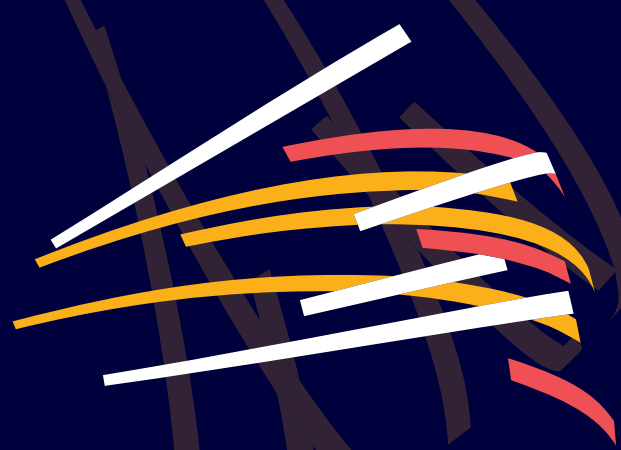




30 YEARS
30 FACES
30 STORIES



FOREWORD

Dear friends of TAIEX,

In 1996, many countries, like my Slovenia, started preparing for EU membership. They needed help with reforms. Many EU experts stepped forward.

Judges who had done it. Customs officers who had done it. Central bankers who had done it. They explained and shared with our administrations what worked. This is TAIEX.

In thirty years, more than half a million EU experts have done exactly that, in candidate countries and around the world. It turns out, the best way to build better institutions is to talk to someone who has already done it before.

TAIEX has shown how European integration improves daily life. Strong institutions are the foundation of democracy. They enable societies to withstand pressure, protect the rule of law and safeguard freedom. They lead to safer products, more responsive public services, easier travel, fairer markets and more dynamic economies.

Today, TAIEX experts continue to ensure that future EU citizens, whether in Ukraine, Moldova or the Western Balkans, can truly see and feel the benefits of European integration.

At the same time, partners around the globe look to the European Union as a reliable partner. Through TAIEX, we help adopt EU standards, strengthen institutions, support reforms and improve lives, both in Europe and beyond.

To all those who have carried this mission into the world: thank you. For three decades, you have helped transform countries and improve lives. You embody European solidarity. Today, as global shifts reshape our world, we will need you more than ever to build a stronger, more secure Europe where better institutions continue to support better lives.



MARTA KOS
COMMISSIONER FOR ENLARGEMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONNECTED & AFFORDABLE	6
FROM REGULATION TO EMPOWERMENT	7
CITIZENS COME FIRST	8
ERASING BORDERS FOR BUSINESS	9
KEEPING UKRAINE CONNECTED	10
SPEEDING UP TRADE AND TRUST	11

SAFE & TRUSTED	12
SECURING THE FRONTLINE	13
DEFENDING DEMOCRACY	14
STRONGER TOGETHER	15
TRANSPARENT SYSTEMS	16
HONEST DIALOGUE	17

TRANSPARENT & ACCOUNTABLE	18
ACCOUNTABLE PUBLIC FUNDS	19
MACROECONOMIC STABILITY	20
FINANCIAL RESILIENCE	21
OPENING THE MARKET	22
CROSS-COUNTRY - CROSS-GOVERNMENT	23

HEALTHIER & GREENER **24**

FROM VULNERABILITY TO SOLIDARITY	25
FRONTLINE CARE	26
RURAL TRANSFORMATION	27
HEALTHY HARVESTS	28
SHIELDING NATURE	29

SMARTER & SIMPLER **30**

LINKING COMMUNITIES THROUGH TRADE	31
ONE FOR ALL, ALL FOR ONE	32
CONNECTED TRACKS	33
TRUSTED SKIES	34
SKILLS FOR TOMORROW	35

BEYOND EUROPE **36**

HEALTHY NEIGHBOURS	37
GATEWAY TO GLOBAL GROWTH	38
THE GLOBAL STANDARD PROMOTER	39
ARCHITECTS OF THE ALGORITHM	40
THE CONSTITUTIONAL ANCHOR	41

CONNECTED & AFFORDABLE

Lower costs, seamless payments, digital freedom

The benefits of EU enlargement and integration are part of daily life: instant payments, international mobile service at no extra charge, goods moving faster, seamless services, doing business across countries without the extra paperwork that slows it down. Behind this simplicity lies the powerful reality of EU integration: with the help of TAIEX, countries align their systems, standards, and rules to function better together and deliver a better service.

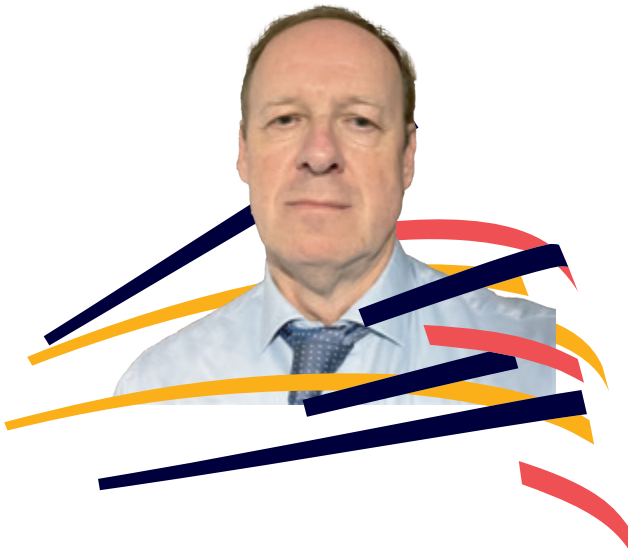
Consider what it takes for a continent to function seamlessly. It requires that a flight path navigated by a Civil Aviation Authority in Moldova operates under the exact same safety protocols as one in Madrid. It demands that a newly established Cyber Security Agency in the Eastern Partnership can instantly share threat intelligence with a counterpart in Brussels. It means that a truck carrying vital exports can clear a customs checkpoint using a single, paperless digital declaration recognised across dozens of borders.

For thirty years, TAIEX experts have been the architects of this invisible infrastructure. By working peer-to-peer with public administrations in candidate and partner countries, these experts help connect them to European systems that make business smoother, services faster, and everyday life simpler.

When telecommunications laws are aligned, the result is not just a new regulatory document; it is a student accessing secure broadband, or a family calling across borders without the fear of excessive roaming charges. When central banks synchronise their payment systems to European standards, it translates directly into a small business receiving cross-border payments in seconds rather than days and without heavy transfer fees.

This technical solidarity proves that EU integration is not a waiting game. By sharing expertise, aligning digital markets, and modernising financial systems ahead of formal accession, TAIEX is removing barriers, lowering costs, and building a resilient, connected Europe for millions of people today.

FROM REGULATION TO EMPOWERMENT



DIETER STAUDACHER

TAIEX EXPERT FROM AUSTRIA

Regulatory Authority for Broadcasting and Telecommunications

A foundation of fair rules and independent watchdogs is a necessary condition for a connected digital continent. For over 15 years, Dieter has been travelling across the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership to help public administrations build exactly that.

MORE CHOICES

“ When I think back about what makes me most proud in 15 years of doing TAIEX missions, it is that I could help somewhere where help is needed. I could see on later visits to the countries I have been before that there has been improvement achieved already and consumers already using the better opportunities they got. ”

His work tackles some of the most complex regulatory frameworks in Europe. In practice, this means working with partner countries to ensure their media regulators are independent from political pressure, that media users are protected against hidden advertising or unfair contracts and that their telecom markets are open to fair competition. Today, the sheer speed of technological change makes this cooperation more critical than ever. Because the digital economy has no physical borders, having the exact same standards across the continent is the only way to ensure a safe, fair environment for everyone.

“ I’m sure that these lessons and these improvements in the countries have led to better opportunities, to lower prices, and what is the most important, to a lot of better choices for the consumers. ”

SAFER DIGITAL SPACES

For Dieter, the ultimate success of TAIEX is seeing partner countries evolve from learners to leaders. Because of these aligned standards, experts from countries like Kosovo* and Moldova now sit as observers in the European Board of Media Services. They are no longer just adopting European rules; they are actively helping to inform them, enriching the entire continent’s digital landscape with their experiences.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



CITIZENS COME FIRST

INGA POPOVICI
TAIEX EXPERT FROM ROMANIA

National Authority for Management and Regulation in Communications

When digital infrastructures align with European standards, physical borders begin to disappear. For Inga, international cooperation often started organically with questions from colleagues in neighbouring countries like Moldova and Ukraine. Inga's favourite are the consumer-focused TAIEX events.

