

**CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME  
FOR THE YEARS 2008-2011  
BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF FLANDERS  
AND THE GOVERNMENT OF LATVIA**

**IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CO-OPERATION TREATY  
BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF FLANDERS  
AND THE GOVERNMENT OF LATVIA**

**Brussels, 27-28 May 2008**

The sixth meeting of the Joint Commission to discuss the Co-operation Programme for the years 2008-2011 to implement the Co-operation Agreement between the Government of Flanders and the Government of the Republic of Latvia was held in Brussels on 27-28 May, 2008.

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

**Flemish delegation:**

**Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs  
Foreign Affairs Division**

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| - Freddy Evens    | head of division, head of delegation                                   |
| - Koen Haverbeke  | representative of the Flemish Government<br>in Riga (office in Warsaw) |
| - Ursula Van Riet | policy advisor, secretary  |

**Department of Public Governance**

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| - Jan De Mulder | policy advisor |
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**Department of Work and Social Economy**

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| - Farah Nolens | policy advisor |
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**Department of Economy, Science and Innovation**

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| - David Grzegorzewski | policy advisor |
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**Department of Mobility and Public Works**

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| - Etienne De Winne  | director-engineer |
| - Martijn De Bruijn | policy advisor    |
| - Pim Bonne         | policy advisor    |
| - Robert Peeters    | policy advisor    |

**Department of Agriculture and Fisheries**

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| - Gabriel Ysebaert | policy advisor |
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**Department of Environment, Nature and Energy**

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| - Bart Van Impe | expert |
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**Flanders Investment and Trade (FIT)**

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| - Sabine Vincke | policy advisor |
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**Department of Welfare, Public Health and Family**

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| - Karin Van Puyenbroeck | policy advisor |
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The head of the Latvian delegation thanked for the kind reception and presented the members of her delegation:

**Latvian delegation:**

**Ministry of Finance**

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| - Mrs. Inta Vasaraudze  | Deputy State Secretary, head of delegation                                |
| - Mr. Vladimirs Karols  | Director, International Financial Policy Department                       |
| - Ms. Tatjana Stepanova | Senior Desk Officer, International Financial Policy Department, secretary |

**Ministry of Education and Science**

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| - Ms. Māra Katvare | Deputy Director of the European Affairs Department |
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**Ministry of Health**

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| - Ms. Evija Dompalma | Head of Forecasting and Analysis Division, Policy Planning Department |
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**Ministry of the Environment**

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| - Ms. Ilze Prūse | Head of Project Implementation Division, Climate and Renewable Energy Department |
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**Ministry of Agriculture**

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| - Ms. Iveta Baļčūne | Head of International Projects Division, International Affairs Department |
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**Ministry of Transport**

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| - Ms. Kristīne Iosava | Senior Desk Officer, Department of International Relations |
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**Ministry of Economics**

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| - Mr. Sergejs Lukins | Deputy Head of Foreign Economic Relations Division, Foreign Economic Relations and Trade Department |
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**State Chancellery**

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| - Ms. Inga Bite-Perceva | Head of Public Administration Policy Division, Policy Coordination Department |
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**State Employment Agency**

- Ms. Inese Kalvāne

Director, Department of the Employment Services  
and Development

**Permanent Representation of Latvia to the EU**

- Ms. Olga Orlova

Counsellor to the Ministry of Agriculture

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

## **1. ECONOMY**

### **1.1. General framework for cooperation**

Both Parties underline the importance of cooperating concerning regional development policies and SME development.

### **1.2. Specific actions**

The Flemish Party, i.e. the Agency for Economy of the Flemish government, proposes the following fields of expertise as topics for which it can guarantee a highly qualitative transfer and exchange of knowledge and information.

Regarding the execution of cooperation projects by project promoters, both Parties underline the importance of relevant European programmes and also the Flemish Cooperation Programme for Central and Eastern Europe as a means of financing these projects.

#### **1.2.1. General economic and regional policies concerning SME**

Particular attention shall be given to:

- efficient instruments and means of financial support for companies;
- entrepreneurship (a.o. mentorship projects, promotion campaigns on entrepreneurship, strengthening business associations and networks...);
- efficient institutional support network for start-ups and SME (a.o. access to finance, marketing, management, business conduct,...).

#### **1.2.2. Regional development policy and the European Fund for Regional Development (ERDF).**

Particular attention will be paid to the system of Flemish regional and spatial economic policy.

Particular attention will also be given to the role of national (ex. given Objective 2) and European Territorial Cooperation Programmes (Interreg IV) in the framework of the European Fund for Regional Development (ERDF). Both the management as the impact of ERDF programmes on regional development policies and projects in Flanders will be looked at.

