

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S TAIEX INSTRUMENT

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Abstract:

TAIEX is the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument of the European Commission. TAIEX supports public administrations with regard to the approximation, application and enforcement of EU legislation as well as facilitating the sharing of EU best practices. It is largely needs-driven and delivers appropriate tailor-made expertise to address issues at short notice in three ways: workshops - EU Member State experts present specific areas of EU legislation in workshops to a large number of beneficiary officials; expert missions - EU Member States experts are sent to the beneficiary administration to provide in-depth advice on the transposition, implementation or enforcement of a specific part of EU legislation; study visits - a group of three practitioners from a beneficiary administration take part in a study visit to an EU Member State's administration. The TAIEX mission is to provide institution building support in all areas of the EU acquis with the view to support efforts in alignment, application and enforcement of legislation of the acquis in the Beneficiary Countries. The TAIEX mandate to provide assistance covers: Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo*; Turkish Cypriot community in the northern part of Cyprus; Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Republic of Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. All countries covered by the Partnership Instrument; EU Member States in the framework of the administrative cooperation within the policies managed by DG for Regional and Urban Policy. TAIEX assistance is open to: Civil servants working in central public administrations; Judiciary and law enforcement authorities; Parliaments and civil servants working in Parliaments and Legislative Councils; Representatives of social partners, trade unions and employers' associations; TAIEX does not provide direct support to civil society, private citizens or to individual companies. This year 2016 marks the 20th anniversary of the launch of TAIEX, the Commission's instrument of technical assistance and information exchange. An occasion not only to celebrate, but to both look back and into the future.

Key words: European Union, program, legislation, business.

JEL classification codes: Q01, P33

TAIEX Background

TAIEX was created in 1996 and is managed by the Commission headquarters DG Enlargement, Institution Building Unit (D4). The Institution Building Unit is responsible for the three main technical assistance instruments of DG ELARG: TAIEX - short term technical assistance (two weeks maximum); TWINNING - long term technical assistance (1-2 years); SIGMA: horizontal support scheme in co-operation with the OECD. His mission is to provide institution building support in all areas of the EU acquis with the view to support efforts in alignment, application and enforcement of legislation of the acquis in the Beneficiary Countries.

TAIEX beneficiaries and partners

The TAIEX mandate to provide assistance covers:

- Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo;
- Turkish Cypriot community in the northern part of Cyprus;
- Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Republic of Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.
- All countries covered by the Partnership Instrument

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- EU Member States in the framework of the administrative cooperation within the policies managed by DG for Regional and Urban Policy.

TAIEX assistance is open to:

- Civil servants working in central public administrations;
- Judiciary and law enforcement authorities;
- Parliaments and civil servants working in Parliaments and Legislative Councils;
- Representatives of social partners, trade unions and employers' associations;

It is good to know that TAIEX does not provide direct support to civil society, private citizens or to individual companies. Also, there are some beneficiary groups: Central Governments, Ministries; Government Bodies; Public Agencies; Regional and Local Authorities; National Parliaments; Judiciary; Private Sector Associations; Social Partners. There are some specific forms of assistance, like: seminars/workshops (single/multi-country); peer reviews for the candidate countries (monitoring of progress in the approximation of the *acquis communautaire* to improve strategies and to prepare regular reports); assessment missions (identify needs and elaborate strategies); expert missions (advice and guidance); study visits (providing opportunities for officials of beneficiary countries to understand how MS deal with practical issues); regional training programme (train the trainers). As we speak about the TAIEX activities for private sector associations, we can mention that TAIEX launched this programme in 1998 with the main objective:

- to inform and train business operators on key issues of the *acquis communautaire* having direct impact on their activities;
- to share experiences and best practices between SMEs of the TAIEX beneficiary countries and the EU M-S.

This programme in particular aimed at reaching representatives of SMEs by organising:

- TAIEX «Business Weeks »;
- TAIEX “Business know-how exchanges on approximation and implementation of key EC Internal Market legislation”;

Where it is used?

TAIEX is used in the following fields (http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/tenders/taix/index_en.htm): agriculture and food safety; freedom, security and justice; environment, energy, transport and telecommunications; internal market; support to the Turkish Cypriot community; TAIEX REGIO Peer 2 Peer.

