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Day of Parliamentary Research
Panel II. The Role of Parliaments in International Relations

Strengthening the Capacities of National Parliaments as Actors in the
Processes of Legal Approximation and Europeanization of Domestic Legal
Orders Beyond the EU's Borders:
Methodological Challenges for EU Twinning Projects

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Introducing the research project

- **Research objective:** What is the role of parliaments as actors in the processes of approximation of third countries' legal orders with EU *acquis* through Twinning Projects (TP)? How to increase the effectiveness of Twinning cooperation?
- **Expected practical results:**
 - ✓ better understanding of the challenges of proper designing and implantation of TPs in the contexts of EaP and Western Balkan countries;
 - ✓ formulated methodological recommendations allowing the optimization of performance of TPs.



Twinning

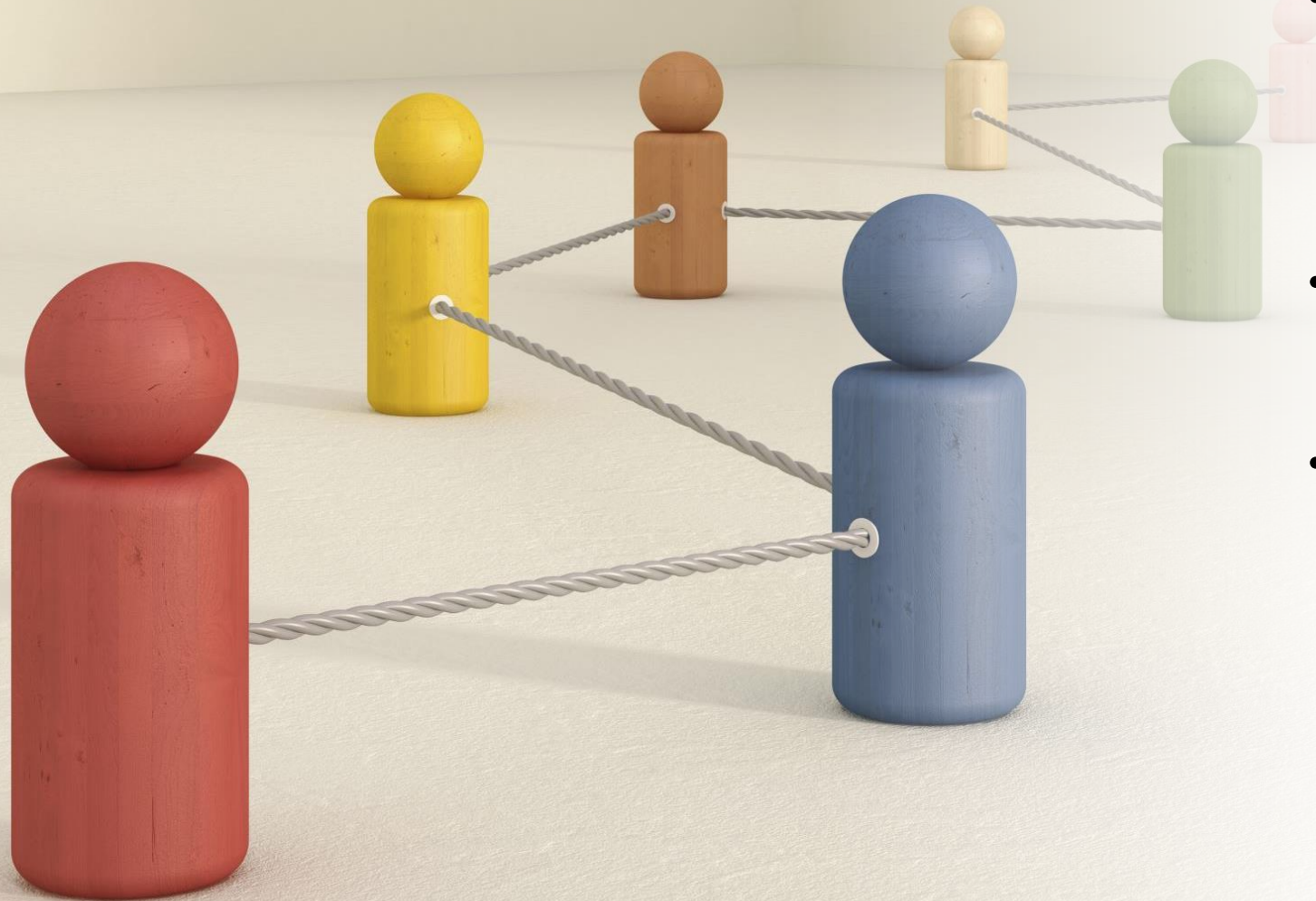
The state of the art and practical challenges

- Although Twinning instrument has been actively used for a long period of time, its **performance (especially in the non-accession context)** has not been sufficiently studied in the academic literature;
- The studies evaluating the effectiveness of TPs are usually designed as single case studies (e.g. on Serbia by Fotios Fitsilis and Aleksandra Jovanović) and address predominantly the projects targeting governmental agencies. **Comparative studies** and studies examining **domestic parliaments** as beneficiaries are scarce.
- The **methodological challenges** include: the accessibility of information related to the practice of implementation of a TP; the possibility of a longitudinal study; the problem of correct attribution of an observable change and establishing cause-and-effect relations (is it a result/impact of a TP or another factor(s)?).

