experts career growth**; communicate this to the management of government authorities and mandated bodies.
- Formulate your **own national Twinning Out guidelines**, along with the Commission rules and **provide relevant training** for ministries, mandated bodies and other organisations concerned and interested
- Make use of the command of **Slavic languages**, where applicable, in project bids and project implementation.
- Consider involving **regional and local authorities** (STEs) where it might be beneficial

### Organisational Recommendations

- Set up a **special Twinning Out agency / unit / organisation** to coordinate and concentrate TWO information. This TWO unit/agency shall be managed by and accountable to one public administration body only: one ministry or the Government Office.
- Use the **expertise of the people who have administered TWI and TWO so far** (including the CFCU/AO staff).
- Make sure that the **NCP mandate and organisational status is strong enough** to facilitate contacts and effective cooperation with top level management of ministries and mandated bodies.
- Ensure **enough resources** to run the NCP daily business.
- Establish a **network of ministries and agencies and initiate and encourage active networking**
- **Build Twinning institutional memory** in order to set off staff turnover in NMS public

administrations.

### Operational Recommendations

- Create a **special website** dedicated to Twinning – list all project fiches there and update it frequently.
- Have **one person** just for circulating fiches around ministries and mandated bodies, updating the website and generally taking care of incoming and outgoing e-mail.
- **Communicate regularly with the management of ministries and mandated bodies** to convince them of the importance of TWO both for the country and for the institution. Remind SPOs and contact persons constantly about TWO opportunities but **avoid “information overkill”**. Provide **timely, structured and clear information**.
- Make regular contact with, provide information to and make use of the information from **embassy officers** in Beneficiary Countries.
- Provide **training** (most importantly in TWO preparation, Logical Framework Approach (LFA) and other relevant skills) and continuous **support**.
- Publish a **“smart version” of the Twinning Manual**.
- Allocate some **funds for pre-bidding visits and preparatory work; establish bridging funding**.
- Be **present at presentations / preparatory visits / fact-findings** if possible.
- Make information about **cultural and interpersonal sensitivities** part of the training provided to RTAs, PLs, STEs and MTEs.
- Allow for **flexibility and creative solutions**.

The above recommendation sheets draw mainly upon the data collected throughout the time of our research project implementation. Some of them, however, also appear in previous evaluations of Twinning (Birker et al. 2000; MZV ČR 2001; Cooper, Johansen 2003; WM Enterprise 2006; Bouquet 2006; BMWi/GTZ 2006), which lends our findings and the subsequent recommendations some more credit and provides support to our proposals and advice.

Besides these, we suggest that the Czech Republic’ decision-makers consider also some specific recommendations formulated in the following section of the report. Especially the last one, i.e. to organise and international Twinning Out seminar, might extend the above argument sheets and bring along some practical, effective and fast measures.

## 6.2 Recommendations Specific to the Czech Republic

Twinning Out is a new instrument that Czech authorities are learning to use. Given the information gathered so far as well as the terms of reference for this research project, we feel that there is a need

for some key strategic and operational decisions to be taken to benefit as much as possible from the positive aspects of TWO and its spin-off effects.

The following section therefore brings some specific TWO recommendations taking into account the structural and political conditions in the Czech Republic. It starts with a brief outline of the experience so far with TWO and the description of the public administration environment within which TWO is set in the country. Based on the analysis of Czech Republic's foreign policy and assistance priorities as well as the structural conditions, particularly public administration capacities and human and financial resources, suggestions regarding the location, organisation and operation of the National Contact Point are made. Out of the five scenarios given, the research team recommends to choose an agency-based approach, inspired by one of the NCP models used in OMS. The chapter closes with a presentation of five models of Czech involvement in TWO projects and the outline of benefits and drawbacks as well as probability of and requirements for the use of each of them.