CITIZEN-CENTRED POLICIES

“ The comparative approach helps beneficiary organisations with whom we cooperate identify the most appropriate mechanism to ensure that adopted legislation is effectively implemented at the national level.

Through TAIEX, she has supported these nations in highly technical fields—sharing Romania's hands-on experience in spectrum management, broadband development, consumer rights. European policy is unique because it is inherently citizen-centred. When this careful regulatory work succeeds, the results extend far beyond technical compliance. The ultimate proof of this citizen-first approach is seeing digital barriers fall in real time, translating directly into everyday financial relief and social connection for millions of people.

”

CONNECTING NEIGHBOURS

“ To take roaming as an example, EU citizens and citizens from the candidate countries ... Moldova and Ukraine... can travel freely while remaining connected with their families without concerns of high costs... It brings us closer to our neighbouring countries, and it gives us a perspective of effective cooperation.

”

For Inga, TAIEX is the bridge that turns legislation into tangible connectivity. It proves that technical solidarity can erase digital borders, making travel easier and proving that a connected Europe is a stronger Europe.



ERASING BORDERS FOR BUSINESS

MIRELA BENKO
TAIEX EXPERT FROM CROATIA
Croatian National Bank

A connected Europe requires more than just communication; it requires financial trust. For a small business operating outside the EU, cross-border banking can be a nightmare of high transfer fees, delayed payments, and bureaucracy. The solution is the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA), and joining it requires a monumental overhaul of a nation's banking infrastructure. Mirela remembers what it was like when Croatia navigated its own SEPA integration.

INSTANT PAYMENTS

“ When the Republic of Croatia started with its SEPA migration, we didn't know that such kind of help existed. We made some mistakes. We had some wrong turns. So, my main point here is to point to these mistakes, so they don't have to repeat them. ”

Today, she is in a position to help others. She uses that firsthand experience to guide neighbouring countries, like Montenegro, through the same highly technical journey. Through TAIEX Expert Missions, she works directly with the Central Bank of Montenegro, ensuring their payment systems, service providers, and legal frameworks comply with strict EU financial laws. The impact of this alignment on the local economy is transformative. It removes hidden financial borders, acting as a catalyst for trade and foreign investment.

EASIER TRADE

“ Before SEPA, making a payment was much harder. It took a few days just to send money to the European Union or to receive. And now with SEPA, it's just a few hours. With instant payments, it will be only a few seconds. I think that this is the biggest benefit. ”

By modernising these payment systems, Montenegro is one step closer to the European Union. Mirela helped ensure that the benefits of European integration are felt immediately in the wallets of citizens and the growth of small enterprises, long before formal accession.



KEEPING UKRAINE CONNECTED

VLADISLAVA KOVTUN

TAIEX BENEFICIARY FROM UKRAINE

Head of International Cooperation and International Projects Division

For millions of citizens, the most immediate and tangible proof of European integration sits right in their pockets. Through intensive cooperation with the European Union under the TAIEX programme, Ukraine has taken practical, rapid steps to align its telecommunications sector with the EU Single Market.

CONNECTED FAMILIES

“ For Ukrainian citizens, it means that they can travel across all 27 EU countries and use mobile calls, SMS and data under the same conditions as at home without extra charges. It shows that European integration is not abstract or theoretical. ”

This technical partnership achieved a historic milestone: the integration of Ukraine into the EU “Roam Like at Home” area, extending EU internal roaming policy to a non-EU country for the first time. While the process required complex alignment of regulations and standards, this cooperation goes far beyond making travel cheaper with affordable mobile services helping businesses operate and families stay in touch. Under the extreme pressures of the ongoing full-scale war, this seamless cross-border communication has transformed from a modern convenience into a critical lifeline for millions of displaced citizens.

EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY

“ This partnership demonstrates that Ukrainian solidarity is more than a principle. Digital connectivity becomes a backbone of resilience. It allows societies to function, economies to adapt and countries to coordinate during crisis. ”

For Vladislava, this technical alignment sends a clear message. By integrating into the European digital space today, TAIEX cooperation brings real support, stronger connections, and a profound sense of belonging to a united European family based on fairness, freedom, and solidarity.



SPEEDING UP TRADE AND TRUST

NAZMI BERISHA

TAIEX BENEFICIARY FROM KOSOVO

Kosovo Customs

For the European market to function, it is not enough for digital data and financial transfers to move instantly, the physical goods must keep up. For economic operators and citizens, long lines at border crossings and unpredictable customs paperwork are more than just an inconvenience; they are a direct barrier to economic growth.

FASTER BORDER CROSSINGS

“ Aligning the Kosovo legislation with the European Union means that our economic operators will apply the same rules as EU countries... This will reduce the unnecessary bureaucracy, which will also shorten procedures at border crossings. ”

Through TAIEX, Nazmi and his colleagues have been working intensively with EU experts to replace outdated systems with modern and transparent electronic ones. The technical challenge is immense. But, when a border operates predictably, the ripple effects are felt in every home: transport costs drop; market supplies stabilise; operators work better on both sides; and increased competition leads to fairer prices for consumers. Nazmi emphasises that the true value of TAIEX goes far beyond drafting or aligning new legislation.

CONNECTED ECONOMIES

“ Until we join the EU, we need this support from TAIEX. They are sending real experts, who share the practical part. Just having new regulations, but not implementing them right, it will have this boomerang effect for businesses as well. ”

By successfully turning European customs theory into daily practice, Nazmi and his team are doing more than clearing cargo. They are building a predictable, transparent environment that earns the trust of investors, protects consumers, and firmly connects their economy to the rest of Europe.

SAFE & TRUSTED

Defending democracy, fighting corruption, justice you can trust

Trust is not given. It is earned through systems that work and institutions that prove themselves worthy of it: when a prosecutor in the Western Balkans refuses a bribe and the system protects that choice; a citizen reports corruption knowing the complaint will be investigated fairly; a journalist exposes manipulation without fearing retribution; digital infrastructure resists coordinated cyberattacks designed to paralyse public services. These moments define whether democracy survives or crumbles.

Safety should not be taken for granted either. It is strengthened through European integration—by bringing systems closer together and enabling administrations to work across borders.

It is built through professionals who show up to defend the rule of law. It requires judges who understand the value of credibility. It demands prosecutors who meet as equals to solve shared problems, and investigators who recognise that organised crime knows no borders, so neither can protection against it.

For thirty years, TAIEX has supported administrations by connecting experts who deal with similar challenges. When experts from EU countries share how they track disinformation or respond to cyber threats, partner institutions can apply proven approaches immediately. When police and investigators coordinate on asset recovery, they align processes and build contacts that speed up cross-border cooperation and help fight organised crime more effectively. The result is quicker responses and stronger enforcement in practice.

Defending modern democracy requires a continuous, unbreakable chain of accountability. It begins on the digital frontlines, tracking hackers and exposing disinformation. It moves to police tracking illicit funds across borders and relies on prosecutors and judges to uphold the law. Experts meet as peers, share failures alongside their successes, and build trust through honest dialogue, building more effective institutions and ultimately contributing to a safer Europe.



SECURING THE FRONTLINE

MIHAI LUPAŞCU

TAIEX BENEFICIARY FROM MOLDOVA

Cyber Security Agency

Modern democracies run on digital infrastructure. When these systems fail, societies stop functioning. For Moldova, facing an unprecedented wave of cyber threats and coordinated interference during recent election cycles, cybersecurity was recognised not as a technical ad-on, but as a fundamental requirement for national sovereignty. Hacktivists and foreign actors were actively seeking to compromise critical networks and access sensitive communications. The state's digital presence had to be rapidly fortified to protect the integrity of the ballot box, shield citizen data, and prevent malicious data exfiltration.

“ The most important thing they can do is to ensure that their presence online is secure... because collective security comes from the security of each individual citizen. ”

COORDINATED DEFENCE

Yet, securing physical infrastructure and data servers is only the first critical step. Cyber intrusions are frequently weaponised to feed disinformation campaigns, meaning the defence must extend from protecting digital networks to protecting democracy.

PROTECTING CRITICAL SYSTEMS

Through intensive TAIEX cooperation, experts from across the EU travelled to Chişinău to share best practices with the Moldovan authorities. The collaboration focused on continuous learning, adapting to newly observed hacking techniques, and promoting widespread citizen awareness of digital hygiene, such as critical thinking and verification of information posted online. By aligning technical teams with strategic communication units, TAIEX proved that defending a nation requires both high-level government coordination and everyday public vigilance to build long-lasting digital resilience.

