UACES 43rd Annual Conference

Leeds, 2-4 September 2013

www.uaces.org

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM IN THE EU's EASTERN NEIGHBORHOOD THROUGH TWINNING

The case of Moldova

Stefan Roch

PhD candidate, Central European University

2013

ABSTRACT

Through the analysis of interview data gathered in Moldova between May and June 2013, the paper argues that EU Twinning is a strong tool towards institutional change in domestic public administrations in the Eastern Neighborhood. The argument follows a logic of appropriateness, arguing that Twinning can help shape domestic demands through peer to peer cooperation between administrators from EU member states and neighboring countries. Given the conditions of effective cooperation and stable communication, a process of mutual learning can have a considerable impact on the perception of Twinning participants of their own role and their institutional environment. Besides the internal conditions for cooperation in Twinning projects, the paper examines external conditions of political stability, staff salary, motivation and existing domestic capacities. The paper argues that such external constraints can seriously impede Twinning projects. Yet it finds that successful Twinning projects manage to work around such constraints. Through arguing that Twinning in the EU's Eastern Neighborhood has the potential to create sustainable change, the paper aims to add to the discourse surrounding the Eastern Partnership and the wider European Neighborhood Policy which have frequently been described as ineffective.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Abbreviations

RTA	Residence Twinning Adviser
RTA counterpart	Residence Twinning Adviser counterpart
ENP	European Neighborhood Policy
EP	Eastern Partnership
EU	European Union

1. INTRODUCTION

By examining the concept of Twinning in a given neighboring country, Moldova, this paper aims to demonstrate mainly two things. First of all, it aims to show that Twinning in the context of the EP is a unique approach which under certain conditions has the potential to create sustainable institutional change on the administrative level. Second of all, it aims to exemplify some strengths of the ENP in providing an environment for mutual learning as well as weaknesses, particularly in supplying sufficient incentives and adapting to domestic demands. The argument that EU Twinning can have a considerable and sustainable impact on the administrative level in a neighboring country stands in contrast to the mainstream perspective on the ENP, particularly in the Europeanization literature. There seems to be a consensus that the ENP has little impact due to a lack incentives in the form of a credible membership perspective (Kleenmann 2010; Kochenov 2011; Tulmets 2011; Magen 2005). Inspired by the enlargement literature, accounts dealing with the ENP have take the perspective of looking at both external incentives provided by the EU and policy learning through the EU's interaction with domestic institutional structures (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier 2005). The general conclusion appears to be that incentives are too weak and that learning lacks the inertia for deep rooted changes. Most of the accounts provided so far treat the ENP more or less as a black-box; distinct instruments used are not given much in-depth attention. This paper aims to examine the ENP by taking a more micro perspective, based on the point of view of the beneficiary institutions of the ENP in Moldova, rather than the higher EU perspective. The paper argues on the one hand that Twinning can hardly be regarded as an external incentive, resonating with the wider literature on the ENP. On the other hand, it argues that given the right context, Twinning can have a considerable impact on institutional change through social learning, indicating that the role of policy learning has been understated in the literature.

In a nutshell, Twinning is an institution building instrument which is based on the secondment of a public servant from an EU member state into a beneficiary administration. The seconded official is called the Residence Twinning Adviser (RTA). He or she is supposed to work with the beneficiary administration on a daily basis and coordinate a team of public servants from one or more EU member state in providing regular training and other cooperation activities towards the achievement of a number of pre-defined EU policy based reforms (mandatory results) in the beneficiary administration. The paper argues that within the project implementation phase, the mandatory results lose their central role and the interaction between the external experts and the beneficiaries becomes central. Through the interaction with external experts of a similar position, the beneficiary

administration can clarify its own demands and needs beyond the official reform agenda. In that sense, Twinning functions more like a capacity development- than a Europeanization instrument.

Moldova lends itself as a single case-study under the assumption that it is the most likely case in which EU Twinning projects may succeed. First of all, Moldova has been praised by the EU for its deliberate and continuous reform measures in nearly all ENP relevant policy areas, in line with EU standards. Second of all, Moldova is a relatively small country in which modest investments and a relatively small amount of projects can be assumed to have a higher impact on the wider administrative environment then in a larger country, for example Ukraine. The empirical research did not fully confirm those assumptions. The field research indicates that the EU's conclusion of Moldova being a successful reformer is premature. Particularly when taking a closer look at the inherent instability of Moldova's political system and the utter lack of capacity in most parts of the administrative system, Moldova cannot be regarded as a successful reformer towards some form of European integration but as a developing country which still has to achieve a certain level of political stability and administrative continuity to further associate with the EU. This argument is underlined by the observation made in this paper whereas Twinning starts of as an external incentive but becomes more a process of mutual learning throughout its implementation phase.

The paper is based on 15 interviews conducted with project participants from five ongoing and two concluded Twinning projects in Moldova between May and June 2013. In order to gain a balance of perspectives, officials interviewed include six RTAs representing the external experts, five RTA counterparts and two beneficiary project leaders representing the beneficiary side and two EU delegation officials dealing with Twinning. To make the text more concise, quotes from the interviews are nearly exclusively in the footnotes.

2. THE TWINNING APPROACH: FEWER EXTERNAL INCENTIVES; MORE MUTUAL LEARNING

2.1. Twinning as an instrument of institutional change

Institution building is one key component of the EU's European neighbourhood policy (ENP). Among the main aims of the ENP is the building of a "deep and comprehensive free trade area" through the strengthening of capacities of key institutions (EuropeAid 2011). Institution building by definition is a means to an end. The creation of a free trade area therefore means the alignment of particularly trade related institutional structures in the neighbouring countries to the EU's institutional arrangements. To reach that goal, the capacities of domestic institutions need to be strengthened to the extent that the state can fulfil some of its key functions related to trade and other economic matters. Strengthening institutions can incorporate various aspects including institutional structures, institutional incentive mechanisms or working culture. Strengthening institutions always includes institutional change, abandoning previous structures and approaches deemed as ineffective.

Tulmets (2011, S.6) argues that institutional capacity building has been increasingly used by EU foreign policy towards transition and developing countries since the early 1990s. She further points to the recognition that the adaptation of EU norms and rules needs institutions that are able to implement them. In this sense, institutional capacity development must precede the implementation of wider EU standards and rules.

2.2. Mechanisms towards institutional change

The Europeanization literature, influenced by the institutionalism literature, has developed several theoretical frameworks which can serve as the basis for studying the process of Twinning. Particularly a logic of consequences and a logic of appropriateness have been used to derive analytical categories towards studying institutional change (e.g. Schimmelfennig 2007; Freyburg & Richter 2010, pp.264–265). A logic of consequences has mainly been connected to the provision of external incentives via the EU to a candidate or neighbouring country. The logic of appropriateness has been said to manifest itself in some form of social learning or lesson drawing (e.g. Börzel & Risse 2012, p.3;

Schimmelfennig 2007). This article follows the approach of several previous works on Europeanization and EU enlargement, using both logics as ideal types towards explaining change (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier 2005; Freyburg & Richter 2010; Börzel & Risse 2000).