### **6.2.1 Czech Republic: Priorities, Prerequisites and Scope Conditions**

The Czech Republic is a small country with limited human and financial resources. In that respect, it is similar to Austria, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands or Sweden. Also, the continuing public administration cuts are making it rather difficult for the Czech Republic to become active participants in the TWO mechanism. Still the previously mentioned benefits and the fact that the European Neighbourhood Policy is a prominent priority in the EU policy and, last but not far from least, the European Commission is planning to allocate substantial amounts of money to ENP assistance programmes should be enough of a reason for the Czech Republic to ensure that TWO opportunities are maximised by effective, efficient and economical participation in the instrument. Due to the fact that MS are already hitting their limits in terms of sending experts abroad

Chapter 4 has shown that good Twinning Out performance is largely dependent on effective NCP and on the overall organisation and coordination of TWO activities as well as on the human resource and practices of TWO experts. The following section will therefore focus on the structural, financial and political conditions of the country. We will briefly describe the current system of TWO coordination and organisation in the Czech Republic and highlight the issues Czech TWO actors already have to deal with.

The Czech Republic's foreign policy objectives include involvement in the EU's external activities. Twinning is one of the key instruments of this involvement. In order to implement this goal, the Czech government adopted the Main Territorial Priorities in the Framework of the Common

Foreign and Security Policy (Government Resolution No. 388/2005).<sup>46</sup> The *main territorial priorities for the Czech Republic's participation in Twinning Out* have been identified as South European Countries supported within the framework of the EU Stabilisation and Association Process, in particular *Serbia and Montenegro* and *Bosnia and Herzegovina; Ukraine, Moldavia, Georgia and Palestine* (European Neighbourhood Policy countries) (MF ČR and MZV ČR 2006).<sup>47</sup>

The Czech Republic would like to provide assistance specifically but not only to these countries in the field of Justice and Home Affairs; public administration reform; implementation of Structural Funds; trade policy, competitiveness and consumer protection; employment and social policy; harmonisation of technical standards; higher education systems; transport policy; statistics; environment; agriculture, veterinary and phytosanitary area, and food safety.

Czech TWO, as well as TWI activities are administered and coordinated by the National Contact Point located at the Centre for Foreign Assistance, Ministry of Finance.<sup>48</sup> Some administrative support is also provided by the Central Financing and Contracting Unit / Administrative Office (CFCU/AO). The NCP communicates with sending institutions, i.e. ministries and mandated bodies through Senior Programme Officers (SPOs) or other authorised contact persons. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Trade Policy and Agriculture Department) has a special role in terms of providing some political guidance and contacts with embassies in the Beneficiary Countries and other MFA departments.

Czech authorities involved in Twinning Out (ministries and mandated bodies) are generally in favour of taking part in this form of assistance, both as Junior Partners and Project Leaders/Lead Partners and some of the ministries (particularly the Ministry of Environment) have been quite active in this respect. Moreover, many Beneficiary Countries have been expressing their interest in working specifically with the Czech Republic.<sup>49</sup> The Czech Republic's strength is an advanced level of *acquis* implementation, cultural links to many of the Beneficiary Countries (in the TACIS and CARDS regions as well as to Acceding and Candidate Countries) and similar administrative histories and patterns to be overcome. However, the first months of Czech involvement in TWO<sup>50</sup> already revealed that there are some administrative obstacles and structural limitations to Czech participation in TWO.

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<sup>46</sup> The country's territorial priorities are also identified in the Czech Republic's Pro-Export Policy (Government Resolution No. 188/2003) and the Czech Republic's International Development Assistance Policy (Government Resolution No. 91/2002).

<sup>47</sup> The Czech Republic, however, does not exclude the possibility of providing TWO assistance to Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and Turkey as well as to Albania, Macedonia and Russia, or Belarus (if the political situation permits) and Egypt or other Mediterranean countries (MF ČR and MZV ČR 2006).

<sup>48</sup> [http://www.mfcr.cz/cps/rde/xchg/mfcr/hs.xsl/eu\\_Twinning\\_programy.html](http://www.mfcr.cz/cps/rde/xchg/mfcr/hs.xsl/eu_Twinning_programy.html)

<sup>49</sup> One of the interviewees mentioned that even though the bid and the presentation of one Czech authority was far from well-done and impressive, one BC chose the Czechs because they badly wanted to have them there since the country's preferred way of implementing that particular component of the *acquis* was the Czech one.

<sup>50</sup> The implementation of first projects with Czech experts started in autumn 2005. 11 TWO projects were implemented as at the cut-off date of this report, with several other bids being prepared.