“ We have had exchanges of experience, conferences, and workshops with counterparts from EU countries ... TAIEX sessions ... There is very close collaboration, which allows us to advance faster than would be possible by taking this journey alone. ”



DEFENDING DEMOCRACY

LAURA BRINCOURT
TAIEX EXPERT FROM FRANCE

VIGINUM – the French Service for Vigilance and Protection Against Foreign Digital Interference

PROTECTING PUBLIC DEBATE

Democracies rarely collapse overnight; often, democracy erodes slowly through information manipulation designed to fracture public trust and polarise open societies. When France created VIGINUM, it became one of the first countries to build a specialised state agency dedicated exclusively to detecting and countering foreign digital interference. Today, through TAIEX, Laura shares that hard-won, pioneering experience with partner countries facing the same invisible, hybrid threats that seek to weaponise national debates and serve external geopolitical interests.

“ Defence cannot function in isolation. The state cannot tackle this issue alone. It must involve a wide range of stakeholders; all have a role to play. Success depends on a continuous chain of resilience. ”

The cooperation reveals a universal pattern. Partner countries often arrive carrying the fears France once faced: how to aggressively defend democracy without inadvertently becoming a “ministry of truth.” Laura emphasises the agency’s strict legal and ethical framework, helping partners like the Albanian Parliament draft their own national strategies. Knowing that balanced, transparent approaches exist—complete with independent ethical and scientific oversight—gives partners the confidence to launch their own sovereign initiatives to protect media freedom and democracy.

“ We often see that the EU accession process and topic in itself is weaponised and manipulated by foreign powers and foreign states to serve their own geopolitical interests. But this debate belongs solely to the people of the candidate country. So as EU members, we have a responsibility to support this democratic protection whenever requested. ”

SAFEGUARDING MEDIA FREEDOM

The illicit networks that fund and push massive disinformation campaigns are rarely isolated; they are frequently intertwined with traditional organised crime. To truly neutralise these threats, vigilance must extend to investigating criminal activity across physical borders.



STRONGER TOGETHER

OLIVER HOFFMANN
TAIEX EXPERT FROM GERMANY
State Crime Bureau, Baden-Württemberg

Organised crime operates across borders with ruthless efficiency. Drug trafficking, human smuggling, and money laundering syndicates exploit fragmented enforcement, weak coordination, and isolated national investigations. For Oliver, who has participated in dozens of TAIEX peer review missions across the Western Balkans and MENA regions, the solution is equally clear: defence must be as borderless as the threats. The most effective way to cripple illicit networks is to strike directly at their core by targeting their finances.

BORDERLESS JUSTICE

“ Stronger systems are the backbone for stronger economies. When corruption is minimised, it becomes easier to make business and easier to find a job. And by reforming and innovating in institutional frameworks, we can create a stable environment where there are more opportunities for investment and growth. ”

Oliver works directly with police and prosecutors in partner countries to share Germany’s operational experience in building specialised investigation units. By focusing on practical cases, his work empowers local authorities to track activities of organised crime, navigate and enforce the *EU acquis* in the areas of the judiciary and fundamental rights and justice, freedom and security, and freeze the assets of powerful criminal syndicates before they can be moved. Participating together as practitioners to dissect real-world cases builds the deep personal trust required for rapid cross-border operations.

” “ Through TAIEX, we are building bridges, we are building friendships, we are building trust. I have witnessed a significant shift towards more specialised and effective investigation techniques during my missions to candidate countries. Citizens should not have to wait for an official date to enjoy better services and more security. ”

TRACK, FREEZE AND RECOVER

Gathering evidence and seizing illicit funds are crucial victories for law enforcement, forming the beginning of the justice chain. To permanently dismantle organised crime, investigators must pass their findings to prosecutors who can secure convictions.

TRANSPARENT SYSTEMS



LINALOTTA PETRELIUS NDISI
TAIEX EXPERT FROM SWEDEN

Swedish Prosecution Authority

Trust in justice requires more than ambitious laws; it requires systems that citizens can verify. Turning police intelligence into convictions requires prosecutors equipped to navigate complex webs of corruption. Swedish prosecutor Linalotta travels across Europe's neighbourhood to ensure anti-corruption legislation works in practice, bridging the gap between laws on paper and enforcement in the courtroom. Through case-based peer reviews, she engages directly with fellow prosecutors to dissect the anatomy of high-stakes financial crimes.

ACCOUNTABLE DECISIONS

Her work focuses on evaluating how partner countries handle organised crime. Through these evaluations, she helps implement concrete improvements: setting clear investigative objectives, establishing transparent criteria for appointing professionals, and building resilient legal strategies. By shifting towards digital frameworks that prevent decisions from being altered retroactively, these transparent changes protect both the citizens seeking justice and the integrity of the professionals. Different environments, different cultures, different history do not make judicial cooperation always easy. But all it takes are good cases where it works – optimism is needed in this field.

“ I think one thing I'm proud of from my experience as a TAIEX expert is being able to extract relevant and thorough information in a way that in my field, in prosecution, is not always easy... it was the set-up of the mission, allowing us to meet as peers and discuss in a setting that's kind of intimate and honest in a way. ”

“ I had been for a week in a very intense mission, with more than 25 meetings and more than 2500 pages to go through. The day after returning home, a colleague desperately asked me for help in his extradition case. He was in court. He had tried to get vital information for over a year and got nothing. Within an hour, he had the information. It's maybe a small example, but for me it was a tangible result. ”

EMPOWERING PROSECUTORS

A relentless prosecutor can bring corruption to light, but their work ends at the courtroom doors. To ensure the public truly believes justice works, the final responsibility rests with the judges who must preside with integrity over these cases.

HONEST DIALOGUE



FRANCESCO FLORIT
TAIEX EXPERT FROM ITALY
Supreme Court of Cassation

When Francesco, an Italian Supreme Court judge, was invited to speak about judicial efficiency at a TAIEX workshop in Warsaw, he accepted with a sense of pride, responsibility and recognition that promoting EU standards requires credibility. While no jurisdiction can be the ideal benchmark in the field, he realised that the rule of law is not about projecting perfection; it is about a commitment to continuous improvement.

“ Honesty is fundamental. If you are honest and true to yourself, you will be honest and true to your interlocutors. By doing this, you get credibility. The entire mechanism is based on trust and credibility, not on pure knowledge. ”

RULE OF LAW, RULE OF ALL

Rule of law is not only a word for institutions, but for each citizen, as each of us participates in building the rule of law in our own country. These shared rights, this hard-won trust is the ultimate foundation for our European future, a lived reality that protects us all.

CREDIBILITY THROUGH HONESTY

This honesty became the foundation for genuine dialogue. Francesco realised that national pride may mask systemic weaknesses, ultimately hindering real reform and engaged in open and frank dialogue among equals. With colleagues from Eastern Partnership countries, they dissected their shared operational hurdles—daunting case backlogs, complex procedural delays, and the universal struggle to balance swift verdicts with the absolute right to a fair trial. By addressing these issues openly, they discovered that justice systems across the continent are essentially navigating the same turbulent waters. This shared vulnerability instantly broke down institutional walls. It transformed the missions from a standard one-way instruction into a dynamic exchange of practical strategies, applicable across the continent.

“ Learning together in the European context does not mean that you have to copy what you see in other countries. You have to develop your own way. But you can do that only if you open your mind, open your culture. If I had had TAIEX 20 or 30 years ago, I would have been for sure a better judge. ”

TRANSPARENT & ACCOUNTABLE

Better services, less waste, institutions that work

Trust is the vital currency of a functioning society, earned through institutions that deliver: when a mayor relies on effective control and audit to build new infrastructure; when citizens deposit savings knowing their currency holds its value; when a war-torn nation finds the financial backing to rebuild. These moments define if societies thrive or fracture.

While the previous chapter explored how TAIEX secures borders against crime, safety is only the foundation. Prosperity builds the house. In an interconnected world, vulnerability in one nation—whether from changing climate, soaring inflation, opaque public spending, or protectionist barriers—can trigger continental shockwaves. These systemic risks do not just harm markets; they erode the social contract between governments and their people.

For 30 years, through targeted peer-to-peer exchanges, TAIEX has worked to strengthen the institutional backbone required to build robust nations. It demands experts designing climate governance, meticulous auditors ensuring taxpayer funds are never diverted, and central bankers fiercely protecting monetary policy. It calls for innovative risk experts shielding markets from conflict, and administrators opening borders to the free movement of the Single Market.