2.2.1. The logic of consequentiality and external incentives

External incentives are positive measures provided by the EU towards the neighbouring country rewarding domestic institutional changes, in line with EU policies and regulations (compare Schimmelfennig 2007, p.11). The provision of incentives is particularly targeted towards the material interests of elites in a given domestic governance structure (Jacoby 2006, p.25). Such interests may include overcoming internal opposition towards a certain institutional change agenda referred to as veto players (Dimitrova 2002, p.142; Jacoby 2006, p.25) or increasing the budget of a given administrative unit, e.g. Niskanen (1973).

Twinning projects are external incentives funded by the European Union. Neighbouring countries are given the incentive to receive regular trainings on a particular subject matter and receive an RTA in the confines of their administration which represents added capacity. The incentives provided by the project are not of a financial nature. The project funding is dedicated towards the income of the external experts and the organisation of the Twinning project only. The beneficiary therefore does not receive any extra funding towards his or her own budget or any other infrastructure related resources. In this sense, the incentive structure of a Twinning project is not necessarily very strong compared to for example budget support. It does not supply considerable resources beyond the ideational support of external experts.

Despite the lack of material incentives, some of the interviews, particularly with Twinning beneficiaries indicate that the anticipated expertise that Twinning is supposed to provide may be an incentive towards strengthening ones' own position in the administration and silencing possible veto players. Particularly the perspective of receiving direct support from domestic administrators that work in a similar field was mentioned as one of the main incentives towards applying for a Twinning project.[1]

---

[1] „We applied for a Twinning project to get the experience from the profession and managers (…). Our goal was to have direct access and relation to public servants straight away in order to get their knowledge" (Project-leader#4)

"When we had the launching of the Twinning project in Moldova, we thought about something more on the applicable side, implementation of legislation. (…) So, the Twinning project was a bit of having the access to something that is dealing with the same issues, so it's a kind of, no it is really a first practical experience. You have the experience from people that are dealing with the same things you deal with." (RTA-Counterpart#9)

The main problem with conceptualizing expert support through Twinning is that it does not supply support in a top down supply and demand fashion. It is based on combining external experts' and domestic counterparts' inputs in each activity, each decision, each output produced. The Twinning manual argues that Twinning is not a one-way delivery of technical assistance but rather a joint process in which each partner takes on responsibilities (European Commission 2012, p.11). Several RTAs interviewed emphasized that beneficiaries must be included in each of the steps of the Twinning project.[2] Various respondents from the beneficiary side emphasized that Twinning does not supply any readymade solutions and ideas but is rather informational. It is up to the beneficiaries to make up their mind what is relevant or not.[3] One could assume that although Twinning is conceptualized as a cooperative approach, beneficiaries may fall back into the mode of simply receiving external advice without much own input. In fact, quite a number of respondents argued that at the beginning they expected more or less a classical technical cooperation project. Yet, through the implementation process they got a better grasp of how to actually cooperate in the project.[4]

The notion that beneficiaries may not be fully aware at the beginning of what Twinning means and having to invest own time and resources despite a lack of material incentives indicates that the role of external incentives should not be overstated. A Twinning project can be an incentive at the beginning to the higher level administrators and political actors that initiate the project. Yet any result by a Twinning project constituting institutional change depends highly on the input of beneficiary participation during the project. Therefore, several interviewees specifically pointed out how the Twinning project represented an extra burden for them in their day to day activities.[5]

---

[2]   "We are giving you the material, the instruments, the tools that will help you to make decisions, we are bringing you scenarios, we are bringing you lessons learnt but you have to decide. You must do the job." (RTA #13)

  "The main difference in that case with Twinning is that you work on the manual together. You accept it as you go along. It is a process rather than a production." (RTA #7)

[3]   "Twinning projects, this is not technical support, it is not a technical project. One thing which is very important for Twinnings is that it is an informational project." (RTA-Counterpart #11);

  "We have to come across and to deal with our own ideas. (...) They give the report and you have to examine and give the comments. So, this is the difference. The beneficiary is involved in the same manner as donors."(RTA-Counterpart #9)

[4]   "I had the impression I was 13 or 15 years ago in 1998, when you had to explain that you were not technical assistance, when you said you are not doing the law, not doing this." (RTA #13);

  "The previous project was technical assistance. We were used to that kind of project. (...) After that we realized that we have to work together in a team that we have to have communication (…). We realized that we need to communicate more between us and beneficiary administration representatives." (Project-leader#4);

  "We had no idea at that time how it is going to be and we expected that probably we have less work and we will just wait for somebody coming to share our experiences, not being actively involved. It was not like this. Each activity was asking from us staff and beneficiary participants quite a lot (...)." (RTA-Counterpart #9)

[5]   „We really we don't have so much time as it *[Twinning]* is additional time, an extra work for us" (RTA-Counterpart #8)

2.2.2. The logic of appropriateness and social learning

As argued by Gilardi and Radaelli (2012, p.162), learning has been over-conceptualized and under-researched. It is not very difficult to observe a given instance or process of learning or updating of beliefs with the chosen methods of this research, interviewing and participatory analysis. But to estimate whether these processes lead to substantial institutional changes and whether these changes are sustainable is a considerable challenge. The literature on policy and social learning is quite rich, offering a myriad of definitions and terminologies. Yet the framework of this paper does not allow for a more in depth discussion of different streams of learning theory.[6] It rather reflects on some of the propositions made in several accounts on policy and social learning.

Operationalizing concepts such as learning and socialisation is a challenge that is still at the core of constructivist research. In contrast to the more rationalist treatment of external incentives, tracing the effects of learning requires a more in depth reconstruction of the process of socialisation and subsequent institutional change. External incentives are tangible; we know them when we see them, learning and socialisation is not. We can assume a person has learned when we see changes in his or her belief structure, when for example the answer to how that person had handled a given instance differs to how that person handles it at present or aims to handle it in the future. We can assume that an institution or an organisation has learned when we see considerable behavioural changes. The ideal approach would be to interview people at separate points in time (Checkel & Moravcsik 2001, pp.223–224). This paper is based on a first set of interviews done over the span of 2 months, over-time comparisons can therefore not be made. Nevertheless, such shortcomings were accommodated for in the interview guide by deliberately asking interviewees to explain their current position in the Twinning project and the administration and to reflect on how that differs from their previous position. Since comparing the reaction of a single interviewee over time is not possible in the confines of this paper, the interview responses are compared to each other as much as possible, tracing similar indications of learning and socialisation.

Already in 2005, Magen (2005, pp.424–425) argued that the potential of the ENP to facilitate learning processes between the EU and the neighbouring country is its biggest strength. According to Magen (2005, p.425) social learning involves communication about self-understandings, perception of reality and normative expectations. It takes place in organizational settings that promote the

---

"We expected completely different things from Twinning. We had no idea of what Twinning is. Now we understand this and we (...) are content." (RTA-Counterpart #1)

"Twinning does not only mean assistance from the EU but also some contribution from the beneficiary country. That meant that we had to (...) introduce the necessary budget allocation for the Twinning project. We had to discuss with our people in order to ask them to contribute because nobody was very willing to work more for nothing." (RTA-Counterpart #9)

[6] For a more in depth discussion of different approaches to policy learning, consult Zito & Schout 2009 or Farrell 2009 among others.

diffusion of meaning and result in the change of individual and collective identities. From its form, Twinning is conducive to social learning, particularly in comparison to other institution building tools. As argued in a recent evaluation report on the Twinning instrument in the ENP, it provides great learning opportunities as its tasks are based on a peer to peer cooperation approach (Bouscharain & Moreau 2012, p.70). Particularly the specific organisational setting of Twinning is fertile to Magen's definition of social learning.