Firstly, and most importantly, the major problem is the (un)availability of experts and the lack of support that TWO receives from the top levels of ministries and authorities. The issue of RTA/STE availability boils down to the size of the country and public administration and the pool of the Czech Republic's human and financial resources. In that respect, the Czech Republic is in a similar situation as Austria, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, or Sweden. There are few key experts who can be spared for a project abroad without being missed badly by their sending institution as finding a similarly trained and experienced replacement is very difficult. Moreover, due to the non-existence of the Civil Service Act, experts have no guarantee of returning to the same position they left. Also, the high turnover of staff in Czech ministries is a problem for both Twinning Out and Twinning In projects.

Secondly, our interviewees mentioned that the financial methodology, as presented by the CFCU is not clear and is unadapted to the local situation. SPOs and Heads of EU Departments At different ministries express their fear of financial control and evaluation. The financial methodology was described as "just a translation of the EC document" (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs). It was suggested that Czech SPOs and other authorised officers would welcome a "Twinning Out Cookbook," i.e. a document well adapted to the Czech institutional environment. This document would set out clear rules in order to avoid misunderstandings and control problems. Some of the ministries (e.g. Ministry of Environment) have already drafted their own TWO guidance.

Thirdly, some interviewees also highlighted difficulties related to financial flows which are, however, not specific to the Czech situation since other countries face the same problem. It generally takes a lot of time after the project starts to get an advance payment, if any is provided at all. Ministries in many MS often cover the expenses and pre-finance the missions of the experts without being reimbursed afterwards. To remedy this situation, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs suggested setting up a special fund that could be administered by the Ministry of Finance (or another body responsible for TWO) and that might serve as a reserve fund, helping ministries and other institutions with pre-financing, especially with logistics-related expenses.<sup>51</sup>

Fourthly, where several sectors need to cooperate, complications arise due to unclear delimitation of competences and statutes. Similarly to other (post-Communist) NMS, the strong hierarchy in public administration in the Czech Republic is making inter- and intra-ministerial coordination quite difficult. And the willingness and readiness to take up responsibilities and make own decisions is quite underdeveloped (cf. Lippert, Umbach 2005). This is also why the Czech government has been discussing a draft legislation providing for the establishment of the Czech Agency for Development Cooperation (MZV ČR 2006a,b,c,d).

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<sup>51</sup> The existing system is difficult to synchronise with the budgetary calendars of Czech ministries.

This development agency is to remedy the ineffective, uncoordinated and fragmentary situation development assistance provision by the Czech Republic, as it is at the moment. Inter-ministerial barriers and rivalries prevent synergy and linkage in assistance provision and the administrative costs are quite high. The Czech Agency for Development Cooperation would be established by and work under the political guidance of the MFA. The agency is inspired by the Scandinavian model. The management and control of development assistance would rest with the MFA but all executive tasks would be delegated on this agency. The MFA would be advised by the International Development Assistance Council and the National Coordination Committee for Development Assistance (MZV ČR 2006b,d). Given the shifts of geographical and conceptual focus of Twinning (see Chapter 2.3) it might be quite effective to link TWO to other development assistance programmes and draw upon the benefits of a support infrastructure with relevant administrative capacity in the area of development assistance.

Fifthly, the administrative burden linked to the preparation of bids and project monitoring and financial arrangements proves to be quite heavy for Czech TWO assistance providers, considering their workloads. As there is little chance of setting up special Twinning units at ministries, some interviewees suggested the use of outsourcing (e.g. relying on support structures such as the National Training Fund in case of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs). That, however, may not be an ideal solution since this would further reinforce the fragmentation and exacerbate the uncoordinated system of assistance provision in the Czech Republic.

As evident from the above description, the systemic and structural conditions make TWO provision quite challenging for Czech public administration bodies. The recommendations in sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.3 are designed to show how this situation may be improved, both on systemic and operational levels.