Twinning Project implementation from a conceptual perspective



Conceptual and analytical frameworks

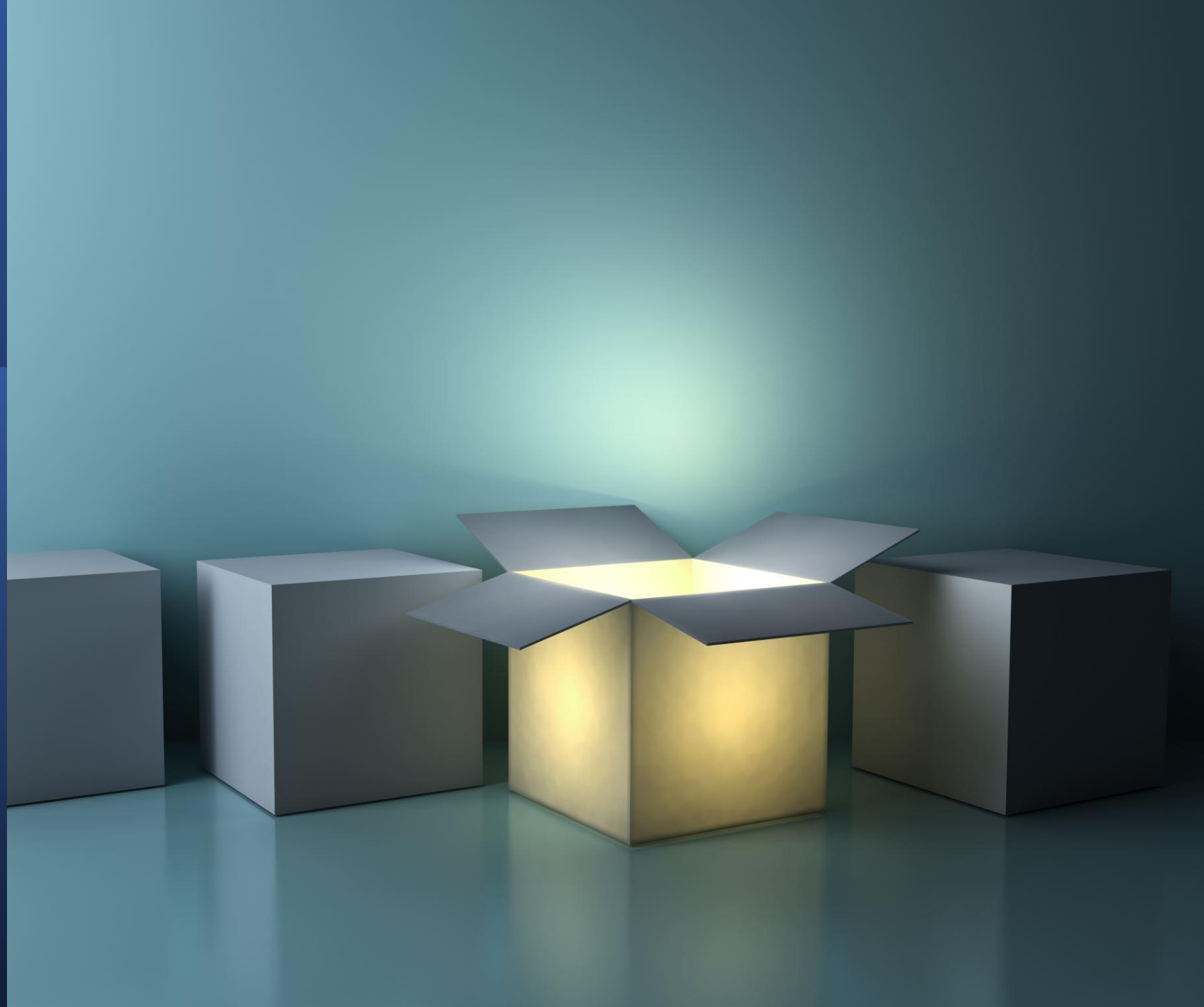


- The concept of **legal approximation in the context of Europeanization and post-socialist transition theories**: *socialization* into values, not only a formal legislative change!
- **Institutional and methodological frameworks** of legal approximation: what role for parliaments?
- **TP performance assessment**: going beyond the criterion of effectiveness (Relevance, resilience, sustainability, efficiency, cohesion, and impact as indicators of TP performance)

Selected findings:

Facilitating legal
approximation through
international
(inter-parliamentary)
cooperation:

What is to be taken into
account?





From the perspective of Europeanization theory:

Socialization processes as ones facilitated by high legitimacy, common identity, and resonance; the role of agency

From the perspective of Legal Approximation theory:

Legal approximation as a systemic change; avoiding “pathological” Europeanization; shifts in the “constitutional identity”

From the perspective of project performance assessment frameworks:

- Relevance (of objectives, methods and tools of a TP)
- Resilience (in the project design and implementation)
- Cohesion (acting with a “single voice” within a team)
- Impact and sustainability (strengthening of inter-institutional links and dialogues and formation of institutional memory)



Thank you for your attention!

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