

**CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME
FOR THE YEARS 2018-2021
BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA
AND THE GOVERNMENT OF FLANDERS**

**IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT
BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA
AND THE GOVERNMENT OF FLANDERS ON CO-OPERATION**

Riga, 9 March 2018

The ninth meeting of the Joint Commission to discuss the Co-operation Programme for the years 2018-2021 to implement the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of Flanders on Co-operation was held in Riga on 9 March 2018.

The chairperson of the Latvian delegation welcomed the Flemish delegation and presented the members of her delegation:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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| – Solveiga Šilkalna | Under-Secretary of State for European Affairs |
| – Ilze Rūse | Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia to Belgium |
| – Linda Kalēja | Second Secretary of the Western and Southern European Countries Division |

Ministry of Agriculture

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| – Diāna Stendzeniece | Senior Desk Officer of the International Affairs Division |
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Ministry of Culture

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| – Lilita Sparāne | Head of Creative Industries Division |
| – Janīna Tiškina | Senior Officer of the International Cooperation and European Union Policy Division |

Ministry of Economics

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| – Gunārs Valdmanis | Deputy Director of Energy Market and Infrastructure Department |
| – Jānis Siliņš | Deputy Head of Innovation Division |

Ministry of Education and Science

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| – Māra Katvare | Senior Expert of the Policy Initiatives and Development Department |
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Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

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|---------------------------|---|
| – Natālija Cudečka-Puriņa | Head of Environmental Quality and Waste Management Division |
| – Inese Viktorija Gropine | Project Coordinator of Project Management Division |

Ministry of Health

– Līga Šerna

Deputy Director of the European Affairs
and International Cooperation Department

Ministry of Transport

– Andris Maldups

Director of the Transit Policy Department

Ministry of Welfare

– Inēta Tāre

Director of the International Cooperation
and European Union Policy Department

Invited by the Latvian delegation:

– Christophe Van Mechelen

Honorary Consul of Latvia in the Flemish
Region

The head of the Flemish delegation thanked for the kind reception and presented the members of his delegation:

Department of Foreign Affairs

– Koen Verlaeckt

Secretary-General of the Department of
Foreign Affairs

– Yves Wantens

General Representative of the Government
of Flanders

– Stefaan De Groot

Policy Officer and secretary of the Joint
Commission

Department of Mobility and Public Works

– Katrien Criel

Policy Officer EU and International
Cooperation

Welfare, Public Health and Family Department

– Fabian Dominguez

Social Affairs and Public Health attaché

Both delegations, hereafter called the Sides, agreed upon the following:

Latvia 2030 and Flanders 2050

Concerning the future development strategies Latvia 2030 and Flanders 2050 it has been decided that both parties will exchange information about the implementation of these programs.

1 ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND FOREIGN TRADE

Both Sides shall continue exchange of expertise between the responsible institutions of Latvian and Flemish governments in investment attraction, export promotion, and other policies related to economic growth.

Joint activities aimed at promoting closer integration of industrial value chains and innovation systems of both Sides shall be encouraged.

Both Sides will support closer co-ordination of positions regarding future policies related to industrial development, innovation and digitalization of industry.

Both Sides will promote closer bilateral co-operation on implementing economic development, industrial and start-up policies. Bilateral co-operation in entrepreneurship, in particular, SME policy, increasing cross border cooperation and joint contact development between relevant stakeholders involved in developing entrepreneurship policy will be also promoted.

As far as multilateral co-operation is concerned both Sides strive for joint participation of researchers in initiatives in the field of "entrepreneurship" financed either through regional, national and/or European funding sources (ERDF, COSME, H2020 etc.).

Both Sides are prepared to examine ways of further optimizing their co-operation in a multilateral framework between entities responsible for outlining and executing entrepreneurship and industrial policies.

The conditions for co-operation in the field of entrepreneurship policies can be elaborated in a separate protocol, in case both Sides can reach an agreement.

In the field of bilateral co-operation both Sides will stimulate mutually beneficial exchanges and co-operation in entrepreneurship policy. They will search for suitable occasions for contacts among scientific institutions, companies, universities and administrations that are in charge of entrepreneurship policies.

Both Sides will cooperate to promote trade relations and will exchange visits of business delegations and trade missions.

2 AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTS

Both Sides will continue to explore further opportunities to exchange knowledge and information in the field of bio-economy. A study visit to institutions in the area of bio-economy may be envisaged. Exchange of experience between both Sides regarding creation of high-value added products in the field of knowledge-based bio-economy may be considered.

3 ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Energy

In energy sector, Latvian Side will support cooperation and exchange of expertise between experts, companies and institutions in the following areas:

- Energy efficiency improvement programs;
- Energy audits for large companies and SME's;
- Renewable energy technologies;
- Development and implementation of "green" technologies;
- Development of sustainable district heating and cooling services;
- Programs for improvement of energy efficiency of buildings;
- Programs in research and development of energy efficient products and services.