### **6.2.2 National Contact Point Location**

Taking into consideration the above structural conditions of the Czech Republic (a small country with limited human and financial resources) and the need to find an efficient, effective and economic solution for the future TWO coordination and organisation, the following scenarios have been formulated by our research team. The scenarios have been designed on the basis of TWO arrangements and NCP models described in Chapter 4. Of course, the EU-related administrative systems of Old Member States cannot be transposed as *acquis* has been. Indeed, that would be far from desirable. But they can serve as a source of inspiration for and consideration by Czech decision-makers. Each scenario gives an outline of the possible arrangements, linking them to specific Old Member States' models and highlighting the benefits and downsides of the respective solutions. Having considered the current policy and legislative developments in the Czech Republic,

we suggest the second scenario as the solution of first choice if the Czech Agency for Development Cooperation is endorsed by the Czech government and the relevant law is passed by the Parliament.

## **Scenario 1**

### **NCP as a special unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

The NCP located at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, like in Belgium or Denmark, has the benefit of linking the expertise in foreign policy matters (relations with third countries, overview of bilateral cooperation with third countries and strategic planning) with the specific “world” of Twinning projects. MFAs usually have enough information on recipient countries and make regular use the services of embassies.

This solution would require the setting up of a special unit either within the European Union Section or the Department of Development Cooperation, Territorial Section II., or at the Deputy Minister level with enough funding for the operation of the NCP along the lines suggested in section 6.1 and below (see section 6.2.3) and . If this option was chosen, we would strongly recommend to use the expertise and knowledge of the current NCP, Jana Hendrichová and her team as well as the administrative experience of the CFCU/AO some of whom should be offered employment by the MFA in order to ensure a smooth transfer of know-how and experience from both TWO and TWI and guarantee continuity and building of institutional memory.

The risk attached to this scenario is the potential lack of operational flexibility and the loss of direct contact with the executor of financial flows, i.e. the Ministry of Finance which must still be involved.

## **Scenario 2**

### **NCP based at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs but delegating services to an agency**

This model of Twinning Out organisation and coordination can be seen in Spain (FIIAPP), the Netherlands (EDV) and Austria (AEI). According to this scenario, the NCP would be located at the Czech MFA which would still provide political guidance but operational tasks would be executed solely by an agency. This agency can either be a special office set up specifically for this purpose (as the Agency for European Integration and Economic Development in Austria) and either be based at the Ministry of Finance, making use of the current NCP and CFCU/AO staff, or be an independent, small executive office for Twinning Out administration only which would be in direct contact with all Czech civil service authorities and mandated bodies. This option would have the benefit of retaining greater involvement of the Ministry of Finance. However, there is still a risk of

some activities running in parallel and the coordination being rather cumbersome. Nevertheless, this scenario is evaluated as the second best option by our research team.

### **Scenario 3**

#### **NCP based at a special agency**

This scenario is inspired by the Irish and Swedish models where the NCP function has been transferred from the Ministry of Finance and MFA, respectively to the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) in Ireland and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) in the Swedish case.

This option might potentially suit best the next generation of Twinning focussing more and more on the European Neighbourhood countries. For this purpose, it would be more appropriate and potentially also more effective and efficient to still use the *political* guidance of the MFA, but delegating the *administrative and operational tasks* upon a Development Assistance Agency, like the Swedish SIDA. The currently debated draft legislation proposing the creation of the Czech Agency for Development Cooperation would allow for such a solution which would link other development assistance and draw upon experience and information from other cooperation projects in the region. At the same time, this option would allow for the use of the IT, human, technical and other infrastructure of the agency. The small unit might be partly financed from Twinning projects' management fees (a percentage would have to be agreed with sending institutions/bodies) and would communicate directly with the MFA and all ministries, authorities, mandated bodies and organisations interested and participating in Twinning. Once again, we would recommend to use the expertise and knowledge of the current NCP staff who might become employees of the agency, along with some CFCU/AO officers to ensure continuity and transfer of Twinning know-how.

The risk related to this option is that the legislation is not passed soon enough and that the agency is either set up too late for the purposes of effective Czech involvement in TWO or that it is not established at all because of the potentially different visions and policies of the next government.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Following the general elections in the Czech Republic in June 2006, the country still has no regular government. The "caretaker" government will be replaced by a new one after the negotiations of parties are completed and the new government is endorsed in a Parliament vote. Alternatively, early elections might be necessary. There is therefore no guarantee of the continuity of decisions taken by the current central administration of the Czech Republic.