By demystifying complex directives and building mutual trust, these experts create more than just wealthy nations; they build accountability into systems. They forge a continuous chain ensuring that institutions deliver expected outcomes—and answer for them. This is the sustainable, united Europe where opportunity is secure and accessible to all.



ACCOUNTABLE PUBLIC FUNDS

MIOARA DIACONESCU
TAIEX EXPERT FROM ROMANIA

Central Harmonisation Unit for Public Internal Audit,
Ministry of Finance

TRANSPARENT SPENDING

A government cannot build schools, hospitals, or modern infrastructure if its internal finances are leaking. Twenty years ago, during Romania's own EU accession, aligning financial control mechanisms with European standards was paramount. Mioara attended then her first TAIEX event feeling like a child on the first day of school—overwhelmed by information, discovering new rules, meeting other professionals. The subject was structural funds. She returned to her office emotional, realising Romania's work was only beginning.

“ TAIEX was probably the most help received at that time: immediate, punctual, tangible, very focused. The immediate connection with professionals was so helpful. The energy received was incredible. Over the past 15 years, we consolidated this system. Now in Romania around 91% of the local administrative units have access to internal audit.

Today, she is the expert other countries turn to. Through TAIEX workshops with Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, Moldova, she shares Romania's hard-won experience. Internal audit reports identify weaknesses in procurement and provide immediate recommendations to improve these systems. The impact is tangible. Mayors can identify procurement vulnerabilities before they escalate. Payments arrive on time. Services become predictable. Citizens receive what they were promised.

” “ You have to inspire the others to see that this is a very good goal. And you have to put all your energy and all your efforts in this process, because it's very good at the end. Happy mayor, better services, happy citizens.

TANGIBLE REFORMS

For Mioara, the greatest satisfaction comes from measuring the journey made and how she can support the neighbours move through the same journey Romania travelled—from confusion to competence, from beneficiary to contributor. Because transparent public finance is the foundation that makes every other reform possible.

Ensuring that government ministries and local municipalities spend transparently secures the domestic budget. Protecting the entire national economy from inflation and political interference demands a fiercely independent monetary anchor.



MACRO-ECONOMIC STABILITY

KLAAS KNOT

TAIEX EXPERT FROM THE NETHERLANDS

De Nederlandsche Bank

A thriving economy relies on a stable currency. Even if a government spends its budget transparently, economic stability is instantly undermined if money supply becomes subject of political manipulation. Klaas travels to partner countries like Montenegro to advocate for a non-negotiable pillar of European integration: the absolute independence of the national central bank.

INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS

“ There was one moment when an authority told me: « this is my decision and I don’t have to explain it. » That really got me going — because power should never be unchecked. However much power you hold, you have to be accountable. You have to be transparent. You have to explain your decisions. ”

Through high-level TAIEX peer reviews, Klaas shares the vital legal mechanisms that protect central banks from external pressures. Focusing on Chapter 17 on Economic and monetary policy *acquis*, he addresses appointment procedures, financial autonomy, and rigorous public transparency. Klaas emphasises that independence is not a privilege for bankers; it is a vital protective shield for citizens. When a central bank is credible, it lowers the cost of fighting inflation, attracts foreign investment, and secures the broader financial system.

“ A strong and independent central bank will always take the interests of its citizens seriously in terms of protecting the value of the currency, protecting the value of deposits, the value of savings, the value of pensions... To see that development taking place in a country like Montenegro, growing slowly but gradually to the recognition of the importance of central bank independence — that is very very satisfactory. ”

PROTECTING YOUR SAVINGS

Stability in Europe can be ensured if all European countries work towards financial and price stability, and the role of independent central banks is crucial. They are a necessary, but not always sufficient for financial resilience, particularly in times of war and conflict.



FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

SINA NASSIRY
TAIEX EXPERT FROM FRANCE

Caisse Centrale de Réassurance

When war strikes, physical infrastructure is destroyed, but the financial infrastructure can collapse just as quickly. Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, international insurers withdrew, leaving the nation unable to underwrite reconstruction projects. Sina stepped in through TAIEX to help design a public reinsurance mechanism capable of absorbing the unimaginable financial costs of conflict.

REBUILDING STRENGTH

“ I clearly feel pride... because the insurance industry suffers from bad reputation. So definitely it was a way to show that insurance has a special role in rebuilding resilience, rebuilding strengths in a particular context. ”

France’s reinsurance system for natural disasters is built on solidarity: a mandatory premium charged on all property policies creates a self-sustaining fund that pays claims when catastrophe strikes. The government does not intervene annually. The system spreads risk so no single loss collapses the mechanism. Adapting this to war risk was never attempted before. The reality check came fast. Ukrainian officials reminded Sina of the brutal constraints: “Half of our budget is for military expenditures. We need this tool as cheap as possible. We cannot afford the best option now.”

“ By implementing a war risk insurance solution, the Ukrainian authorities enable businesses to be covered against damages due to missiles, drones and rocket hits. The compensation will help in rebuilding and reducing the business interruption period and improve the resilience of the local economy. ”

ENABLING RECONSTRUCTION

The constraints forced practical design choices, proving European cooperation works precisely because it adapts proven models to real needs.

When institutions continue functioning even under artillery fire, they earn trust through delivery when survival depends on it. Once financial stability is secured, economies can open borders to regional integration and trade.



OPENING THE MARKET

UWE MICHAEL NEUMANN
TAIEX EXPERT FROM GERMANY

Ministry of Finance and for Europe, Federal State of
Brandenburg

Economic resilience is fundamentally about growth, and in Europe, the Single Market is a major driver for growth. Expanding the four fundamental freedoms to new partner countries requires dismantling complex regulatory barriers. Uwe Michael has spent over a decade using TAIEX to help candidate countries align their legal frameworks with the EU Services Directive, opening the door to cross-border prosperity.

FREE MOVEMENT

“ I think it’s very important to be present in these countries to show that we are there and that we are interested in the countries because we tend to forget that we are in a competition... with other [influences]. ”

The technical work is demanding: implementing the right of establishment, ensuring mutual recognition of qualifications, replacing protectionist policies with transparent competition. What Uwe shares is Brandenburg’s practical experience—balancing consumer protection against unnecessary bureaucracy, building one-stop shops that simplify registration, ensuring that when businesses cross borders, they operate under the same principles of fairness that define the European Union.

SHARED PROSPERITY

“ EU enlargement is not a zero-sum bargain—everybody will profit, will develop, will grow. It’s not that you have to give up something so that others can have more. Everybody will rise. ”

Countries implementing Single Market rules attract more investment, access larger markets, and offer lower prices through competition. When Europe opens its doors and standardises its rules, every participating nation grows stronger together. Once transparent market rules enable fair competition, countries can coordinate governance frameworks to prevent duplication and maximise collective impact.



CROSS-COUNTRY – CROSS- GOVERNMENT

VIOLETA PHILIPPITSCH
TAIEX EXPERT FROM AUSTRIA
Environment Agency

CLIMATE ACTION EFFICIENCY

Environmental protection and climate policy are major considerations any growing economy. As markets integrate and trade expands, isolated environmental policies become ineffective against intensified economic output and global challenges. Tackling climate action in departmental silos— with environmental ministries acting alone disconnected from energy, transport, or finance colleagues – was the norm in many Western Balkan countries. For Violeta, aligning candidate countries with EU integrated policies was about more than just acting on climate; it was about securing the region’s entire future.

“ ***The Western Balkans are a region with enormous potential; aligning with EU standards not only benefits the environment but also strengthens governance, stability and long-term economic development in the region. So for me, helping them to build their institutions, their data systems and policies needed for effective climate action is both meaningful and impactful work.*** ”

Through the joint TRATOLOW and TAIEX partnership, from 2021 to 2024, Violeta facilitated extensive regional cooperation, coordinating 42 events that brought together 5,500 participants and 286 experts from nearly every EU member state. These missions were never top-down lectures. Instead, they were highly interactive platforms: people trust solutions when they come from colleagues who have already faced the same challenges. By ensuring such space for gathering and exchange, TAIEX ensures complex climate directives translate into practical, localised actions, creating a lasting network of professionals dedicated to European climate neutrality.

“ ***Climate policy is increasingly becoming seen as a cross-government priority rather than a topic limited only to environmental ministries. There was much stronger coordination and cooperation between different ministries and stakeholders to address climate challenges in a more integrated way.*** ”

COORDINATED GOVERNANCE

By securing the environment, building transparent institutions, and opening fair markets, Europe ensures its systemic foundations remain strong. But the ultimate measure of these resilient systems is not found in economic data; it is found in how they directly improve the everyday, lived experience of the citizens relying on them.