Although Magen's definition resonates well with the concept of Twinning, it is not sufficient towards analyzing how and why social learning may take place in a given Twinning project. Thus, it is necessary to establish what a Twinning project may constitute both theoretically in the context of this paper but also in the perception of the actors involved. The concept of an epistemic community as established by Peter Haas in the early 1990s has considerable explanatory potential in this regard.

According to Haas (1992, p.3) an epistemic community is a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain. Haas specifies his definition by arguing that epistemic communities may have shared normative and causal beliefs and shared notions of validity and a common policy enterprise. In this sense, a narrower definition of an epistemic community may only include the consortium of external experts and the domestic beneficiaries as distinct epistemic communities in Twinning. Yet the Twinning project itself can be regarded as a common policy enterprise as well. Particularly in his early accounts on epistemic communities, Haas (1990, p.33) stressed the role of cooperation, meaning "(...)different parties coordinate their actions in accord with the desires of their partners (...)". Regarding one side solely as the epistemic community and the other as the recipient or one as the teacher and the other as the learner would not be in line with Haas's definition of cooperation. In this sense, both sides of a Twinning project, the external experts and the beneficiaries, can be regarded as an epistemic community in which each side provides specific professional and technical knowledge. This knowledge must align in the confines of the project. This alignment process may create new approaches to practical issues arising in the day to day work of the beneficiaries. Such a process of alignment is the core of what can be understood as learning in a Twinning project. The change of approaches on practical issues of the beneficiary administration is at the core of what can be understood as institutional change in this regard.

To analyse the alignment of beliefs in Twinning projects in Moldova, the following paragraphs focus on the cooperation process within Twinning projects. The cooperation process is explored according to a number of analytical categories taken from the definition of social learning according to Magen (2005) and the epistemic community concept according to Haas (1992). The first category is self-perception, exploring what roles both the RTA and the RTA counterpart ascribe to themselves and how they resonate. As the first category is rather static, the second category looks at how according

to the interviewees the cooperation between the RTA and the counterpart has developed over time and how it has impacted the perception of their own role and the wider project. The third category, following Magen's definition, looks at the actual process of communication and its perception by the actors involved. It looks at under which circumstances communication is regarded as effective between the parties involved and what may impede communication during the Twinning project.

2.2.2.1. *Role and self-perception of the RTA and the RTA counterpart*

According to the EU's Twinning manual, RTAs are civil servants that are seconded to work in a beneficiary administration for 12 to 36 months (European Commission 2012, p.16-17). Their main duty is to provide advice to the beneficiary administration and to manage the day to implementation of the project. The RTA must therefore fulfil more than one role. On the one hand he or she should be a technical expert, giving specific advice on the subject matter. On the other hand he or she must be a manager coordinating the project, managing the incoming short-term experts, keeping constant contact and remaining sensible to the demands of the beneficiary side.

The expert role of an RTA was only stressed by one interviewee when asked about her role in project. She further argued that it is only one of many profiles of an RTA.[7] The managerial role of RTAs was stressed more often. An EU official particularly emphasized that managerial skills are more important than the technical skill-set of an RTA. Although he emphasizes, if an RTA has additional technical skills it can certainly aid the project.[8] Several RTAs stress their role as coordinators between the beneficiary and the short-term experts. They particularly mentioned the importance of serving the needs of the beneficiaries and making sure that the experts that come for training activities are prepared to do so[9]. One RTA interviewed emphasized that at times external experts may inclined to

---

[7]   "There are 2 profiles for this type of position [RTA]. There are some that are really experts in the field and they will focus on that and then they will manage with very high level assistance, (...). The other position is that some are weak in the subject, but they are good managers." (RTA #13)

[8]   "He [the RTA] has to create the necessary conditions for the teams from the member state and the beneficiary because the required output must be a teamwork. (...) I think the managerial skills or project management skills for an RTA are much more important than the content related skills. But in case you have both, it is the ideal one." (EUD-official#2)

[9]   "I see myself as the person that communicates between the beneficiaries and the member state, as a coordinator between EU experts, EU institutions, beneficiary colleagues and institutions, trying to meet their needs and aspirations within the confines of the Twinning contract."(RTA #10)

        "My role is to make sure that our experts carry out their functions to the best of their abilities, as quickly as they can, as efficient as they can. That means by making sure to support them before they come here, making sure (...) that they understand the background of the project as much as we do as much as we can give them before they get here. (...) I would like to make sure that we are giving one opinion to our beneficiaries, so it is not too confusing." (RTA #5)

take on a paternalistic position, "telling them what to do", yet she is keen on balancing that position with what beneficiaries actually need.[10]

The coordinating and managerial role of RTAs can be assumed to be conducive to social learning, as learning is related to horizontal coordination between the parties involved (compare, Egan 2009, p.1246). Horizontal coordination is necessary to bring the knowledge and expectations of external experts in line with the knowledge and expectations of beneficiaries.

The Twinning manual states that the RTA counterpart is in charge of the management of the day to day activities of the project with the RTA (European Commission 2012, p.32). This management role is reflected in the interview replies, as most RTA counterparts interviewed ascribed themselves a similar coordination role as the RTA.[11] The main difference is that most RTA counterparts interviewed describe themselves as part of the beneficiary side, regarding their task to make the best use of the external experts available in terms of content and timing. In contrast to the RTA, the counterpart is a regular employee of the beneficiary institution and has to manage his or her Twinning related tasks on top of her daily tasks in the administration. On the upside, this arrangement provides for a direct connection between the RTA counterpart and the beneficiary from the start. On the downside, it leads to RTA counterparts taking on large amounts of tasks, making it difficult for them to cope with their workload. [12]

---

[10] "I have had some of my experts sigh: you have to tell them, this has got to be done. They are frustrated, they really see the benefits of what we are saying to Moldova and they want to see lots of movement. But that is my job. I have to balance the experts with the beneficiaries as well." (RTA #5)

[11] "My role in this project would be to coordinate the activities, to link all groups together, to have links with experts and our local executors, experts from our body. We try to have the most effective actions and to have more effective results in the project." (RTA-Counterpart #11)

"You probably know what an RTA is from the beneficiary side there should also be a person, to arrange all meetings. The persons is like a liaison between the beneficiary side and the donor side. (...). I arrange meetings between [external] experts and our experts, local experts from the agency. After the termination of a mission, experts usually give a report. I take care that this report is disseminated to the relevant persons in the agency. I give them a time in which they should see or revise this report. We stay together and make like a brain storming and come with a common decision let's say. We have a lot of training, seminars for inspectors. Of course, this is a routine work. You have to announce them to present them the agenda. To ask them what is convenient for them to meet." (RTA-Counterpart #8)