## **Scenario 4**

### **NCP as a special unit of the Ministry of Finance**

This scenario is drawing upon the arrangements Ireland used to have before the NCP was transferred to the Institute of Public Administration (IPA).

This option would basically retain the current status quo but a change in the tasking and job descriptions of the NCP staff would be required. Currently, the staff are employees of the Finance Ministry with other duties as well and cannot concentrate on the full execution of NCP tasks as required. If this scenario was chosen, we would strongly recommend this to be changed and make such organisational changes to be made, which would allow the NCP to focus fully on its NCP duties and on the extended, more comprehensive portfolio of support services as proposed in sections 6.1 and 6.2.3.

The risk attached to this scenario is that nothing much would change and that the Ministry of Finance might not have a strong enough mandate to coordinate TWO activities, as is often the case now. This scenario might just preserve the status quo with only a few changes made, moreover the pre-financing problem might still be left untackled.

## **Scenario 5**

### **NCP based at the Ministry of Finance but delegating services to an agency**

This option is best represented by the German model. The NCP would be located at the Centre for Foreign Assistance at the Ministry of Finance. It would be assisted by an agency for development cooperation (the GTZ office, in the German case, which has an extensive experience in the field of development policy and project management). Since Twinning projects also deal with economic relations and contracts, the experience of the Ministry of Finance (or the Ministry of Economy) is useful to create synergies between programmes of technical assistance and make full use of competencies in budgetary and economic issues (contacts with companies, etc.). Project management and human resource-related issues (e.g. search for expertise or preparation of experts) would be dealt with by the agency. The downside of this scenario would be the fact that the agency might be moving from one ministry to the other if there is a change at the governmental level and, in effect, in political priorities. Also, competition might take place between ministries to host the NCP and the agency. Finally, using the services of the Czech Agency for Development Cooperation would require a change in the legislation as it is currently drafted since the Agency would be established and tasked by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs according to the wording of the last draft.

## Scenario 6

### NCP based at Government Office

Being incorporated into the Prime Minister's Office, as in France, would allow the NCP to play a real interministerial role. Moreover, if the NCP was situated at the Prime Minister's / Government Office, it might have more political leverage than the MFA or the Ministry of Finance in terms of making Twinning a priority for the top management of the ministries, mandated bodies and other TWO actors, which is crucial, especially given the fact that Czech ministries face staffing problems and already have difficulties finding RTAs. As each ministry would take over the responsibility for the definition of its priorities, project proposals, management of projects, etc, there would be less managerial responsibility for the NCP. The disadvantage of this scenario, however, is that creating a brand new office might be difficult and even counter-productive in terms of development assistance concentration, coordination and streamlining. In this respect, it seems to be the least cost-effective option out of the six scenarios suggested.

### 6.2.3 Suggestions for Improved Performance in Twinning Out Coordination

Irrespective of which, if any, of the above scenarios is selected, we point out which of the recommendations listed in section 5 we believe are crucial and should be seriously considered by Czech decision-makers:

#### Box 7

#### Suggestions for Improved Performance

##### *Improved Internal and External Communication*

- Make **Twinning more visible and attractive**.
- Make **Czech territorial and technical priorities explicitly known to partners at home** (Czech institutions and organisations) **and abroad** (other NCPs): create an electronic presentation package with information on the organisation of TWO in the Czech Republic, priorities, competitive advantage, capacities and possibilities of partnership; circulate this information around both EU Member States, BCs and Czech embassy officers in BC countries.
- Use the **website as a real communication platform** for partners at home and abroad and post all circulations there – get inspired by other NCPs whose experience with using the intranet and internet website has been very positive and appreciated by their RTAs, PLs and other “clients.”
- Keep your **communication as open, transparent, simple and relevant as possible**.
- Send domestic institutions **clear and short notices highlighting the main points in the fiches** to catch their attention – circulation is not enough, think about the “**packaging**” and **time-effective solutions** making it easier for SPOs and their colleagues to react
- Be in **frequent personal contact with the management of Czech institutions and organisations** and find effective ways of “selling” TWO (point at success stories etc.) – **ensure political and management support**.