HEALTHIER & GREENER

Better healthcare, cleaner air, protected nature

Health and a safe environment are not luxuries. They are the foundations of a well-functioning state at the service of its citizens, protecting their health and quality of life.

When a construction worker in Bosnia and Herzegovina goes home safe from mesothelioma because asbestos standards now match European levels. Ukrainian medical teams evacuate over 6,000 patients to EU facilities for specialised care. A young Moldovan farmer secures fair funding to plant modern orchards. Balkan produce shifts from contaminated crops to exports meeting EU safety standards. Greek firefighting forces cross the Mediterranean to help Cyprus suppress catastrophic wildfires. These moments prove that European integration is measured not by economic growth alone, but by how it elevates daily lives of Europeans anywhere on the continent.

While the previous chapters explored how TAIEX secures the economic and institutional engines of a country, prosperity means little without the physical well-being to enjoy it, or the natural landscapes to sustain it. For thirty years, TAIEX has supported this vital work through the steady alignment of health systems, agricultural standards, and environmental protection networks.

This chapter brings together professionals who turn regulations into real benefits. Social experts co-constructing resilient healthcare frameworks. Health officials modernising emergency responses under extreme wartime pressure. Agronomists ensuring food safety. Civil protection coordinators mounting cross-border disaster responses.

By sharing their knowledge and acting with profound solidarity, these experts prove that technical cooperation goes far beyond legislative alignment. It is about nurturing the natural environment, safeguarding vulnerable populations, and building a European community where everyone—no matter where they live—shares the same standard of dignity, safety, and care.



FROM VULNERABILITY TO SOLIDARITY

ANNE BEINIER
TAIEX EXPERT FROM FRANCE
Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

Anne's work in social protection is grounded in personal experience. Having faced serious health challenges at a young age, she experienced firsthand what strong healthcare systems mean—and what they protect against. That experience shaped her entire approach to European cooperation.

PROTECTING PEOPLE

“ What drives me is starting from real needs and field-level issues to co-construct more resilient systems, to guarantee better healthcare and fairer chances for everyone. It is by working together, peer-to-peer, that we make this solidarity tangible. ”

As a TAIEX expert since 2020, her missions across Georgia, Armenia, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina deliver tangible results. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, implementing stricter asbestos standards means construction workers now receive proper protective equipment and rigorous medical follow-ups that prevent mesothelioma—a disease that once meant certain death. In Armenia, improved care quality gives patients better recovery chances. In Kosovo, fairer pension rights guarantee dignity in old age. Digital health insurance platforms now allow thousands to receive benefits without lengthy bureaucratic delays.

What makes TAIEX different? Continuity. Sustained partnership. Anne has supported the same Georgian institution for over three years, building deep relationships of trust that open doors to broader European programmes. It is during these returns to the field that the direct impact on people's lives becomes visible — when technical recommendations translate into better healthcare and European standards become local protection.

PROTECTING RIGHTS

“ The fundamental stake is human: it is about allowing the populations of these countries to benefit from the same rights and the same level of protection as all European citizens. ”

For Anne, a Europe that works is not one that imposes. It is a Europe that coordinates, cooperates, accompanies. A partnership of equals where solidarity becomes real through shared expertise serving in the field.



FRONTLINE CARE

MARYNA SLOBODNICHENKO
TAIEX BENEFICIARY FROM UKRAINE

Ministry of Health

Health systems are fundamentally designed to protect, but in times of war, they become the ultimate frontline of survival. For Maryna, adapting to European medical standards was not a distant procedural goal; it was an urgent necessity to save lives under unimaginable pressure. Through TAIEX, Ukraine achieved sweeping transformations across its medical landscape, proving that European integration can rapidly accelerate even amidst the devastation of conflict.

SAVING LIVES EVERY DAY

“ Aligning standards with European norms lays the groundwork for greater public confidence in Ukraine’s healthcare system for years to come. ”

This long-term vision drove systemic shifts across critical areas. The cooperation facilitated a faster 112 emergency system, modernised ambulance carriages and overhauled the pharmaceutical sector to ensure the quality and availability of medicines. It introduced new EU educational standards, while the International Medical Partnership connected hospitals so doctors could get training in Europe and acquire additional knowledge. Beyond these structural reforms, the scale of European support provided the comprehensive framework needed to address the immediate, devastating fallout of the war—extending a lifeline to those who cannot be treated at home and addressing the invisible psychological wounds of conflict.

“ A humanitarian mission plays a very important role... More than 6,000 people are evacuated to many countries of the European Union for medical assistance. More than 200 mental health centres are opening in Ukraine... This support is not isolated, but part of a long-term, structured commitment to meaningful change. ”

CRISIS SOLIDARITY

European healthcare solidarity and support prove that systems can function even under extreme conditions. When societies build this kind of resilience into their foundation, they create stability that allows people to survive crisis and rebuild futures.



RURAL TRANSFORMATION

JERZY BOGDANOWICZ
TAIEX EXPERT FROM POLAND

Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture

European integration has the power to completely transform the fabric of rural life. Jerzy witnessed this firsthand in Poland, where EU support helped turn struggling agricultural communities into modern, thriving success stories over the last 25 years. Today, he channels that experience into helping Moldova prepare for its own European future, offering partners not just technical legislative assistance, but genuine inspiration and proof that the hard work pays off.

INSPIRING PROGRESS

“ The value of the agri-food export in Poland today is 11 times higher than 20 years ago. Sometimes I visit the smaller villages somewhere in Poland where I have been 25 years ago. I cannot recognise them because huge changes were made using the money from the EU... ”

Jerzy recognised early on that rural development requires more than just financial aid; it demands deep, structural mentorship. The challenges span from the daily economic struggles of local farmers to highly complex administrative hurdles, such as establishing the strict accreditation criteria needed for a national agency to safely manage EU pre-accession funds, designing fair merit-based systems, creating start-up measures supporting young entrepreneurs. He works alongside Moldovan ministries to untangle these complexities and implement good solutions. Instead of simply handing over a list of EU directives to be copied, he breaks down the machinery of integration.

“ They told me: You are an eye-opener, because you don’t only tell us how something should be done, but you give explanations, what is the reason, what is the source of a solution, what will be the results, how it should be prepared in a way that such regulation will give the possibility to achieve the objectives set by the Ministry. ”

RURAL PROSPERITY

Jerzy’s final message was one of optimism confirming the benefits of European integration today and in the future—a testament to the enduring, transformative promise of the European Union, proving that a more prosperous life is entirely within reach.

HEALTHY HARVESTS



DIONYSSIS VLACHOS
TAIEX EXPERT FROM GREECE

Ministry of Environment and Energy / Green Fund

It may sound unusual, but food safety is one of the most direct and intimate ways European policy touches people's lives. It ensures that the meals served to children are healthy, that agricultural practices are environmentally sustainable, and that farmers can compete on an equal footing. Dionyssis travels across the globe to share the core principles of EU food safety legislation. His goal is not to impose harsh restrictions, but to enable healthier citizens and thriving rural economies.

HEALTHIER FAMILIES

“ What matters most for me is not copy-paste of EU rules but understanding the principles behind them. What are the principles? Risk assessment, traceability, safety, consumers more protected and transparency and seeing them being applied in different societies, different conditions. ”

Implementing these rigorous standards in countries with vastly different climates, crops, and social structures is challenging, but possible. In the Balkans, improved monitoring allowed authorities to identify unsafe practices early and guide farmers toward safer alternatives. The impact was tangible: produce that once failed safety standards due to excessive pesticide residues could now be grown, sold domestically, and exported. When countries successfully harmonise their control systems, food safety stops being perceived as an administrative trade barrier and becomes a shared responsibility.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

“ Harmonised food safety practices create an optimum market trade. When the producers follow comparable rules and control systems, competition is based on quality and efficiency... This protects consumers while giving the responsible farmers better access to markets and fairer chances. ”

Dionyssis's most meaningful TAIEX moments? Making friends with fellow experts: travelling together to farms, sitting at the same table, laughing, discussing problems and solutions.



SHIELDING NATURE

EVANGELOS ANDREOU

TAIEX EXPERT & BENEFICIARY FROM CYPRUS

Fire Protection Sector, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment Department

Cyprus is at the frontline of Europe's climate crisis. Mediterranean wildfires—once seasonal threats—now burn with increasing frequency and intensity, destroying forests, threatening communities, destabilising entire ecosystems. For small countries, fighting these mega-fires alone is impossible. Resources are finite. The terrain is complex. Fires cross borders faster than national response systems can mobilise.