"I am the RTA counterpart in the project since the beginning. I think that the role is more technical. (...) Technical means organizational, logistics, things related to the reference, the TORs of each expert that is coming. (...) We were telling them [external experts] on the terms of reference, what do we expect, what is the framework in which they will work during the mission and what do we expect after that as a deliverable (...)." (RTA-Counterpart #1)

[12] "Of course it is difficult for people to have more work. (…) For example I was responsible for the twinning but also I had all my responsibilities that I had before." (RTA-Counterpart #9)

"Sometimes I have to say stop, lets concentrate. "We don't have so much time as it is additional time, an extra work for us. We just sometimes say yes, we agree or disagree and not put some concrete comments. But later on we are doing something. (…)Sometimes I say for this question, I need to discuss with it with the big boss, yes, or lets involve someone else. Something like that every day, really, especially when I have here expert missions. Besides this, I am the chief of the communication department. It implies a lot of time here, to write press releases, to know everything that is happening in this agency. Unfortunately I am alone, only one person." (RTA-Counterpart #8)

Besides the RTA and the RTA counterpart, the member state and the beneficiary project leader are important actors of Twinning projects. The so called member state project leader is the highest level authority from the EU member states side. He or she has a key role to play in organizing the activities, as all the experts. The RTA directly reports to him or her. Yet the member state project leader is scarcely present in the field and less directly involved in the day to day activities as the RTA. Counter to the member state project leader stands the beneficiary project leader. The involvement of the beneficiary project leader highly depends on his or her rank in the organisation. One project leader interviewed, who had the rank of a vice-minister, openly admitted not to be deeply involved in the project's substance matter, preferring to remain sidelined.[13] Another project leader stressed the importance of his involvement in the project and talked more vividly about his cooperation with the RTA and the external experts.[14] The different responses demonstrate the ambiguous role of the project leader. An RTA interviewee pointed out that at one hand you need a project leader that is high enough to make formal decisions to be able to implement changes, yet should not be a political person that can be replaced immediately and is too far away from the project's substance.[15] Therefore, the RTA counterpart is a more appropriate focal point in evaluating the beneficiaries perspective as he or she is closer involved in the day to day activities of a Twinning project.

The RTA and the RTA counterpart are the nucleus of a Twinning project. Any information or demand from either the beneficiary side or the external experts goes through them. Accordingly, both actors mainly ascribe themselves a managerial and coordination based role. Without them, the external experts cannot be allocated, their mission cannot be specified and domestic demands cannot be channelled and incorporated into the project. In order to assume learning and subsequent institutional change through a Twinning project, it is important to establish how their relationship develops over time and their ideas and understandings of the project align. Therefore, the following part analyses closer their actual cooperation.

---

[13] "I cannot get involved in major things. I am not an expert and I do not know too many things in the area they work. I want to know that we have proper legislation in place and I want to know that someone reports to me that yeah we developed that legislation." (Project-leader#14)

[14] "Having discussions, working on every point, every activity, every objective concerning what do we want, how do we achieve this result. Taking into account that first of all this was drafted by us, the Twinning fiche and so on. There were discussions on what we want and we were explain to them and then finding the best way to modify here, maybe to amend here a bit." (Project-leader#4)

[15] "You must have on the beneficiary country side a project leader that is high enough in the hierarchy to obtain and that when something is proposed by Twinning it is implemented. (...) They were hesitating, either vice-minister, the problem of vice-minister is political. If there is political change, he disappears. So you lose everything, cause the person goes and all the training you have. So we made it known discretely that we would not prefer a political person, but an administrative one." (RTA #13)

2.2.2.2. Cooperation between the RTA and the RTA counterpart

The cooperation between the RTA and the RTA counterpart is essential to achieve sustainable results in the form of long term networks and continuous communication beyond the project. One RTA interviewed described Twinning as a "human adventure". She argued that if it works, you built long term and stable ties between the beneficiary and the external experts. If it does not work, it "explodes"; it may have adverse effects such as wasting time, money and human resources.[16] The same interviewee had taken up her position as an RTA some weeks before the interview, yet the project had been under way for nearly a year already. She described the previous RTA as having not been up to the task and unable to build a connection between him, the experts and the beneficiaries.[17] This impression was confirmed in a personal talk with an external expert involved in another project in the same ministry, arguing that the RTA had a very negative reputation among the beneficiary staff.

The case mentioned in the previous paragraph exemplifies the very instability of a learning process in a Twinning project. Matching one or more developed country(s) with a much less developed one is a highly complex and unpredictable process. The tasks and functions of the key actors involved go far beyond formal job descriptions. In order to cooperate in a rather short time frame of around two years, particularly the RTA has to be able to integrate and to find acceptance in a beneficiary administration. Given that in the context of the ENP most Twinning projects are new to the beneficiary and the incoming RTA is not familiar with the beneficiary administration, the initiation of any Twinning project is a gamble. Whether cooperation works or not can only be established during the project. The current framework makes it rather difficult to react to unforeseen problems in a Twinning project. The Twinning contract cannot be changed after it has been initiated. To replace an RTA, an addendum has to be added to the contract, approved by the EU delegation and signed by the beneficiary and the project leader (European Commission 2012, pp.95–96). The rather complicated process of producing a project addendum can potentially further complicating the situation.

Despite the problems described in the previous paragraph, most officials interviewed during or after their Twinning project in Moldova spoke rather positively about the cooperation between the RTA

---

[16]   "Twinning is human adventure. If it works, you become friends forever. (…) If it does not work, which may happen, it explodes." (RTA #13)

[17]   "(...) the issues about RTAs. To do this, you must be an experienced professional. It is very difficult to manage this type of thing. So, that is why our colleague, who we put in this position, he was experienced. He was project leader on two Twinnings, so he knew about this but he was not ready to do what I am doing. He was not willing to commit himself. (…)The Moldovan part and the commission said, we don't want this RTA anymore because his value added is not enough. (…) That is why I must stress, being an RTA is not an easy task." (RTA #13)

and the beneficiary side. In fact, several interviewees stated they had developed a rather close relationship with their counterpart, helping them to better understand the process of Twinning, to manage the often highly ambitious objectives of the project and to share experience among each other. Several respondents from the beneficiary side stated to have developed a close personal relationship with the RTA. The general line of reasoning revolves around being ensured that the RTA can be trusted and provides support.[18] One former RTA counterpart described the end of the project as a very sad time for the beneficiary administration, as the RTA was accepted as an integral part of the working environment. Professional and personal ties were developed that lasted beyond the project up to the date of the interview.[19]

Most beneficiaries interviewed said they had little knowledge of what to expect from a Twinning project at the start. The state chancellery in Moldova provides relatively little support to the beneficiary institutions, mainly due to its own lack of capacity. At the time of the interviews, an EU assistance project was in place to prepare Moldovan administrators and decision makers for Twinning projects. Although interviewees receiving support acknowledged its positive impact,[20] several interviewees from the beneficiary side claimed to have had little awareness of the actual demands of a Twinning project at the start.[21]