- Organise **annual meetings of TWO experts** (RTAs, PLs, STEs and MTEs).
- Make **full use of Czech embassy officers in ENP countries** and let them inform you on any potential project fiches in the pipeline
- Print out a **small, easy-to-carry version of the Twinning Manual** and distribute it to SPOs, RTAs, PLs and other relevant TWO actors

#### ***Financial Support***

- Try to identify and deploy **sources of funding to cover preparation, pre-financing and other bridging costs**
- Find a viable solution in terms of *per diems*.
- **Redraft the financial flows guidance to better reflect the Czech institutional situation** – make use of the experience of ministries so far and draft the guidance in consultation with them

#### ***Training***

- Provide **practical and focused training sessions for RTAs and PLs** several times a year, on top of the general RTA training in Brussels,
- Invite a **current/former Czech RTA and/or PL to share their experience and answer specific, practical questions** of Czech civil servants considering to work as TWO experts. Use the experience and formats of such training in other MS as an inspiration; explore opportunities for cooperation with the MS providers of training.
- Make information about **cultural and interpersonal sensitivities** part of the training.
- Highlight the **career growth opportunities and personal development** side of TWO involvement

#### ***Other Suggestions***

- Use **Twinning Out and TAIEX as complementary instruments**.
- Promote **partnership and cooperation of sectors** where it would be beneficial and enhance the chances of winning tenders.
- Be **involved in the contracting phase** as well.
- Use **TAIEX experts for fact-finding purposes**.

This set of recommendations does not claim to be all-embracing and several other recommendations might be added. Also, more input in this respect would be added by the international Twinning Out Seminar proposed in section 6.2.5. The above list of recommendations, however, is meant as an inventory for Czech authorities in general and the Czech NCP in particular from which to choose and to which to add if they want Czech TWO participation to be effective and successful. We believe these recommendations to be relevant irrespective of the models of Czech involvement in TWO activities presented in the final section of this report.

### **6.2.4 Models for Czech Involvement in Twinning Out**

There are several ways in which small countries with limited human and financial resources can be involved in Twinning Out. This section looks into the prerequisites, advantages and disadvantages

of the various options, seeking to identify the probability with which these models of involvement will be used in the case of the Czech Republic.

<b>Model 1: Czech Republic as a Single Applicant and Provider of Twinning Out</b>			
<i>Model Probability</i>	<i>Prerequisites</i>	<i>Positives</i>	<i>Negatives</i>
<b>low</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- strong administrative and management skills</li> <li>- good presentation skills</li> <li>- clear vision and well-developed workplan</li> <li>- strong language skills</li> <li>- a competent RTA and availability of STEs</li> <li>- top-level support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- stronger image of the CR and the sending institution</li> <li>- no difficulties arising from consortium management issues</li> <li>- better control over project outcomes</li> <li>- higher management fees for sending institution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- substantial demands on the time and availability of Czech experts</li> </ul>
<b>Model 2: Czech Republic as a Lead Partner in Twinning Out Consortia</b>			
<i>Model Probability</i>	<i>Prerequisites</i>	<i>Positives</i>	<i>Negatives</i>
<b>low to medium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- strong management and administration skills</li> <li>- preferably experience from previous, similar projects</li> <li>- good coordination, communication and negotiation skills</li> <li>- clear vision and well-developed workplan</li> <li>- a competent RTA and availability of STEs</li> <li>- top-level support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- stronger image of the CR and the sending institution</li> <li>- more control over project outputs and outcomes</li> <li>- lesser capacity demands</li> <li>- creation of partnership for future bids / co-operations</li> <li>- learning experience for Czech experts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- consortium management and coordination difficulties</li> <li>- substantial demands on the time and availability of Czech experts</li> </ul>
<b>Model 3: Czech Republic as a Junior Partner in Twinning Out Consortia</b>			
<i>Model Probability</i>	<i>Prerequisites</i>	<i>Positives</i>	<i>Negatives</i>
<b>high</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- good partnership skills</li> <li>- good technical expertise</li> <li>- good “marketing” of the country on the TW market</li> <li>- flexibility</li> <li>- adaptability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- better chances of success</li> <li>- little or no demands for management and coordination skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- some administrative demands on sending institution</li> <li>- lesser control over project outcomes</li> </ul>
<b>Model 4: Czech Republic as a Strategic Junior Partner of Some Member States</b>			
<i>Model Probability</i>	<i>Prerequisites</i>	<i>Positives</i>	<i>Negatives</i>
<b>medium to high</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- commitment to strategic partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- strengthened cooperation with some</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- restricted options for cooperation</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- good “marketing” of the country on the TWO market</li> <li>- good technical expertise</li> <li>- provision of updated CVs of Czech experts</li> <li>- flexibility</li> <li>- adaptability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MS with strong positions in some countries</li> <li>- little or no demands for management and coordination skills</li> <li>- guaranteed chances in certain sectors/domains/countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- some administrative demands on the country</li> </ul>
<b>Model 5: Czech Republic providing Individual Experts for Consortia</b>			
<i>Model Probability</i>	<i>Prerequisites</i>	<i>Positives</i>	<i>Negatives</i>
<b>high</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- good technical expertise</li> <li>- provision of updated CVs of Czech experts</li> <li>- frequent and extensive contact with other MS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- very little administrative and no management demands on home administration</li> <li>- flexibility</li> <li>- good option to use the expertise of Czech STEs</li> <li>- greater complementarity with TAIEX</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- little control over project results and impact</li> <li>- limited effect on the reputation of the country / sending institution</li> <li>- no management fees for home administration</li> </ul>