COORDINATED DISASTER RESPONSE

“ Cooperation at the European level acts as a force multiplier... TAIEX acts as the catalyst that transforms individual, national efforts into a coordinated, effective, and resilient European framework for preventing and managing climate-driven disasters. ”

”

The transformation is comprehensive. Cyprus now implements integrated fire management across prevention, readiness, and suppression. Vegetation management covers 245 forest communities. Advanced technology—unmanned aerial vehicles, electro-optical sensors—enables real-time monitoring. Personnel train continuously in prescribed burning and rapid initial attack strategies learned from partners across the Mediterranean. When a catastrophic fire struck Cyprus, rescEU mechanisms deployed: Spanish and Swedish teams were ready to assist, Greek ground firefighting forces crossed the Mediterranean, working shoulder-to-shoulder with Cypriot teams to suppress the flames. This is European solidarity proven through coordinated action when survival depends on it.

“ Cyprus is a natural living laboratory for adaptation strategies. By documenting and disseminating these experiences, Cyprus can support other member states in preparing for climate conditions that are likely to become more frequent and severe in the coming decades. ”

”

ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE

When expertise built on lived experience becomes transformation, Europe's strength is tangible through solidarity and cooperation for clean air, safe food, healthy forests and dignified life for all Europeans.

SMARTER & SIMPLER

Better education, smoother borders, safer travel

The benefits of European integration are revealed in ordinary moments. A university degree earned in one capital opens job opportunities in another. A high-speed train operates under identical safety standards whether traveling through domestic territory or across international borders. Aviation authorities share real-time threat intelligence so passengers boarding anywhere enjoy the same safety standard along their journey.

These moments of seamless connection are the result of an “invisible infrastructure” of shared rules, technical standards, and mutual trust built through thirty years of dedicated TAIEX peer-to-peer cooperation. In a rapidly evolving landscape, making Europe Smarter means building the digital and physical networks that can withstand the pressures of the modern world. Smarter and simpler means transforming complex procedures into streamlined systems that enable trade and help people move forward with confidence.

This chapter examines mobility—the capacity to move goods efficiently, travel safely, and develop skills that translate across borders – through the experience of five experts who are architects of connectivity. From agricultural trade specialists to border management professionals, railway safety authorities to aviation experts and education reformers, they are helping partner countries align with European standards as a concrete driver of prosperity. By harmonising the rules for our roads, rails, skies, and schools, they ensure that the only thing moving faster than the people are the ideas and dreams they carry with them.



LINKING COMMUNITIES THROUGH TRADE

BARTEL DE MUYNCK
TAIEX EXPERT FROM BELGIUM
Agency for Agriculture and Fisheries

Building a seamless Europe often starts in complex and sensitive contexts. In Cyprus, the Green Line is a unique line between the two Cypriot communities. It is legally not a border, yet carries significant practical implications. For local farmers in the Turkish Cypriot community, this line poses real challenges to accessing the EU's Single Market. For nearly two decades, Bartel has played a key role in facilitating this access, helping these producers navigate compliance with rigorous EU food safety, traceability and plant health standards, and thereby contributing to the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community.

UNLOCKING TRADE

“ The most rewarding part is that you have immediate results. You see the harvesting, you inspect the potatoes, you see also the buyer, and then you see the trucks crossing the Green Line. ”

Getting those trucks across requires commitment and hands-on mentorship. Bartel works directly in the orchards and fields, teaching farmers how to manage maximum pesticide residue levels, utilise EU-certified seeds, and maintain the precise plant passports and labelling necessary. The transformation is palpable. Farmers who once relied on middlemen now negotiate directly with buyers. The produce crossing the Green Line no longer stays in the southern part of the island; it meets the high-quality standards required to be exported onwards to Germany, Greece, and beyond. This trade is so vital that during the COVID-19 lockdowns, when the crossing was entirely closed to the public, Bartel was authorised to cross the buffer zone every day to ensure the potato trade survived.

“ All the farmers, they ask me what's the best there, what can I do, how do I have to spray. We don't do only the work we have to do, we explain how the quarantine pests spread, what they have to do to avoid it. So that's a very good job that TAIEX allows us to do. ”

TRUSTED STANDARDS

TAIEX facilitates economic growth, proving that smooth, standardised trade ultimately benefits communities. This commitment to breaking down barriers is only one step; the true promise of a seamless Europe lies in transforming obstacles into professional, invisible gateways.



ONE FOR ALL, ALL FOR ONE

GREGOR JANC

TAIEX EXPERT FROM SLOVENIA

Service of the Director General of the Police

For millions of Europeans, the ultimate symbol of a simpler life is the ability to cross a border without even realising it. But making a border “invisible” for travellers requires an incredibly sophisticated, high-tech infrastructure behind the scenes. Gregor has spent years through TAIEX helping partner countries from the Western Balkans to the Caucasus prepare for this transformation—sharing the exact “Schengen Spirit” that defines a modern, open Europe.

SEAMLESS PASSAGE

“ One is doing border control for everyone. Whenever you check a person, then he or she enters this big area. We have to trust those performing those checks. One for all. ”

”

Gregor’s mentorship focuses on the delicate balance between openness and safety through Integrated Border Management. This requires a fundamental shift from “static” to “dynamic” control—moving away from traditional checkpoints toward a system powered by real-time risk analysis and inter-agency cooperation. He works with border police and customs officials to implement digital surveillance tools that identify potential threats long before they reach the crossing point, allowing legitimate travellers to pass through without delay. By professionalising these services and ensuring that police, customs, and veterinary authorities work as a single, coordinated unit, he helps partner countries reduce wait times for families and businesses while simultaneously strengthening the fight against cross-border crime. His missions prove that a smarter border is one that knows exactly when to open its gates and when to close them, ensuring that the privilege of free movement is built on a foundation of absolute security.

“ When you see a border stop being a barrier and start being a professional gateway, you see the true face of European integration. It’s about giving people back their time and their freedom, without ever compromising their safety. ”

”

INTEGRATED SECURITY

Gregor ensures that the privilege of free movement is built on a foundation of absolute security. By perfecting these professional gateways, he guarantees that once a traveller or a shipment enters the European area, they can move forward with total reliability, whether they are travelling by rail or by road.

CONNECTED TRACKS



FABIO CROCCO
TAIEX EXPERT FROM ITALY
Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport

Italy was a global pioneer in introducing free competition to high-speed rail, creating a modern, efficient, and highly reliable network. For Fabio, keeping this vast institutional knowledge locked within national borders was a missed opportunity. He saw TAIEX as a way to serve not just Italian citizens, but the citizens of a larger, unified Europe—helping partner countries modernise their railways while avoiding the costly mistakes of the past.

UNINTERRUPTED CONNECTIONS

“ Creating standards means to enhance competitiveness and to give opportunities to all the companies to enter other markets. ”

Building this unified network requires creating entirely new institutions from the ground up. In many partner countries, independent railway safety authorities and investigation offices simply did not exist. Fabio’s mentorship is intensely hands-on. He recently travelled to Kosovo multiple times to share best practices with local officials how to establish and govern a dedicated safety agency. The collaboration culminated in a study visit to Italy, where the Kosovan team studied the Italian agency firsthand so they could introduce the same level of rigorous standards back home. Beyond preventing accidents, train transport rule standardisation opens the door to fair market competition, drastically improving the quality of passenger services, while advancing Europe’s broader environmental goals, as rail remains fundamentally greener than road or air travel. This deep structural alignment ensures that when a train crosses a border, it does not just change jurisdictions—it maintains an unbroken chain of safety, efficiency and sustainability.

“ Better connectivity in the field of railways means that we have the possibility to travel all around Europe with a safe system, at low cost, and therefore to have the opportunity to experience other realities, to exchange cultures, to know each other, to become friends, to reduce conflict. ”

IRONCLAD SAFETY

It is a commitment to seamless travel that must remain just as ironclad when the journey leaves the tracks and takes to the skies.



TRUSTED SKIES

EVGHENI KOSTEȚKI
TAIEX BENEFICIARY FROM MOLDOVA
Civil Aviation Authority

European mobility relies on an invisible web of trust. Whether boarding a flight in Chișinău or Paris, passengers need the absolute certainty that their journey meets the exact same rigorous safety standards. For Evgheni, guaranteeing this level of security is more than a regulatory requirement—it is a fundamental mission that requires deep, systemic cooperation with European partners.

