

## COMMITTEE ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

<b>Date</b>	<b>28 June 2001</b>
<b>Time</b>	<b>2.00pm</b>
<b>Venue</b>	<b>Committee Room 3</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Twinning</b>

### Purpose

1. Information on Twinning

### Recommendation

2. That Members note the content of this paper.

### Background

3. At its last meeting on 23 May, the Committee requested a

background paper on twinning.

### What is Twinning?

4. The accession to the European Union of the Central European candidate countries (CEs) requires the **strengthening of their institutional and administrative capacity** so that they are capable of applying the *acquis communautaire* (EU law) to the same standards as current Member States. Within Member States (MSs), the *acquis* is implemented by national administrations, agencies, professional bodies and the private sector. This body of administrative and technical expertise is made available to Central Europeans through the **twinning** programme.

## How does it work?

5. To date much of the EU's assistance and bilateral aid has delivered expertise through guidance, legal advice, consultancy assignments and exchange visits of experts. Twinning uniquely involves the **secondment of EU experts** to the 10 CE candidate countries : Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. Through twinning, the CEs should develop an efficient and operational organisational structure that will enable them to fulfil their Community obligations. Specific projects are drawn up by the CEs and the Commission, and circulated to Member States for proposals. The EU's Phare programme reimburses the successful Member States for the cost of its participation in a twinning project.

## How do we get involved in a project?

6. UK bids are co-ordinated by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. There are a number of ways in which to be involved in a twinning project. As Project Leader, Pre-Accession Adviser (PAA) or short-term expert :-

The **Project Leader** is usually a senior official dealing with the project matter on a daily basis. The Project Leader maintains a close link with the PAA in the CE Ministry, and produces quarterly reports on the progress of the project. The role of the Project Leader is vital to ensure projects remain on track, and that a lasting relationship with the CE Ministry is maintained.

**Pre-Accession Advisers (PAAs)** are Member States experts seconded full time to the CE Ministry. This is an essential element of a twinning project, offering expert advice to the CEs, co-ordinating the project components and monitoring of the development of the project. PAAs work in the CE Ministry for the duration of the project

Tasks requiring the services of specialised experts, or for sectors not within the PAA's own competence, will be undertaken by **short term experts** who visit for a specific purpose, usually for a duration of 1-2 weeks;

The implementation of new systems may require **training** of the personnel that will be responsible for ensuring their continued success. This will also include, where appropriate, the training of trainers. Training usually occurs in the CE country, rather than the Member State.

## Pre-Accession Advisors

7. Pre-Accession Advisers are usually **Public officials and assimilated public servants**. The seconding agency is reimbursed by the Phare programme for the cost of the PAA's salary, plus a rate of 6% to cover replacement expenses and administrative costs. PAAs continue to

be employed by the home administration, which is in turn reimbursed. All other related costs e. g. daily cost of living allowance, housing, removal expenses, school fees or billed expenses, are reimbursed direct to the PAA by the Commission. PAAs can also be from the **Private sector** if they have the required experience of implementation or enforcement of the acquis. Private sector specialists may be contracted by a central public administration to be PAAs. The same allowances as above apply to private sector specialists, and the salary will be equivalent to that of a public sector employee of similar experience.

## UK's Approach to Twinning

8. The UK is committed to full and active involvement in twinning. It is involved in a total of 76 twinning projects in all ten CEs, from the 1998, 1999 and 2000 rounds, the third highest number of projects among Member States following Germany and France. During 2000 the UK successfully bid for 32 projects, including 2 outstanding from the 1999 round and has some 48 PAAs either working in Ministries throughout Central Europe, or preparing Twinning Covenants. The projects cover a wide range of subject areas, including law enforcement and crime prevention, taxation, structural funds, regional policy, industrial policy and environmental policy.

9. Member States often deliver projects in consortia. The UK is co-operating with all participating Member States on twinning projects, and actively encourages UK Departments to work in co-operation with other Member State partners.

## Position in Wales

10. The Assembly has to date played a relatively modest part in arranging study visits for participating countries and providing short-term experts to provide advice on an ad hoc basis.

11. In April of this year, at the request of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, officials from the Assembly and the Wales European Centre joined a scoping study to Poland and Hungary to explore the opportunities that might be available for Wales to participate in future projects in those countries. Both countries (along with the Baltic States and the Czech Republic) have been identified in the Wales European Centre's strategy document as "*significant areas to develop and work with*".

12. The visit provided an excellent opportunity for establishing key contacts and informing a preliminary assessment of the level of future participation Wales might reasonably expect. One of the key messages that emerged from the visit was the willingness on the part of Poland and Hungary to collaborate with the UK, particularly the devolved administrations.

13. Twinning is only one of a number of facets that need to be considered in deciding how the Assembly will respond to the opportunities and challenges of enlargement. It is a highly

competitive and resource intensive process and the benefits are not easily quantifiable. The extent to which the Assembly could or should participate is one of the issues that the proposed new working group to this Committee will be asked to consider. Terms of reference for the new group will be part of a separate paper that the Committee will be asked to consider.

## **European and External Affairs Directorate**