Awareness of the project's demands was mainly achieved through interaction during the implementation phase. Several interview responses indicate that through interacting with the respective counterparts the actors were gaining an actual understanding of their role in the Twinning

---

[18] "I see [the RTA] every day, absolutely. (...) I like the relation with [the RTA]. She is an absolute fantastic person. She is very nice. Not only from a professional point of view, but as a person, that is very important." (RTA-Counterpart #8)

"It is important to have a good relation with the RTA. Half of the project success is possibly the relationship with the RTA. (...) We established quite a good relation. We had a friendly relationship. It is really something that was on a personal level also. Quite good established. It is important to have the understanding about that person and to have his support. Otherwise in a country where you have to provide your institution with the results you cannot do it without the involvement of the local people." (RTA-Counterpart #9)

[19] "We said that [the RTA] is part of the [beneficiary institution]. When he left, it was such an event. (...) When Twinning finished we were sad. To whom should we go to consult? We used mails, we correspond, not every day, but when we there is something to do we keep in touch" (RTA-Counterpart #12)

[20] "I was present at these seminars after I signed the contract. I found out a lot of new things and felt very sorry that I had no possibility to negotiate the project after these seminars because they really helped." (RTA-Counterpart #1)

"The [support project] created a network between the RTAs and the RTA counterparts. This helped a lot to get to know other beneficiaries and to get to know how they work. With the help of the seminars and conferences we got to know more about Twinning, TAIEX and SIGMA. This was our first Twinning project, we very much appreciated the support." (RTA-Counterpart #12)

"[The leader of the support project] was very kind to invite us. They are doing a great job and for beginners like me, this is very important." (RTA #3)

[21] "Even when you have the [Twinning] manual, the reality is different. With the help of consultants we understood easier the issues." (RTA-Counterpart #12)

"From the beginning of the project, the biggest challenge was that we did not know so well the approach of Twinning and that the main idea is that we have to work together" (Project-leader#4)

project. One respondent described that on one hand external experts are not particularly aware of what beneficiaries expect and on the other beneficiaries are often not too clear of what they want.[22] One RTA interviewee indicated that finding out what the beneficiary wants can be tricky for the external experts as well. On the one hand there is the awareness that practices need to be changed, and on the other hand advice on change may be perceived as paternalistic.[23] To create a basis for mutual understanding, openness is required from both the beneficiary side and the external experts. As one RTA counterpart argued, beneficiaries often know that the external experts are not very different from themselves. Yet they recognize that the administration they come from is more advanced. That recognition helps to open up to their experience.[24] On the other, as one RTA argued, external experts also learn about their own position by putting their work into the perspective of the beneficiary side.[25]

The arguments provided in the previous paragraph indicate further how intensive cooperation on a horizontal level between external experts and domestic beneficiaries is crucial in creating a common understanding of the Twinning project as a process in which ideas and concepts are exchanged. Each side has to show an awareness of the other and a willingness to adapt to the specific situation the project provides. If the eternal expert side and the RTA do not adapt, their work may be regarded as detached from the local reality and paternalistic. Hence it may be discarded. If the beneficiary side does not adapt, they may not be able to make use of the experience of the external experts.

2.2.2.3. Communication between the RTA, the RTA counterpart and beyond

Communication in Twinning is a crucial part of the wider cooperation process. Through the interview responses, it became clear that communication is both important between the participants of the

---

[22] "This was when the activities were starting, first missions, explaining to them what we want to obtain the results. After the first missions, the experts knew I our ideas, knew what we want and working together. (…)These inputs were also from our side, but they also understood us that maybe we are not so aware of what we need and they also approach this way, it was a common team work." (Project-leader#4)

[23] "If I was in their position and some foreigner told me I do it the best way. I would feel threatened or undermined, just on a personal level. I wander if in some ways this is how some of the managers feel. But if the managers do not see the need to change those practices it is not going to go anywhere." (RTA #5)

[24] "Normally, people that are coming are just normal people that working in their home institution, doing their job. So, if their institutions are doing better than we do, then people that are working there are probably doing a good job." (RTA-Counterpart #9)

[25] "If you talk to some of my experts who are working in local authorities at the moment, they feel terribly underfunded because there have been so many economic restrictions recently. I mean it is very good for our experts to see the experiences here in Moldova and take them back to their countries. We think we have got it really hard." (RTA #5)

project and stakeholders outside of the project, connected to the subject matter. Coming from a public administration environment themselves, RTAs are in general aware of the connections between different units, departments and ministries on a given policy issue. Various RTAs therefore emphasized to have tried to include as many Stakeholders as possible in the activities and the debates surrounding the Twinning project.[26]

Language can be an issue. Most RTAs interviewed had no or little proficiency in either Moldovan or Russian. What happens generally is that RTAs try to work around the language barrier in one way or another. One RTA interviewed explained vividly how at first she and her counterpart had difficulties communicating but by her picking up some Romanian and the counterpart improving his English and knowing some French, their communication developed into solid cooperation.[27] Another RTA stressed the importance of her support staff in communicating with the beneficiaries that would at least ensure a basic level of communication.[28] From the beneficiary side, language was not described as a problem.

Beyond the issue of practical communication and language, other cultural issues were mentioned as both barriers and facilitators of the project. One beneficiary described how the different mentality of the "calculating" Nordic experts was seen as a cultural barrier to the more "French or Spanish" mentality of Moldovans. Yet gradually throughout the project both sides started to appreciate the differences.[29] Another RTA described how cultural differences can be beneficial to the project as they

---

[26] "We tried to enhance communication and now they are happy to be in our working group which is great. We said at many meetings that departments should not be silos. There should be inter-ministerial working groups and much more cooperation between institutions with a common goal." (RTA #10)

"We try to push our counterpart, (...) to be more active, proactive, try contact media, try to have press releases. It is moving slowly but hopefully surely. So, visibility is more difficult than most people think." (RTA #7)

[27] "At first he could not speak English and I could not speak his language. I could understand a little Romanian. (...) I was sitting next to him and immediately I said, how could we communicate and immediately he took my copybook and wrote and we understood each other even though we could not say much. This is another issue for the RTA. You are in a country that here they speak Moldovan, Romanian and Russian. My predecessor RTA here knew a little Russian but insufficient to be able to understand and he I don't know why, refused to learn Romanian. This meant that all meetings were with interpreters. (...) I decided to improve my Romanian (...) I improved a little bit. On the other hand when there was the kick of here, I spoke in English, because that is the language of Twinning, but I spoke extremely slowly so people can understand." (RTA #13)

[28] "My Romanian is terrible after having been here for 10 months. I am not a linguist at all. I have my counterpart, she speaks very good English. Some of the people in the agency speak some English. Obviously we got a language assistant and another assistant on the project, so I have got enough support there. (…) It would be better if I spoke Romanian." (RTA #5)

[29] "There were issues for us to understand their behaviour, Dutch people and Swedish people. They are more Nordic, say more calculating. Well, we are more French, more Latin. (...) Having the RTA here already one year and a half, he also changed a lot, he became more Moldovan, he is one of us. He also contributed a lot to this and in every discussion he told us that he is from our part, he is together with us to promote what we want to the member state countries. To be frank we learnt a lot and we have a very close, honest and good cooperation and communication with the RTA." (Project-leader#4)

create interest in approaches that are common in the experts' home country but have not found their way into the approach of the beneficiary administration.[30]

The arguments in the previous paragraphs show that constant communication is crucial in Twinning project to keep the cooperation process alive and to reach as many stakeholders as possible. In Twinning projects in the Eastern neighbourhood, language and cultural particularities do play a considerable role. By practically forcing external experts and domestic beneficiaries to communicate on a day to day basis, such language and cultural barriers can be overcome. Through constant communication both sides develop coping mechanisms and build an understanding of and an appreciation for the different approaches of the other. Nevertheless, although it did not come through in the interviews very much, language and the cultural barriers are real ones. In an ideal world, where those barriers do not exist, projects would run considerably more smoothly.