“ For us, it is very important that we are already viewed by our European partners as equals in terms of implementation of flight safety. This step represents a validation of our team’s work and reflects the image of the aviation authorities. ”

Through TAIEX, Moldova partnered directly with aviation experts from Romania to draft a comprehensive, strategic flight safety programme. The collaboration was structured as a highly practical, three-step exchange. First, Romanian specialists travelled to Chișinău to assess local systems. Then, Moldovan experts travelled to Bucharest to gain critical on-site operational experience. Finally, the teams reunited to write and consolidate a robust national framework designed to continuously analyse risks and enforce strict preventative measures. This peer-to-peer mentorship fundamentally elevated Moldova’s aviation capabilities, proving that true integration happens when technical knowledge is shared transparently across borders.

“ Every time any passenger, any citizen comes on board an aircraft from the Republic of Moldova, they are just as safe as in any corner of the European Union. This is our mission as a core authority. ”

UNCOMPROMISING SAFETY

By ensuring the skies remain secure, Evgheni builds the trust required for a truly mobile continent—a place where the only thing moving faster than the people are the recognized skills and ideas they carry with them.



SKILLS FOR TOMORROW

ALEXANDER KOHLER
TAIEX EXPERT FROM AUSTRIA

Federal Ministry of Women, Science and Research

A thriving economy cannot be built on outdated knowledge. Alexander has spent years working through TAIEX to help partner countries fundamentally rethink education and prepare youth for the future. His mission is not to impose rigid academic models, but to help institutions adapt to rapidly changing realities—ensuring that young people can build prosperous, stable careers without having to leave their home countries.

RECOGNISED SKILLS

“ What makes me most proud of working with TAIEX is seeing self-reflection happening in practice when institutions start asking themselves new questions or are open to doing things slightly differently. These changes are often gradual, but they have a lasting effect.

This peer-to-peer approach leads to life-changing results across vastly different regions. In Djibouti, Alexander helped create formal validation procedures for young people who had gained practical skills through part-time jobs, volunteering, or family businesses, but lacked the formal documents to prove it. In the Republic of Moldova, his exchanges helped schools rapidly embrace digital learning to keep education alive during the unprecedented COVID lockdowns. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a rigorous two-year collaboration strengthened the accreditation of higher education degrees, ensuring those diplomas are universally trusted by both students and employers.

” “ As trust in education system grows, companies are more willing to hire locally and invest in young graduates. For communities, this means more skilled jobs, fewer young people having to leave and a stronger cooperation between schools, training centres and local employers. ”

TRUST IN EDUCATION

By modernising these educational frameworks, TAIEX tackles youth unemployment at its root and prevents brain drain. It gives the next generation the confidence to navigate a seamless Europe.

BEYOND EUROPE

Stronger partnerships, shared prosperity

The challenges facing institutions today do not recognise borders or regions. A laboratory analysing disease samples operates under the same scientific principles whether located in Tunis or Vienna. A court protecting human rights may have to solve similar legal conundrums whether in Beirut or Paris. A regulatory authority navigating new technologies confronts the same questions about innovation and safety whether in Brasilia or Tallin. Geography may separate these institutions, but the fundamental questions they address often converge.

TAIEX's reach extends across the Southern Mediterranean, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Caucasus, and the Middle East. The mechanism remains the same: peer-to-peer exchange between practitioners who understand the daily realities of institutional work. Partner countries are not candidates for EU membership, yet they seek the same goal—institutions that function effectively, protect and serve their citizens reliably, and operate with integrity. The exchange works because it addresses concrete problems for which technical expertise can offer a solution.

These partnerships rest on a practical foundation. European experts bring tested solutions to problems they have already solved. Partner countries bring their own innovations developed under different constraints. The exchange is direct: workshops where officials compare actual procedures, study visits where administrators see systems in operation, technical missions where specialists work through specific challenges together. No templates or predefined recommendations—just professionals helping professionals.

This chapter follows five such exchanges. They span veterinary services and judicial reform, vocational education and digital governance, industrial standards and AI regulation. Each operates in a different region, tackles a different sector, and adapts European experience to a different context. Together, they demonstrate that effective institutions share common principles regardless of where they operate, and that the work of building them is always collaborative and grounded in the recognition that good governance serves people, not systems.



HEALTHY NEIGHBOURS

MOHAMED NACEUR BACCAR
TAIEX BENEFICIARY FROM TUNISIA
Centre National de Veille Zoosanitaire (CNVZ)

Disease knows no borders, and in a globally connected world, the health of one nation is also the health of its neighbours. For Mohamed Naceur Baccar, the Director of Veterinary Services in Tunisia, TAIEX is the essential bridge that allows Mediterranean partners to speak the same technical language of health safety. By aligning Tunisian veterinary controls with European standards, Mohamed ensures that the food on local tables—and the livestock moving across borders—meets a universal benchmark of health.

ONE HEALTH SHIELD

“ When we talk about animal health, we are talking about human health—this is the ‘One Health’ concept. By strengthening our veterinary services through this peer-to-peer exchange, we are protecting our citizens and opening new horizons for our economy. ”

The core of Mohamed’s work focuses on building a robust biosecurity shield that extends far beyond Tunisia’s borders. Through targeted TAIEX missions, he has worked with EU experts to modernise Tunisia’s response to zoonoses—diseases that jump from animals to humans—and to refine the certification processes for animal products. As Tunisia sits at the crossroads of Europe and Africa, having laboratories and inspectors that use European protocols creates a “circle of trust”. This technical alignment prevents regional health crises and ensures that Tunisian exports are recognised as safe by international markets.

“ TAIEX gives us the tools to harmonise our legislation, but more importantly, it builds a community of professionals who trust each other. When we work together, we are solving problems that affect the entire Mediterranean region. ”

MEDITERRANEAN BRIDGE

By professionalising these veterinary networks, Mohamed ensures that the physical foundations of life in the Southern Neighbourhood are as safe and resilient as those within the EU. This regional stability is the first step in a broader global journey—one that extends from the health of livestock and local residents to the preservation of the planet’s most vital resources.



GATEWAY TO GLOBAL GROWTH

MONA-ANITTA RIIHIMÄKI
TAIEX EXPERT FROM FINLAND

School of Biotechnology and Natural Resources,
Häme University of Applied Sciences

In the heart of Paraguay, one of Latin America's largest green investments—the Paracel cellulose project—is set to create 40,000 jobs. However, without a workforce trained in modern, sustainable forest management, that potential risked being lost. For Mona, TAIEX provided the platform to ensure that the green transition translated into real, life-changing opportunities for the local population.

LOCAL BRAINS, GLOBAL GAINS

“ Our mission is to educate change makers, the teachers who can mediate sustainability skills and competencies to the communities. So, to us, it really is also the sustainable way of education and the most valuable handprint we can make. ”

Mona's mission focused on a radical modernisation of Paraguay's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system. By bringing Paraguayan officials to Finland to witness simulator-based training and public-private cooperation firsthand, she helped them move away from theoretical teaching toward practical, industry-aligned education. This shift ensures that local communities—particularly in rural areas—are not just bystanders to international investment but are the primary beneficiaries of a bioeconomy that preserves ecosystems while fuelling growth. The reform creates pathways from vocational education to higher education, ensuring young people can build careers without leaving their communities.

“ Global Gateway has a very unique approach combining investment with human capital development. When forestry education is linked to the real jobs in the area and the daily life, it of course creates the inclusion of the whole community, but it also can help people to raise issues that are important in a society and not maybe so visible to the industry. ”

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY

By anchoring global investment in local expertise, Mona proves that European sustainability standards are a powerful engine for development globally. The local transition from raw natural resources to a knowledge-based economy is aided by the invisible language of standardisation, which in turn allows emerging markets to compete on the global stage.



THE GLOBAL STANDARD PROMOTER

THOMAS ZIELKE
TAIEX EXPERT FROM GERMANY

Office for National and International Standardisation Policy, Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy

GLOBAL PASSPORT

In the complex world of international commerce, products cannot move unless they speak the same technical language. A safety certificate issued in Baku must be recognised in Antwerp; a technical component made in Azerbaijan must meet the same rigorous requirements as one made in Germany. For Thomas, TAIEX is the tool that helps partner countries master this “invisible language”, transforming local industries into global competitors.

“ I am personally convinced that standardisation is a contribution to peace and prosperity in the world. What we do have to offer as Europe is a certain idea of best practice — what we can do with standardisation to create a single market. Because to bring together more than 20 economies under a rule of law and under a harmonised standardisation system is certainly an achievement that no one until now has achieved. ”

Thomas’s work in Azerbaijan focuses on shifting from a state-owned standardisation system to a private-sector model that gives businesses real participation opportunities. By helping Azerbaijan draft and execute a modern standardisation law, he enabled local companies to join international bodies like ISO and IEC, where they can contribute to global standard-setting. In Azerbaijan’s oil and gas sector, technologies used in exploration now meet internationally recognised benchmarks, opening doors to new markets while protecting consumers.

