



COOPERATION PROGRAMME 2019 – 2021

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

The Governement of Catalonia

and

the Government of Flanders

(hereafter referred to as the 'Parties'),

Considering the previous Cooperation Programmes and with a view on implementing the Cooperation Agreement between the Government of Flanders and the Government of Catalonia, signed in Barcelona on February 20, 2008, and pursuant to the outcome of Catalonia – Flanders Joint Deliberations held between January and April 2019,

Have agreed as follows:

PRIORITIES FOR COOPERATION 2019 – 2021

1. INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION IN INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN UNION AFFAIRS

Both Parties agree on organizing regular contacts between the competent authorities and specifically among those dealing with the European Union and International Organizations.

They agree to exchange information and experiences regarding their representations abroad, collaboration between the delegations of both territories in third countries, coordination between their departments of Foreign Affairs and the management of their respective delegations.

Both Parties also agree to lobby jointly towards the European institutions for issues of mutual interest.

Both Parties will promote regional policies within the framework of the Agenda 2030 and the global and European networks in which they participate in the field of climate change, biodiversity and environment in general such as, respectively, nrg4SD and EEAC. They will also seek cooperation and capacity building within the multilateral sphere and in the implementation of the Agenda 2030, with regard to frameworks such as UNFCCC, CBD and its Advisory Committee of Subnational Governments, and UNEA. Furthermore, both Parties agree to exchange information and practices on the implementation of the



Sustainable Development Goals through their different planning approaches (for Flanders e.g. the Vision 2050 strategy, for Catalonia e.g. Alliance Catalonia 2030).

The list of these issues is not exhaustive and can be complemented or amended with other considerations later on.

2. DIGITALIZATION

Both Parties will exchange best practices in strategies and policies in transitioning from the concept of *smart city* to *smart region* based on the experiences of both territories. They will also work together in identifying key actors in specific projects and technologies such as 5G, IOT or Cybersecurity in order to explore possible joint projects on a European level. Also, Catalonia and Flanders will join efforts on a self-sovereign digital identity for citizens which puts them in control of their data, making use of technologies such as SOLID and Blockchain.

There are important seaports both in Catalonia and in Flanders. Competent authorities of both Parties have expressed their interest in exchanging best practices of implementing *smartPORTS*.

3. CULTURE

A variety of activities for potential cooperation have been detected on both sides in order to foster and promote cultural exchanges in multiple areas.

Catalonia and Flanders will promote joint projects with theatres, festivals and cultural centers in both territories in visual arts, performing arts, (early) music and architecture. Several organizations and institutions in both regions expressed their interest.

The Parties will enhance the mobility of artists and artists' residencies. Furthermore, both regions are willing to cooperate on film and gaming.

In the area of literature, the translation of contemporary literature will be fostered in both ways, from Dutch into Catalan and from Catalan into Dutch.

The Catalan party is still eager to find counterparts in Flanders in the following areas: language, strategic fairs for performing arts and circus, heritage, museums and art galleries.

4. YOUTH

Both Parties agree on pursuing collaboration in the area of youth policy and youth work. They express the willingness, according to the interest of the other participant, to exchange information and documentation regarding youth policy and youth work strategy, to exchange high level and/or mixed delegations for study visits to elaborate youth (work) policy at all levels –local, regional, national and European– and to promote the democratic participation of children and youth in society.



5. SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Both Parties will exchange best practices on experience with community-based programmes and integrated services for families with children, taking into account accessibility and diversity.

They will also exchange information, knowledge, experiences, documentation and/or tools in the domain of preventive healthcare, wellbeing of young children, childcare concerning target groups and social vulnerable families, and family benefits.

6. HEALTH

Both Parties agree on sharing experiences on various health-related areas as they already actively work together in European networks such as EUREGHA (European Local and Regional Authorities Network), WHO-EURO Regions for Health Network, the European Connected Health Alliance and the IFIC (International Foundation on Integrated Care).

Furthermore, the regions can exchange and learn from each other on the following:

- Regional indicators on health in the context of European cooperation amongst regions;
- Strategies in disease prevention and health promotion;
- Strategies for integrating social and health issues, digitalization experiences, medical records and, more particularly, learning about the integration of health and socio-economic data to identify the needs at population level and to better tackle health inequalities (this item can possibly be addressed soon with the support of the Structural Reform Support Programme);
- Reproductive medicine and correct management of a public reproductive cell bank;
- Strategies in smart business modelling in cross cooperation Health-Industry.

Furthermore, both Parties will increase the knowledge of each other's ecosystems in the field of innovative health care solutions. They agree on encouraging cross-sectors cooperation between healthcare and industry to accelerate the adoption of innovative solutions to increase the quality of care and to support the development of business activities, entrepreneurship and the creation of jobs. Mutual goal is to ensure the sustainability of their health and social care systems by increasing their efficiency and identifying innovative and financial business models.