---

[30] "We have a culture of openness, help each other by pulling together to get the job done. Here there are still some cultural differences. People think in a more compartmentalised way, more about their own department. (...)In the [EU member state] (...) there is a policy of "naming and shaming". Results are published on the internet. There is a different culture here. But they are very interested in that. (...) Yes, there were cultural barriers. They did not expect that [naming and shaming] to be possible. It is a new and "big" idea for them and to see that it is possible is very interesting for beneficiaries." (RTA #10)

3. CONDITIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE THROUGH TWINNING

The previous chapter has shown that Twinning projects work on an individual level, given that cooperation and communication functions properly between participants that are aware of their own role. This chapter argues that those conditions, although essential to the project, are not sufficient. Alongside the peer to peer cooperation within the projects, the external institutional environment needs to be conducive to Twinning to create lasting change. The interviews conducted indicate a number of conditions that stand in the way of long lasting and stable change, including political stability, staff fluctuation, low salaries and the durability of existing capacities.

3.1. Political stability in Moldova

Political stability is an issue in all European neighbourhood countries and Moldova is by far no exception. Although the EU has praised Moldova recently for its persistent reform efforts and its pro-European government (European Commission 2013), quite a number of deep-rooted political deficiencies persist which directly affect Twinning projects. Moldova's political vulnerability was recently revealed as its pro-European government had to resign. The resulting state crisis left the country without government until June this year. At least one Twinning project was directly affected. One of the main legal acts produced in the project has not been approved by the parliament so far, although the project had finished.[31] An RTA counterpart specifically referred to the political crisis as a major obstacle to undertaking particularly Twinning projects.[32]

An EU official emphasized that in his opinion what Moldova is missing is a "final definition" of what kind of country it would like to be. He further emphasized that vested interests of politicians are a

---

[31] "Of course it is the, how should I say, the components of the parliament. They always needed the quorum and there were some delays in the adoption of the law because of this. There was a risk that the law would not be approved. But of course from the government we always had good support, they always replied to our letters." (RTA #3)

[32] "From an institutional point of view, I cannot tell you what will be in the future. You see our government is 1 months and a half in existence. It was changed and now there is another government. The political situation in Moldova is also a risk. Probably that is why there are not so many of these kind of projects. The difference is, technical support does not go so open here." (RTA-Counterpart #11)

serious obstacle in the country's development.[33] Every new government changes the political structure and the administrative set up. Any form of institutional continuity or the building of an institutional memory which would aid Twinning projects is hardly possible under such political conditions.

Russia is an important influence on Moldova's political agenda. A high percentage of Moldovan nationals are native Russian speakers and of Russian origin. A large part of the labour migration from Moldova is directed towards Russia, making Moldova highly dependent on remittances from Russia. The persistent Transnistria conflict is considerably due to Russia's subsidies into the Transnistrian economy, keeping the deviant territory from economic and political collapse. Furthermore the Communist party is the strongest party in parliament and is highly in favour of increasing integration with Russia over the EU. Russian officials have deliberately voiced their reservation over Moldova's European integration efforts (Litra 2012). This has negatively impacted the public and political debate in Moldova over European integration (Eastern Europe Studies Centre 2013, p.3). Some of the interviewees mentioned that institutional reforms in Moldova should be sensible to Russian demands and Russian standards since Russia is the main economic partner of Moldova next to the EU[34]. Another RTA counterpart mentioned that the political pressure Russia exerts is highly felt in the administrative reform process.[35]

3.2. Staff fluctuation, motivation and salaries

Staff fluctuation, low levels of salary and a lack of staff motivation was mentioned several times in the interviews as problematic for Twinning projects. There are two dimensions to this problem. The

---

[33]   "Well in this country everything is changing since 1991. They still follow their own way, they still are missing the final definition. Changes and also I see that there maybe is some interest involved. These guys, politicians definitely have their own vested interests." (EUD-official#2)

[34]   "We have the Russian federation who are the biggest importer of our products and economically we are very sensible to their position. By the way when we have accreditation, we also have Russian Federation accreditation because we need to export products into Russia." (RTA-Counterpart #11)

"Moldova looks in 2 directions, to Russia and to the EU. Russia has its own standards. Often Russian standards are higher than the EU ones. Russia tends to be the bigger market, for language and other reasons." (RTA #10)

[35]   "It is pressure from Russia all the time. We had a very tricky history. Its like this particular part of land. Its until we are not in any other community, not part of the EU, we will see what the Eurasian community will do. The pressure will be really strong." (RTA-Counterpart #9)

first dimension relates to political decision making. The second dimension relates to the staffs' own incentives and the low incentive public administrations in Moldova are able to offer their staff.

One Twinning project was particularly affected by staff movements. The respective project leader, a vice-minister, described staff fluctuation to be a relatively normal procedure during times of change. He pushed for the creation of a specific agency which in his regard underlines his ministry's European aspirations, yet affected the Twinning project as it demanded considerable changes to the work plan right from the beginning.[36] As a result, the RTA of the same project described staff fluctuation to be a problem the project had to deal with. According to him, the changes were considerable, but could be managed through finding local focal points that remained in the institution and focusing activities around them.[37] The confusion on changes and reforms in this project is reflected in Moldova's wider administrative reform agenda. Parkes and Viilup (2012, p.2) argue that a large quantity of EU minded reforms in Moldova were implemented in an "unthinkingly clumsy" way. Accordingly they observe an increased frustration of the EU with Moldova.

