

COOPERATION PROGRAMME 2015 – 2017

IMPLEMENTING THE COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF CATALONIA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF FLANDERS

The Government of Catalonia
And
the Government of Flanders
(hereinafter referred to as the "Parties"),

Referring to their long-standing bilateral relations;

with a view to implementing the Cooperation Agreement between the Government of Flanders and the Government of Catalonia, signed in Barcelona on 20 February 2008, and pursuant to the outcome of the Catalonia - Flanders Joint Deliberations held between January and April 2015,

have agreed as follows:

PRIORITIES FOR COOPERATION 2015 – 2017

1. INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION IN INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN UNION AFFAIRS

Both Parties agree on organising regular contacts between their delegates and representatives abroad and specifically amongst those dealing with the European Union and International Organisations. Both Parties will in this respect exchange information and experiences regarding the following aspects of representation abroad:

- General aspects of the model of representation abroad (diplomatic recognition, relations with the national embassies, criteria for establishing delegations in certain countries, etc.);
- Relations with the country where the delegation is based; collaboration between the delegation and the host country's institutions and services; relations with other foreign delegations in the host country;

- Coordination established between their departments of Foreign Affairs and their delegations abroad;
- Relations between their own departments of Foreign Affairs and their national Foreign Affairs authorities with regard to subnational representation abroad;
- Management of the delegations (legal status, staff recruitment, wages, law applicable, kind of activities developed, interaction with other services within the delegation such as foreign trade, tourism etc.)

Both Parties will exchange information and experiences about their know-how towards international organisations and European Institutions such as the European Parliament. Both Parties shall cooperate in the field of the EU decision-making process by exchanging information, opinions and positions concerning general EU matters.

2. AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT: BIO BASED PRODUCTS

Both Parties will share information and knowledge concerning the use of (residues of) biomass of the primary agricultural and fisheries sector and forestry with the aim to recycle raw materials, innovative applications and the production of renewable energy. This refers to, among others, the processing of manure, crop biomass (including crop residues) and fisheries discards.

The exchange will focus on increasing the potential of bio-economy and the implementation of biorefineries in both regions. Both Parties will provide information about and insights into the parameters of supply and demand and pricing incentives typical for their markets, the subsidy instruments and research available in their area as well as the environmental impact of the application areas.

3. YOUTH WORK

The minutes of the working programme regarding youth, discussed during a youth sub-commission meeting on March, 10th 2015 are attached to this working programme.

Both Parties will set up study visits/peer-learning/round table meetings concerning:

- Youth policy development,
- Social entrepreneurship,
- Empowerment of young people for political participation,
- Inclusion, diversity and equal chances in youth work,

- Cooperation between formal and non-formal education focusing on early school leaving and school drop-outs
- Cooperation between formal and non-formal education focusing on local community education plans.

4. ECONOMY, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION

Both Parties will examine ways to further optimize their co-operation in the framework of the European Research Area, in the field of research, science and innovation policies.

The conditions for co-operation in the fields of science and technological innovation can be elaborated in a separate document, in case both Parties can reach an agreement.

In the field of bilateral co-operation, both Parties will stimulate mutually beneficial exchanges and co-operation 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 co-operation is concerned both Parties strive for joint participation of researchers in the European Programs (H2020, COST, ESFRI, JPI ...) for Research and Development.

Both Parties confirm their commitment to cooperate closely to ensure the success of the Vanguard Initiative and in particular of the pilot actions on 3D-printing and on efficient and sustainable manufacturing. Therefore they have identified specific application domains (health care, automotive and machinery) in which they support a more in depth exploration of potential synergies.

5. INNOVATION AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

ACCIÓ (through its Internationalization and Innovation Departments and its office in Brussels), FIT (Flanders Investment and Trade-Europe Department) ^[1] and the homologue agencies in charge of Innovation and Internationalization of Flanders have agreed to foster and increase their existent and long-lasting cooperation in these matters for the next cooperation term.

We are proposing 6 areas of cooperation that will be detailed in a sub-working program agreed yearly between parties and will be added to this current working program. The areas of cooperation are the following:

^[1]FIT is the Agency of the government of Flanders to promote sustainable international business, in the interest of both Flanders-based companies and overseas enterprises.

ACCIÓ is the Agency of the government of Catalonia for competitiveness and therefore dealing with Internationalization, Innovation, Transfer of Technology, Entrepreneurship and Investment Promotion.