Agriculture and food safety - The TAIEX instrument delivers assistance across the agriculture, food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary and fisheries sectors. The timely provision of targeted expert help is of particular importance in the veterinary sector. Disease control simulation exercises, both before an outbreak of disease and a rapid deployment of experts immediately after disease detection, have been of significant benefit for the participants. Priorities for agricultural policy assistance are centred on the establishment and development of paying agencies, delegated national institutions charged with the responsibility of administering trade mechanisms and processing farm support payments, from the application stage through to verification, payment and audit. Furthermore guidance is given on the implementation and enforcement of the Common Organisation of the Markets and a range of policy areas from state aids and rural development to quality issues such as the protection of geographical indications and organic farming standards.

Freedom, security and justice - Strengthening the European Union as an area of freedom, security and justice without internal borders continues to be a priority and it is a model that TAIEX assistance contributes to export. The range of legislation is wide, covering issues such as free movement of persons, visa policy, EU external borders policy, Schengen area, immigration, asylum, judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters, drugs policy coordination, data protection, fundamental rights, racism and xenophobia, police and customs cooperation, crime prevention, fight against organized crime. At the same time, the target groups remain varied and diverse, composed not only of officials of the Ministries of Justice and the Ministries of Interior but very

often includes those who have to apply the *acquis* in their daily work: judges, prosecutors, police officials, other law enforcement agencies, border guards, officials from migration and asylum authorities, customs departments, etc.

Environment, Energy, Transport and Telecommunications - Classical TAIEX assistance or support via the Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network (ECRAN) is provided to our beneficiaries in all fields covered by the environmental legislation (air quality, waste management, nature protection, chemicals, industrial pollution and climate change). Environment and energy are key policies closely linked as production of energy has an impact on the environment and the climate. The topics addressed go from renewable energy and energy savings to market liberalization in the oil, gas and electricity sectors. In the area of transport, sectors covered include maritime, inland and aviation including joint programmes with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC). Technical knowledge is also transferred on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and its market regulation. TAIEX activities are organized on topics such as electronic communication, number portability, broadband infrastructure and postal services.

Internal Market - The Internal Market is underpinned by a range of supporting measures and policies which the EU and its Member States have adopted to sweep away the technical, regulatory, legal, bureaucratic, and other barriers that stifled free trade and free movement within the Union. Activities cover a vast array of *acquis* measures, mainly related to the four freedoms, but also extended to EU policies, programmes and initiatives in a larger sense. Assistance is particularly focused on social and employment policy, intellectual property rights issues, financial services, competition policy and consumer protection and health policy. Focus is also given to SMEs and industry, competition issues including state aids, structural funds, EMU and free movement of capital, taxation and customs.

Support to the Turkish Cypriot community - Against the backdrop of EU measures taken, aiming at an end of the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community by encouraging economic development, the TAIEX instrument has been designated as the vehicle for implementing all technical assistance to support the preparation of the Turkish Cypriot community's ability to apply EU legislation. The main objective of TAIEX assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community, in the framework of the cooperation with the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, is to prepare the legislative and enforcement capacity so that the EU *acquis* will be immediately applicable upon the entry into force of a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. To support this programme, TAIEX engages Member State experts in a number of technical areas:

- Support for the implementation of the “Green Line” Regulation
- Assessment missions aimed both at evaluating legislation and administrative capacity and at developing in close cooperation with local counterparts, a structured plan for future technical assistance

Medium-term expert visits on strategy and Turkish Cypriot capacity building and the development of key co-ordination structures within the Turkish Cypriot community

TAIEX REGIO Peer 2 Peer - The TAIEX REGIO Peer 2 Peer was created in cooperation with Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy. It facilitates short-term exchange of know-how between cohesion policy experts and administrations involved in the management of ERDF and Cohesion Fund in all Member States. It is part of the Commission's broader effort to help Member States strengthen their administrative capacity. Public sector institutions involved in the management of the ERDF or Cohesion Fund can request support. As under the TAIEX instrument, 3 types of exchanges can be provided: short-term expert missions, study visits and workshops. The tool is easy to use and flexible. The application can be done online, the main information required is: the type of exchange requested; a short explanation of the need for assistance; the objective of the exchange for the applicant; the topics of interest; a designated contact person and the profiles of the potential participants; an estimated timeframe during which the exchange could be organized.