In the economic and innovation field, Flanders Care works together within the Enterprise Europe Network (various domains) through the sector -group Healthcare, the NCP Health network, for smart specialization activities through the S3 vanguard initiative and in the framework of the ERRIN network.

7. INNOVATION AND INTERNATIONALIZATION

Both Parties agree to foster and increase their existent and long-lasting cooperation in the area of trade promotion, internationalization and innovation through their competent agencies, the Flemish FIT & VLAIO and the Catalan Acció & Prodeca, including their



respective offices abroad (Acció in Brussels and FIT in Barcelona). For that purpose, they will exchange information regarding business and investment opportunities.

There are several specific areas of collaboration agreed between the Parties. Catalan and Flemish authorities will improve participation of companies in events on technology transfer; they will focus collaboration on RIS3 sectors such as advanced manufacturing, Agrofood, ICT and creative industries; support companies' participation in international trade fairs that take place yearly in both territories; share cluster's information and perform comparative analysis of industrial security and management models.

At the request of the other Party, both authorities will also exchange information regarding their markets and sectors, useful contacts, experiences and knowledge concerning the promotion of international entrepreneurship.

8. TOURISM

Both Parties encourage the collaboration and the exchange of information, experiences, knowledge and best practices in the field of sustainable, competitive, innovative and accessible tourism, in particular with regards to the implementation of the 2030 UN agenda and the SDG's.

Both Parties express the willingness to exchange knowledge, experiences and best practices in the field of smart and innovative marketing, regional branding and culinary tourism. The respective destination management organizations can define the specific items and issues of collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding.

9. SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

Both Parties will increase the knowledge of each other's research institutions and innovation models by upholding mutual visits and meetings between research centers that have expressed their interest in collaborating.

A mapping of all joint research projects will be performed in order to have a better knowledge of compatibilities and opportunities.

Existing agreements between Catalan or Flemish research institutes in the EU with other institutes will be explored to analyse if partnership may be enlarged with Catalonia and Flanders new institutions. In this regard, the bottom-up principle will be followed, allowing researchers, research groups or centers to decide about possible partnerships.

Furthermore, a new young researchers scheme for mobility between Catalonia and Flanders could be proposed to EU for funding under the umbrella of an MSCA EU project.

10. AGRICULTURE, BIOECONOMY AND MARINE ENVIRONMENT

Both Parties will seek cooperation and exchange of expertise in the maritime field between Flemish and Catalan institutions in areas such as the following:

- Marine data and information systems,
- Marine research infrastructures,
- Ocean literacy,



- Training and capacity building,
- Mapping marine research and innovation and marine knowledge outputs,
- Science in support of coastal and marine policy and management,
- Marine research collaborations in ocean-related areas.

Both Parties will also work closely with universities and research institutions from Catalonia and Flanders in the preparation of research proposals under H2020 and Horizon Europe. They will continue their cooperation in the fields of bio-economy and food-tech, as well as explore possibilities in new areas of collaboration such as smart digital farming.

11. URBAN AGENDA AND HOUSING

An initiative has been put forward to seek collaboration and exchange of good practices on the management of social housing by promoting both-way missions.

Both Parties will contribute to the implementation of the Action Plan of the Partnership on Sustainable Use of Land and Nature Based Solutions of the Urban Agenda for the EU. Likewise, they will exchange experiences and best practices and will build joint alliances to seek the recognition of the key role of subnational governments in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

12. EDUCATION

Both Parties express the intent, according to the interest of the other participant, to exchange good practices and innovative experiences aimed at encouraging technological and scientific vocations, and at promoting professional development plans and permanent teacher trainings. These initiatives would take place preferably in the framework of European programmes and without prior financial engagements.

13. ENVIRONMENT

Both Parties agree to exchange strategies and policies in transitioning to a circular economy, the rational use of raw materials including high-quality secondary raw materials and industrial symbiosis.

Both Parties also agree to build capacity on transdisciplinary action research through the exchange of expertise as well as development and testing of methods and approaches to perform social-ecological research in the context of climate and biodiversity research, linked to the implementation of SDGs on local levels.

14. TRANSPORT

Both parties are willing to exchange knowledge and best practices on:

- logistics and multimodality covering all aspects of modern logistics and multimodal transport of goods, including urban and port logistics, inland terminals and modal shift actions by seeking for efficiency, sustainability, innovation and digitalization;



- maritime transport and seaports with emphasis on sustainability, ICT, accessibility and port community networking;
- land transport and road traffic safety by addressing elements such as financing and tolling of infrastructures, new mobility platforms, organization of public transport in urban and rural areas, shared mobility, mobility as a service and new technologies.

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 may 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 December 21, 2021, unless stipulated differently in the present programme for specific policy areas.

The Joint Committee will maintain an updated list of specific activities in all sector areas. The next meeting of this Joint Committee will be decided by the Flemish and the Catalan Parties.

Signed in Barcelona on April 4, 2019, 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 Catalonia,

Mireia Borrrell i Porta
Director General for Foreign Relations

For the Government of Flanders,

Freddy Evens
Secretary General of Foreign Affairs