- Concentrate our cooperation on RIS3CAT sectors like among them advanced manufacturing, Agrofood, ICT and Creative Industries, among others. On this last point it could be an occasion to reinforce the participation of Catalonia in the network created by the Government of Flanders named "Districts of Creativity".
- Promote technology transfer between our 2 regions using existing instruments and mobility of researchers (TECNIOSPRING Programme, among others).
- Invite Flanders to draw a mapping of innovation and technology systems in Catalonia as it was already been done by Catalonia for Flanders.
- Offer a better dedicated support to Flemish companies participating in trade fairs in Barcelona such as Mobile World Congress, Smart City Expo, Alimentaria, Expoquimia, etc.
- As a way to foster the collaboration between both regions, we propose to organize institutional, business and innovation missions between Flanders and Catalonia.
- Staff exchange: Both regions will study staff exchanges programmes in order to increase the cooperation between government agencies of Flanders and Catalonia, as for example between ACCIÓ, and Flanders Invest and Trade and the newly created Agency for Innovation Support of Flanders.

6. HEALTH

Flanders and Catalonia could share experiences on many health priorities. Both regions are active in the European Regional and Local Health Network Euregha where we can also discuss potential topics for exchange of expertise. The following are examples of those priorities:

Healthcare planning and health programs

- Health Plan 2011-2015: strategic planning focused in chronic care and integrated care
- Mental Health Plan: mental disorders and addictions
- Public Health Plan: health in all policies
- Health and Social Care Integration Plan
- Prevention and Chronic Care Plan
- Virtual model of care

Healthcare projects

Quality framework: accreditation of health centers

Digital health infrastructures and projects

- Personal health record: pilot phase. Scale-up in 2015
- Mobile Health Masterplan
- Interoperability and standards office

GENERAL AND FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Both Parties will agree bilaterally and on a case by case basis which financial and general conditions will apply to each specific action.

The provisions of the present Cooperation Programme do not preclude the possibility of implementing other activities, exchanges or projects that will be agreed upon by the Parties.

Any disputes concerning the interpretation or implementation of the present Cooperation Programme shall be solved by negotiation between the Parties.

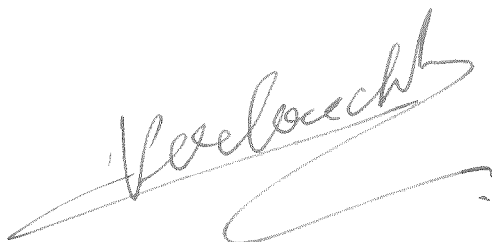
The Cooperation Programme shall enter into force on the day of its signature. It shall remain in force until 31st December 2017 unless stipulated differently in the present programme for specific policy areas.

The next meeting of the Joint Committee will be decided by the Flemish and the Catalan Party.

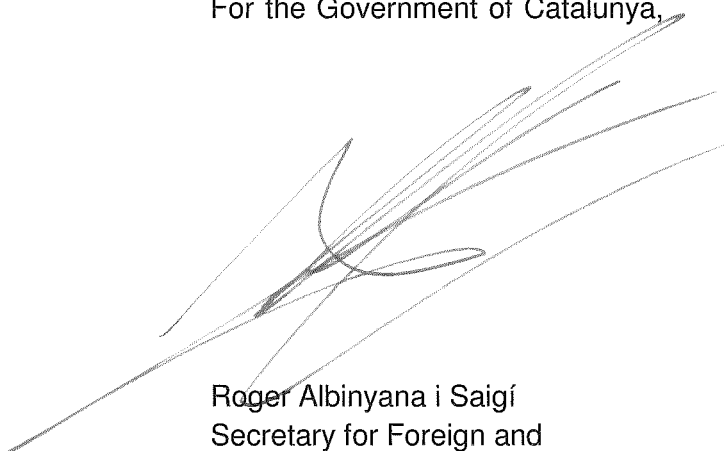
Done in Brussels on 1st July 2015, in two original copies in the English language. The Dutch and the Catalan versions will be exchanged through the channel of the respective Foreign Affairs services. Should any differences in the interpretation of the Cooperation Programme occur, the English version shall prevail.

For the Government of Flanders,

For the Government of Catalunya,



Koen Verlaeckaert
Secretary-general
Flanders Department of Foreign Affairs



Roger Albinyana i Saigí
Secretary for Foreign and
European Union Affairs