Staff fluctuation caused by political instability is one side of the story. On the other side, people leave the administration on their own account. Various standard public policy texts recognize the need to provide some sort of incentive in the form of adequate pay and adequate working hours among others to keep public servants satisfied and to prevent high levels of staff frustration and fluctuation (Dunleavy & Hood 1994; Le Grand 2003). Nearly all RTAs interviewed mentioned that the beneficiary staff they work with is in their opinion considerably underpaid.[38] Despite low salaries, and the extra work Twinning demands, most RTAs described motivation as surprisingly high. The main line of reasoning is that it is due to a sense of gaining professional experience and profiting personally from

---

[36] "We pushed a lot. We had pretty much support in the government on this reform. The resistance is still on the working level. People are reluctant to change and its difficult. But on the higher level it is overall approved." (Project-leader#14)

[37] "Yes [staff movement] it has been a problem. There were lots of changes. There was a change in programmed activities; many new people had to be appointed to the new Institution. At the beginning we worked with small groups of people that we knew would be involved in the long run. When the institutional structure was being radically changed, it became clear that some staff were not going to transfer to the new institution, which was not ideal. So, during the transition phase we worked in certain activities that we knew would be continued. (…) The new agency is much more focused and much more engaged. They see career potential and are very active with Twinning activities. (RTA #10)

[38] "Regarding the salaries, from the beginning when I came there I was very surprised about the low, low level of salary of public servants" (RTA #3)

"It is always an issue. Everyone hear wants to earn money. Everyone wants to earn more money and I think the civil servants are paid poorly to put it straight forward." (RTA #7)

"As far as I understand, the staff salary is very low, which isn't unusual in the smaller countries. They have got tremendous difficulties to deal with." (RTA #5)

"The salaries are low but no one ever said I don't do this because I don't get paid." (RTA #10)

the trainings offered by the experts and the presence of the RTA.[39] This point of view is not exclusive to the RTAs perspective. As one RTA counterpart argued, involving people in activities that provide a different perspective on their day to day work and getting into contact with professionals from other countries can be quite exciting for the participating staff and may help to minimize the impact of low salaries.[40]

Whereas a lack of monetary incentives can be overcome in the Twinning project through the presence of external experts, it remains problematic outside the project frame. One RTA interviewed argued that a lack of funding is not necessarily the problem towards the beneficiary organizing trainings themselves. The costs of organising such trainings are low. In his opinion, it is simply a lack of interest and motivation of the people in charge to do something about the situation.[41]

3.3. Durability of existing capacities

In a recent article on EU democracy promotion in Tunisia and Morocco, Van Hüllen (2012, p.130) argues that for neither country existing administrative and state capacity are a difficulty in terms of cooperation with the European Union. For Twinning in the case of Moldova, the opposite is the case. Parkes and Viilup (2012) argue that instead of incentive based policies, such as democracy promotion, the EU must focus on more small scale capacity development to enable Moldova to formulate its own demands and take ownership over its reform agenda. In the reporting of several projects, very basic issues of administrative capacity were raised as problematic. One report raised a considerable dissatisfaction with the office space provided to the RTA, lacking internet connection.

---

[39]   "They are thinking OK, we have this kind of responsibility and we need to be paid better. The other thing is, they are young, they are enthusiastic, they work because they like this field. I think they enjoyed working with the experts and with me also but of course, this needs to be solved by the government." (RTA #5)

"I can say that I feel genuinely that they listen to what we say and they look for our advice and our support. We can have disagreements, we are bound to have disagreements about things and maybe the things we suggest they just don't agree with because of the local way of doing things." (RTA #3)

[40]   "These kinds of projects are based on a lot of enthusiasm of people that are working, on people that really want to do something, learn something new, that like to be in contact with somebody from another country. So it is always something that is making people to be involved. So you have to find as an RTA counterpart, you have to find something that you can give to your colleagues in return to their involvement in the project. Because you cannot give them salary, this is almost impossible. It is the same salary. You only need to find something they will be happy with to support those initiatives." (RTA-Counterpart #9)

[41]   "To some extent I can appreciate a lack of funding. It does not take a lot of money to organize training for say 30 people. The ministry has the venue, they can easily do it in house, they can send out invitations through e-mail, they can ask the participants to print the power point slides, they can by having such an approach, they can distribute the potential low cost for paper and other things. They could offer coffee breaks that is it. It does not cost an awful lot of money. So in our case, I cannot really blame it fully on the financial constraints, really it is more I feel a lack of interest, a lack of drive from those who are responsible to organize." (RTA #7)

Another report indicated that after about half a year it became increasingly difficult for to secure seminar rooms for project activities. One RTA put it frank, arguing that from her point of view the beneficiary agency is absolutely under-resourced for its mandate.[42]

The lack of administrative capacity is most visible in the project design phase, when beneficiaries have to specify their demands and be clear about what they want and what not. One can assume that a well developed administration that is appropriately staffed and funded has an intact institutional memory and a clear mandate. It knows more or less where it needs extra training and external expertise. An administration with low capacity may not know that. This can be critical for projects like Twinning, which depend highly on the input and feedback of the beneficiary side. One interviewee from the beneficiary side argued that at the beginning, they did not know what they wanted to get out of the project and asked the external experts and the RTA to take this into consideration.[43] To date in Moldova all Twinning fiches are drafted by external experts and not by the receiving administration. An external consultant who was generally not exposed to the administration for more than a couple of weeks designs a project instead of any internal staff member. One EU official interviewed recalled an episode where a future beneficiary specifically asked to draft the fiche themselves but gave up after a couple of weeks because they were unable to cope with the procedures.[44]

---

[42] "I would say our agency is under-resourced. Without looking at the budget in detail, I see the difficulties they are under and they appear to be extremely under-resourced." (RTA #5)

[43] "These inputs were also from our side, but they also understood us that maybe we are not so aware of what we need and they also approach this way, it was a common team work." (Project-leader#4)

[44] "Initially we agree with the beneficiary that they will prepare the draft Twinning fiche, not the TORs, but the Twinning fiches. Initially they were very happy. Yes, we will get these Twinnings, we are ready, what we have to go? OK guys, here is the Twinning manual. You go through the manual, you don't have to read the entire manual, only the part for preparation, then we need to discuss and then you work. So they said ok, in 2 weeks time we have the Twinning fiches. After 3 days I started to receive calls, messages, e-mails, well it is difficult, blablabla. We have no experience in preparing such fiches according to the manual. Do you think there is the possibility to hire experts? Well, OK, at least we tried you know but I don't know. Maybe after a dozen of Twinnings the government will be ready for that. Yet at this stage they are still in need of external experts to prepare those fiches." (EUD-official#2)

4. CONCLUSION

The paper has shown that Twinning is an instrument used by the European Union, which has the potential to create institutional change in a neighboring country through policy learning. These changes may be scattered and missed when evaluating the EP or the ENP as a whole. It was demonstrated that whereas the EP and the ENP may remain rather ineffective, specific instruments such as Twinning can have a lasting impact on the administrative level if they manage to align with domestic demands. Although Twinning is only one piece in the EU's toolbox of the Eastern partnership and Moldova is only one, relatively small, country, several observation made in the framework of this paper are relevant for the perception of the ENP and the EP as a whole.

The ENP lacks the kind of incentives that could cause major properly rooted institutional changes in the administrative structures of neighboring countries (Dragneva & Wolczuk 2012; Magen 2005; Kochenov 2011; Kleenmann 2010). Change cannot be externally induced. It has to start from domestic initiatives. What the case of Twinning in Moldova indicates is that the demand for change was given in all projects. Through various conversations with public and development officials I was made aware that change is demanded on nearly all levels and policy areas of public administration in Moldova. What is clearly lacking is the capacity to specify this demand, to clearly state what needs to be changed and how that change may come about. Large scale changes induced through external incentives can be detrimental in an administrative environment that does not have the capacity to voice its own demands.