Given the Czech Republic’s structural conditions and taking into consideration the findings from initial research among Czech TWO actors, models number three and five are given high probability rating. In other words, **the Czech Republic might be expected to provide Junior Partner services and the expertise of individual experts on a most regular basis**. These two models also suit best the current administrative / institutional capacities of and the level of commitment by Czech TWO actors (i.e. do not require top-level support and long-term secondment abroad) However, this is not to say that the other models should be dropped in the long-term perspective. Our conclusions only highlights the most probable and least demanding options for the near future which reflects the structural and other limitations presented earlier in the report. The models proposed also echoes the demands by BCs who trust the Czech Republic’ experts (and experts from other NMS) in their technical knowledge and value their accession experience but prefer OMS to manage Twinning projects. Finally, these two models suit best the preferences and capacities of the most active sectors in TWO, especially the Ministry of Environment.

This report, nevertheless, seeks to provide some guidance and basis for Czech authorities to realise and fully exploit the benefits offered by Twinning. And in order to reinforce the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the report, we propose to organise an international seminar where the options presented and recommendations made might be complemented and debated further, ideally followed by some strategic and operational decisions by relevant Czech decision-makers.

### **6.2.5 International Twinning Out Seminar**

Apart from circulating this report to all respondents of this research project as well as to Czech SPOs and NCPs in other Beneficiary Countries, we propose to organise a Twinning Out seminar organised jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Czech National Contact Point and the Institute of International Relations.

This seminar or workshop would present the findings and recommendations of this research project. These would be discussed by all participants. The Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Contact Point (Ministry of Finance) might have their contributions reflecting their opinions, comments and suggestions. In the second part of the seminar, Old Member States would present their national solutions and models as well as strategic priorities and there would be a round-table discussion of these issues. The emphasis would be on the exchange of experience with operational and practical issues such as strategies to mobilise domestic experts, financial flows, domestic regulations governing the secondment of experts, Twinning website administration, complementary funding, Twinning consortia mechanisms, key success criteria, RTA and PL training formats and content etc. In this respect, the seminar would be a follow-up on the Hungarian NCP workshop for New Member States organised in November 2005. However, the scope would be broader and more practical

Apart from inviting the NCPs from Old Member States, we suggest inviting NCPs from New Member States, ambassadors and EU secretaries from the European Neighbourhood Policy countries and Old Member States. The Czech participants would include the Czech NCP, MFA officials as well as Senior Programme Officers and Contact Persons from all ministries and mandated bodies. Representatives of DG Enlargement and the Representation of the European Commission would also be invited.

This seminar would be a practical and interactive extension of the outputs of our research project and might set the basic parameters for further development of Twinning Out cooperation in the Czech Republic. The seminar may also help to find a consensus over issues highlighted in this report and suggested for consideration by or even recommended to Czech authorities.

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