3.2 Circular economy

The Latvian Side is interested in implementing co-operation projects with Flanders regarding formation of the management structure and transition towards circular economy.

Flanders Circular is a cross-sector programme providing knowledge in methods to involve line ministries in promotion of circular economy.

The follow-up projects can be prepared as public governance experts seminars, interministerial (agencies) and municipal level experts study visits and short term fellowships (policy making level) in field of circular economy.

3.3 Nature, art, heritage and remembrance education

Both Sides appreciate co-operation projects led by non-governmental entities, including in the field of nature, art, heritage and remembrance education.

In this context, the Flemish Land Agency invites Latvian partners to co-operate in the centuries old Vloethemveld nature reserve.

4 PORTS AND LOGISTICS

Both Sides are interested in cooperating in transport sector, accordingly exchanging information on experiences and knowledge on a regular basis. Given the existing

cooperation and geographical location of both countries, particular interest will be paid to cooperation in maritime transport sector, as well as logistic solutions.

Both Sides are prepared to consider receiving two delegations of maximum five (5) Latvian/Flemish experts for a period of five (5) days at the most in Flanders/Latvia to exchange information, training, documentation (including site visits to various locations to be determined) and knowledge about one or more of the aforementioned issues, according to their points of interest.

4.1 Cooperation in maritime transport

The Latvian and Flemish governments are interested in facilitating co-operation and the establishment of maritime connections, thus promoting container traffic between the Latvian and Flemish ports, as well as assess further cooperation opportunities such as establishment of regular ro-ro lines between ports etc.

Both Sides are willing to exchange information and experiences in:

- Port management issues;
- hinterland connections from sea ports;
- greening of maritime transport with regard to air pollution;
- the use of LNG as a fuel for maritime shipping;
- the role of the waterways in adapting to climate change, etc.

4.2 Cooperation in logistics

Both Sides are willing to exchange information and experiences regarding:

- Logistics developments in the hinterland;
- application of smart logistics concepts and tools for optimizing the different links in the logistics chain;
- promotion and encouragement of full modal integration;

Latvia offers a role of a logistics hub between Flanders and Asia, providing time-efficient and high quality logistics services between Asia and Flanders hub Antwerp.

5 SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

5.1 Innovation

Both Sides are prepared to examine ways to plan/implement cooperation projects and experience exchange visits under the EU programs and state budget related to innovation

(innovation policies, main support structures, support instruments, examples of good practice).

Both Sides shall examine ways of further optimizing their co-operation in the framework of the European Research Area, both in the field of research, science and innovation policies.

The conditions for cooperation in the fields of science and technological innovation can be elaborated in a separate protocol, in case both Sides can reach an agreement.

In the field of bilateral cooperation, both Sides will stimulate mutually beneficial exchanges and cooperation in science and technological innovation. They will search for suitable occasions for contacts among scientific institutions, companies, universities and administrations that are in charge of science and technological innovation policies.

As far as multilateral cooperation is concerned, both Sides will strive for joint participation of researchers in the European Programs (H2020, COST, ESFRI, JPI etc.) for Research and Development.

Both Sides will strive to encourage multilateral cooperation between research institutions to foster joint research and to improve competitiveness in research grant schemes.

Both Sides will share knowledge and experience about policies and practices for improving technology transfer systems – cooperation between entrepreneurs, scientific institutions, companies, and universities in commercializing research outputs, enhancing innovation and technological upgrading of enterprises.

5.2 Research

Both Sides will further optimize their cooperation in the framework of the European Research Area, both in the field of research, science and innovation policies. As far as multilateral co-operation is concerned, both Sides will encourage joint participation of researchers in the European Programs for Research and Development (H2020, Eurostars 2, COST, JPI).

6 CULTURE

6.1 Celebration of Latvia's Centenary

Latvia invites Flanders to work together on some specific projects in the field of music (Flemish collaboration with the State Academic Choir "Latvia", Sacred Music Festival), and fine arts (exhibition of the Latvian artist Voldemārs Johansons at the center for Fine Arts "Bozar").

Both Sides will aim to further enhance cooperation in the field of contemporary performing arts.

7 CREATIVE SECTORS

The Latvian Side invites representatives of the Flanders Districts of Creativity - the Flemish organization for entrepreneurial creativity, the initiator and coordinator of the international Districts of Creativity, which unites 13 of the most creative and innovative regions around the world - to collaborate with the Latvian Creative Industries Business Incubator, with the aim to provide exchange of best practice and to develop further partnerships by including Interdisciplinary Educational, Cultural and Creative Industries Support Centre "TabFab" and "Riga Makerspace" district to the network managed by Flemish partners. Both Sides are willing to exchange practical tools, strategies, policy documents and developed programs as well as provide each other with information and intro's (if necessary) to the local scene, contacts and organisations

8 YOUTH

The working programme regarding youth shall be discussed at the Youth Sub-commission for multilateral and bilateral cooperation to be held in Tallinn early 2018. The minutes of the meeting will be distributed afterwards.