Twinning is an instrument which can succeed in at least starting the process of institutional change in a public administration environment. It taps in where other incentive based instruments fail, in helping administrations to decide what they want. External incentives linked to pre-decided EU practices make it easy for the beneficiary. No deeper reflection on the initiation and the impact of a change process are required as the incentive given is regarded as both the means and the end of institutional change. Twinning does not make it easy for either party involved. Although goals are seemingly agreed before hand through the contractual agreement of mandatory results, the interview responses indicate that the meaning and the actual aims of each Twinning project are only discovered through actual cooperation during implementation.

Moldova has for a long time profited from sloppily implementing EU practices based on incentives such as budget support or visa liberalization, convincing the EU to be its most successful reformer. The perception of Moldova as a successful reformer is more and more being challenged (Parkes &

Viilup 2012). It is imperative for future accounts on the EP to point to the detrimental effects of ad hoc changes through external incentives in political instable and administratively underdeveloped countries such as Moldova (e.g. Dragneva & Wolczuk 2012).

Twinning utilizes an actual, yet underappreciated strength of the EU in its Eastern neighborhood. That strength lies in the experience and knowledge of 27 different member states coping with their domestic problems, constantly drawing new solutions that combine domestic and EU demands. That pool of knowledge is a source that only the EU possesses, but only utilizes scarcely through its Twinning instrument.

It is worth to take a closer look at Twinning, not just in Moldova. The conditions under which Twinning may function or not and the nature of the alignment of external experts- and beneficiary perspectives could only be touched upon in the framework of this paper. Further conceptualization is necessary. It is useful to consult other literatures, particularly concerning capacity development and organizational learning, to gain further insights on the nature of Twinning and its impact.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Börzel, T. & Risse, T., 2000. «When Europe Hits Home: Europeanization and Domestic Change». *European Integration online Papers (EIoP)*, 4(15), pp.2000–015.

Börzel, T.A. & Risse, T., 2012. From Europeanisation to Diffusion: Introduction. *West European Politics*, 35(1), pp.1–19.

Bouscharain, G. & Moreau, J.-B., 2012. Evaluation of the Institutional Twinning Instrument in the Countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/overview/documents/20121002-final-report_en.pdf [Accessed November 10, 2012].

Checkel, J.T. & Moravcsik, A., 2001. Forum Section: A Constructivist Research Program in EU Studies. *European Union Politics*, 2(2), pp.219–249.

Dimitrova, A., 2002. Enlargement, Institution-Building and the EU's Administrative Capacity Requirement. *West European Politics*, 25(4), pp.171–190.

Dragneva, R. & Wolczuk, K., 2012. EU Law Export to the Eastern Neighbourhood. *EU External Relations Law and Policy in the Post-Lisbon Era*, pp.217–240.

Dunleavy, P. & Hood, C., 1994. From Old Public Administration to New Public Management. *Public Money & Management*, 14(3), pp.9–16.

Eastern Europe Studies Centre, 2013. Moldova reality check. Available at: http://www.eesc.lt/uploads/news/id517/Moldova%20Reality%20Check%20April_June_2013.pdf [Accessed August 7, 2013].

Egan, M., 2009. Governance and learning in the post-Maastricht era? *Journal of European Public Policy*, 16(8), pp.1244–1253.

EuropeAid, 2011. Update on Eastern Partnership implementation. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/eastern_partnership/documents/update_on_the_eastern_partnership_en.pdf [Accessed March 26, 2013].

European Commission, 2013. European Neighbourhood Policy: Working towards a stronger partnership. Available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/docs/2013_enp_pack/2013_comm_conjoint_en.pdf [Accessed March 22, 2013].

European Commission, 2012. Institution Building in the framework of European Union policies: Common Twinning Manual. Available at: http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&cad=rja&ved=0CD0QFjAC& url=http%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2Fenlargement%2Fpdf%2Ffinancial_assistance%2Finstitution_bui lding%2F2012%2Fmanual_may_2012.pdf&ei=1CJ9UKCqM8fZtAa0iYG4CQ&usg=AFQjCNGISd57OhAS QpFc0hmbO83JL2JpqA&sig2=JNizMhAvqcoJMW5Qz5Ew5Q [Accessed October 10, 2012].

Farrell, M., 2009. EU policy towards other regions: policy learning in the external promotion of regional integration. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 16(8), pp.1165–1184.

Freyburg, T. & Richter, S., 2010. National identity matters: the limited impact of EU political conditionality in the Western Balkans. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 17(2), pp.263–281.

Gilardi, F. & Radaelli, C., 2012. *Governance and learning*, The Oxford Handbook of Governance. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Available at: http://centres.exeter.ac.uk/ceg/research/ALREG/documents/Gilardi_Radaelli_HoG_2010_06_29.doc x [Accessed July 29, 2013].

Le Grand, J., 2003. Motivation, agency, and public policy: of knights and knaves, pawns and queens. *OUP Catalogue*. Available at: http://ideas.repec.org/b/oxp/obooks/9780199266999.html [Accessed August 2, 2013].

Haas, P.M., 1992. Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination. *International Organization*, 46(1), pp.1–35.

Haas, P.M., 1990. *Saving the Mediterranean: the politics of international environmental cooperation*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Van Hüllen, V., 2012. Europeanisation through Cooperation? EU Democracy Promotion in Morocco and Tunisia. *West European Politics*, 35(1), pp.117–134.

Jacoby, W., 2006. *The enlargement of the European Union and NATO: ordering from the menu in Central Europe*, Cambridge University Press.

Kleenmann, K., 2010. The European Neighbourhood Policy-A Reality Check. *Romanian Journal of Political Sciences*, (02), p.118.

Kochenov, D., 2011. ENP's New Developments: Imitating Change–Ignoring the Problems. *Comparative European Politics, Vol. 9, 2011*.

Litra, L., 2012. The neutrality and sovereignty of Moldova in the sight of Russia. *Moldova's freign policy statewatch*, 49, p.3.

Magen, A., 2005. Shadow of Enlargement: Can the European Neighbourhood Policy Achieve Compliance. *Columbia Journal of European Law*, 12, p.383.

Niskanen, W.A., 1973. *Bureaucracy--servant or master?: Lessons from America*, Institute of Economic Affairs.

Parkes, R. & Viilup, E., 2012. Eastern partnership? More like mutual dependence. The case of EU home affairs cooperation with Moldova / n° 52 / Notes Intl / Publications / CIDOB home page. Available at: http://www.cidob.org/en/publications/notes_intl/n1_52/eastern_partnership_more_like_mutual_d ependence_the_case_of_eu_home_affairs_cooperation_with_moldova [Accessed June 13, 2013].

Schimmelfennig, F., 2007. Europeanization beyond Europe. *Living Reviews in European Governance (LREG)*.

Schimmelfennig, F. & Sedelmeier, U., 2005. *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*, Cornell University Press.

Tulmets, E., 2011. Institution-Building Instruments in the Eastern Partnership: Still Drawing on Enlargement? *Eastern Partnership Review*, 6.

Zito, A.R. & Schout, A., 2009. Learning theory reconsidered: EU integration theories and learning. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 16(8), pp.1103–1123.