“ Innovation comes from businesses. We need to give them the freedom to develop. And that is given through standardisation. I think this system is something that Europe can export — and we will benefit from that as well. ”

MUTUAL PROSPERITY

By strengthening the rules of the global market, Thomas proves that technical cooperation creates prosperity on both sides—partner countries gain market access and stronger institutions, while Europe benefits from more reliable trading partners and expanded opportunities. Yet, as the world becomes increasingly digital, these industrial standards are now merging with a new frontier: the world of Artificial Intelligence and data governance.



ARCHITECTS OF THE ALGORITHM

CRISTINA SHIMODA UECHI
TAIEX BENEFICIARY FROM BRAZIL
Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation

In the rapidly evolving landscape of Artificial Intelligence, the challenge for governments is no longer just about technological adoption—it is about ensuring that these powerful tools are governed by human-centric values. For Cristina, TAIEX served as the critical link between the European Union’s pioneering AI Act and Latin America’s emerging digital frameworks through the EU-LAC Digital Alliance.

GLOBAL AI GOVERNANCE

“ **One key insight is that many countries, especially from the global south, are still seen mainly as sources of data in the AI ecosystem. In that sense, we found an interesting similarity with European countries, which are also concerned about data governance and ensuring fair value from data.** ”

The cooperation delivered tangible results across multiple fronts. Through TAIEX, Brazil strengthened the SCALAC supercomputing network—the Advanced Computing System for Latin America and the Caribbean—building on years of EU-LAC scientific collaboration. The Brazilian Data Protection Authority launched a regulatory sandbox that allows startups to test AI systems in supervised environments, identifying risks early while supporting innovation. TAIEX also connected research centres from the University of São Paulo to Barcelona’s Supercomputer Centre and Slovenia’s IRCAL, creating a transatlantic network of AI expertise. This was not just a one-way transfer; it was a genuine exchange where all countries shared their policy priorities and experiences in AI governance.

TRANSATLANTIC BRIDGE

“ **Without this exchange, the region could face fragmented AI regulations and weaker governance. That would increase risks for citizens and make it harder for our countries to participate fairly in the global AI economy.** ”

By bridging the digital divide across the Atlantic, Cristina proves that TAIEX’s mission has no geographical limits. This global commitment to shared values and rules-based systems reaches its final destination in the heart of the judicial system, where the ultimate protection of a citizen’s rights is determined by the integrity of the law.



THE CONSTITUTIONAL ANCHOR

JENS WOELK

TAIEX EXPERT FROM GERMANY / ITALY

Faculty of Law, University of Trento

All the digital networks, industrial standards, and health protocols in the world are only as strong as the legal systems that protect them. For Jens, an expert in comparative constitutional law, TAIEX is a tool for deep, systemic reform even in the most challenging environments. In Lebanon, a country navigating profound political and economic crises, he led a team of European experts to conduct a comprehensive functional review of the Lebanese judicial system—that became the foundation for real legislative change.

FUNCTIONING COURTS

“ In one court in the south of Lebanon, a lady, a judge came to me after our meeting and handed over to me a list and said: “Here are the things which do not work”. I was very strongly impressed because this was the first time ever that someone had prepared for this visit in such a way and took the opportunity as a judge to do so.

The review led to something unprecedented: a Justice Forum where judges, civil society organisations, bar associations, and government officials gathered for over two years of open dialogue on judicial reform. The discussions tackled the most sensitive issues—anti-corruption mechanisms, judicial independence, the appointment of judges, and prevention of political interference in court proceedings. The result was tangible: a new law on the judiciary adopted in 2025, incorporating some important recommendations of the Justice Forum. This included safeguards against political interference and to ensure efficiency in the investigations and trials.

SHARED STABILITY

“ Lebanon is a democracy, a democracy in difficult conditions, but a democracy... ”

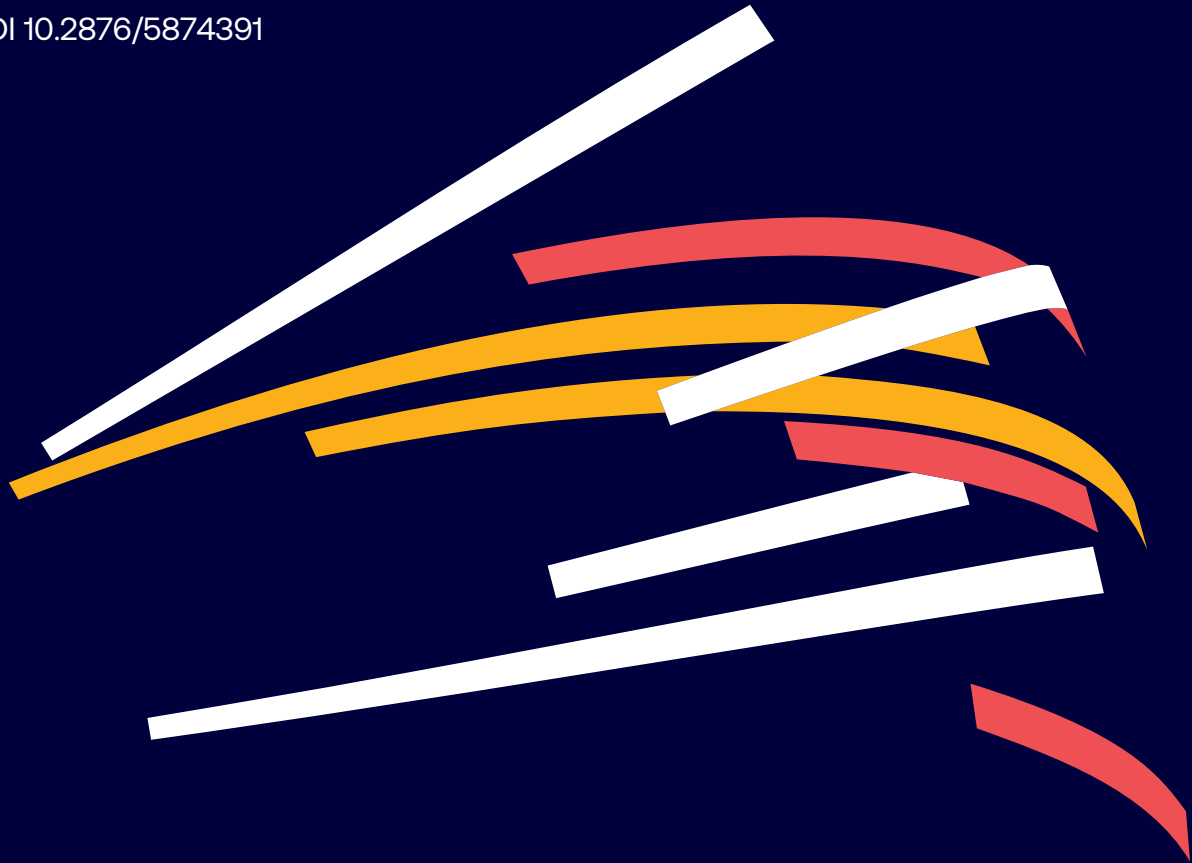
By anchoring the “Beyond Europe” journey in the fundamental rights of the individual, these exchanges provide the essential groundwork for every other success. Whether it is a forest in Paraguay, a laboratory in Tunisia, or a digital server in Brazil, every achievement in this chapter ultimately relies on a foundation of justice that allows people everywhere to move forward with dignity.

CONCLUSION

The thirty-year journey of TAIEX is a story of people—of experts meeting as peers to solve the most pressing challenges of our time. From the early days of building new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe to the modern frontiers of Artificial Intelligence and partners across six continents, this instrument has remained constant in its mission: to provide the “invisible infrastructure” of shared values and shared benefits. Whether protecting the air we breathe, the food we eat, or the digital rights we exercise, these thirty experts and their stories provide only a snapshot of all the work done through over half a million exchanges and thousands of institutions supported.

As this booklet shows, the work of building resilient institutions is never truly finished; it is a collaborative, ongoing dialogue that transcends geographies and connects people that share dedication to public service, professional commitment and expertise. TAIEX continues to evolve, adapting to the needs of Europe, its neighbours, and partners across the globe. By bridging the gaps between national borders and between technical fields, TAIEX ensures that institutions do not face the challenges of the future alone, but as a community committed to ensuring a safer, fairer, and more prosperous world.

And the story continues...



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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