9 EDUCATION

9.1 Exchange of information and documentation

Both Sides agree to exchange of information between the Latvian Academy of Culture and the Government of Flanders regarding partnerships in the framework of EU support programme ERASMUS+ and other existing national and international exchange and cooperation schemes.

9.2 Summer Courses

9.2.1 Dutch Language and Culture summer courses

Scholarships for Dutch language summer courses for the students and lecturers in Dutch language.

Scholarship for Dutch language summer courses for the students and lecturers at the Latvian Academy of Culture (professional development).

Scholarship to the lecturers of the Latvian Academy of Culture to be better acquainted with Flemish culture both in Flemish and French language in order to improve and further develop sub-programmes "Latvia - France/Belgium" and "Latvia - Low Countries/Germany".

The Dutch Language Union has a funding programme for translation workshops on location in Latvia, in cooperation with ELV (Centre of Expertise for Literary Translations).

9.2.2 Scholarships for participation at the international summer schools in Latvia

For the purpose of promoting the study and enhancing the knowledge of the official language, history and culture of Latvia, the Latvian Side, guided by the principle of reciprocity, shall mutually provide each year scholarships for participation in the International Summer Schools organised by the higher education institutions of the Republic of Latvia.

The sending Contracting Side shall submit the list of nominated candidates to the State Education Development Agency or the higher education institution, which is organising the International Summer School within the deadline which is published on the website of the Ministry of Education and Science <http://www.izm.gov.lv/en/latvian-scholarships-and-fellowships> and the State Education Development Agency www.viaa.gov.lv/scholarships.

9.3 Cooperation with educational institutions

Latvia invites Flanders to support the Intensive Programme in Law and Economics for the European Neighbourhood Policy Countries and Central Asia and Western Balkans, implemented by the Riga Graduate School of Law, through providing scholarships or other means (logistical support for study visits, academic staff). Both Sides remain open to cooperate on providing training programs to participants from European Neighbourhood (ENP) countries in areas of good governance, democracy, human rights.

The Art Academy of Latvia and University of Ghent are looking forward to cooperation in the framework of the European project "Urbanising in Place. Building the food water energy nexus from below".

10 SOCIAL WELFARE, PUBLIC HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

10.1 Social integration of persons with disabilities

Both partners see potential possibilities for cooperation in the area of help and social integration and persons with disabilities, namely:

- system of long term care for elderly people, persons with disabilities and chronically ill people;
- social and labour rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

In Flanders, the Flemish Agency for people with disabilities (VAPH) is the agency that is competent for these matters. They will consider potential opportunities for cooperation within their scope.

10.2 E-health

Possible field of cooperation within e-health: sharing knowledge about information systems on data sharing in healthcare (electronic patient file, electronic prescription, medication schedules, mobile health applications).

10.3 Preventive health care

Possible domain for cooperation within preventive health care: exchange of experiences and solutions for more registrations on screening tests.

10.4 Child and Family

- The Flemish Agency Child and Family (Child and Family) is able and willing to exchange information, knowledge, experiences, documentation and/or tools in the domain of the preventive healthcare, about the wellbeing of young children, in the domain of childcare and concerning target groups and social vulnerable families. More especially, the Flemish Agency Kind en Gezin (Child and Family) can exchange information, experiences and documentation about the organization and regulation of child care in Flanders and Brussels.
- The Flemish Agency Kind en Gezin (Child and Family) can also provide information about the organization of integrated early childhood preventive care (family centres).
- The Flemish Agency Kind en Gezin (Child and Family) can provide tools in the domain of unsafe children's articles, online courses (for instance breastfeeding www.kindengezinacademie.be), pictographic material, material about child development, family supporters, vaccination, experience in early eye or hearing screening, etc.
- The exchange on the above mentioned items can be realized through different channels of communication. Mutual exchange visits can be organized within the limits of the available financial resources.

11 PUBLIC GOVERNANCE

Both Sides will cooperate by exchanging information, experience, knowhow and best practices. Both sides agree to focus future contacts and cooperation on public sector innovation, modernization and efficiency.

Specific cooperation may cover issues like strategic planning and performance management, regulatory management and administrative simplification, policy evaluation and evidence-based policymaking, digitalization and e-governance, human resources management, integrity and diversity policies, urban policy approaches and relationships with local authorities.

12 GENERAL AND FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Both Sides agree that the criteria and financial conditions regarding scholarships as well as exchange of persons provided for in Article 9 shall be agreed by the parties concerned on a case-by-case basis.

Both Sides shall agree on the conditions for each specific event upon mutual consent. All disputes concerning the interpretation or realisation of this programme of activities shall be settled through negotiation between the Sides.

Both Parties agree to hold the next meeting of the Joint Commission in Brussels in the first half of 2021.

Drawn up in Riga, on 9 March 2018, in two (2) original versions in English.

For the Government of the Republic of Latvia

For the Government of Flanders



Solveiga Silkalna



Koen Verlaeckt