Particular attention will be paid to innovative project results and/or project examples in view of the Lisbon Agenda/objectives and the mutual experience with SME participation in ERDF programmes and projects.

#### **1.2.3. Sustainable infrastructure and sustainable management of business premises**

Particular attention will be paid to the results and outputs of a Flemish - European Union supported “Innovative Actions” project related to this issue.

#### 1.2.4. Enterprise coaching programme: PLATO mentorship projects

Particular attention will be given to PLATO mentorship projects. PLATO projects aim at professionalizing the management of small enterprises and enhancing networking between enterprises. The strategy consists in setting up fixed groups of small enterprise managers with one or two counsellors to exchange experiences on a monthly basis during one or two years. The counsellors are executives from large companies or experienced self-employed persons who are gladly willing to put their experience at the disposal of other entrepreneurs.

#### 1.3. Exchange of delegations.

Both Parties are interested in the possibility of exchanging a limited group of experts and officials in the economic fields mentioned under 1.2 or other fields to be determined by common agreement.

This exchange will be aimed at transferring experiences, knowledge, documentation, work models and information on these fields as well as providing specific training.

### 2. FOREIGN TRADE

Latvian side is interested in developing and facilitating trade relations between Latvia and Flanders, and also to develop Flemish investment attraction to Latvia. In Latvia these activities are realized through the Investment and Development agency of Latvia (LIDA). In Belgium this is practically fulfilled by the Embassy of Latvia, with the assistance of the Latvian Investment and Development agency.

To promote the export of Latvian enterprises and develop cooperation between Latvian and Flanders enterprises, LIDA organizes enterprise trade missions to Flanders and also business meetings between Latvian and Flanders enterprises.

In addition to daily work with export promotion and investment attraction activities and requests of commercial nature, the Embassy of Latvia in Belgium will examine the possibilities and interest to organise a multisectoral trade mission of Latvian companies to Flanders in the first half of 2009.

The Flemish Party is committed to further encourage trade relations between Latvia and Flanders. This will be realized by "Flanders Investment & Trade", the official Flemish institution backing Flemish companies - especially SME – in various kinds of international enterprise, as well as helping foreign companies in setting up or expanding an investment in Flanders.

Flanders Investment & Trade will achieve this by:

- helping Latvian companies looking for Flemish goods and services, for cooperation with Flemish business partners or for investment in Flanders;
- pointing out Flemish companies at concrete trade opportunities occurring on the Latvian market;

- supporting Flemish companies wanting to expand their commercial activities by helping them in their prospection efforts on the Latvian market (e.g. by means of information and advice);
- realizing the sectoral focus-strategy and corresponding action programme for Latvia. Flanders Investment & Trade established a long-term strategy for the Latvian market that will focus in a pro-active way on three promising sectors in Latvia which represent interesting opportunities for Flemish companies: food and retail, construction materials and interior decoration and industrial subcontracting. The promotion actions that FIT planned for the coming years, will be organized in close cooperation with the concerned parties and authorities in Latvia.

To this end, Flanders Investment & Trade has a Flemish economic representative in Vilnius who acts as liaison officer between Flemish and Latvian companies and institutions.

Since 2006 Flanders Investment & Trade has organized the following two export promotion actions in Latvia: a multisectoral trade mission to the Baltic States in November 2006 (with the participation of 24 Flemish companies) and a collective stand with Flemish companies on the “Maja I” building fair in Riga (March 2007). The trade mission in 2006 had a special focus on the “transport and logistics” sector with a general presentation and visit of the port of Riga, organized by the Port Authority of Riga, as well as B2B-contacts between Flemish participants and potential Latvian partners from the logistic sector. Shortsea Promotion Centre Flanders was a participant in the mission and made contacts in Riga for the founding of a promotion office on SSS in Latvia.

The following initiatives are planned for 2008-2010:

2008:

An invitation of 6 buyers (food sector) from the Baltic States (including 2 buyers from Latvia, more specifically from Balta Bura, a major food importer and a supplier to the catering industry and Lielais Kristaps) to Brussels for B2B-contacts with Flemish companies (June).

2009:

A multisectoral trade mission to Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, with special focus on the food sector, the sector of construction materials and industrial subcontracting in various branches of industry.

An information and sensibilization seminar on the trade possibilities for Flemish companies in Latvia, in the framework of the “Export days Northern Europe”, held in Flanders.

2010:

An invitation campaign towards food buyers from the Baltic States (Latvia included) to Brussels for B2B-contacts with Flemish companies.

In addition to these actions, the economic representative goes (once a year) back to Flanders for individual meetings with Flemish companies in order to give them tailor made advice concerning the business opportunities in Latvia and how to approach the Latvian market.

Both parties will continue to exchange information regarding business and investment opportunities. Ad hoc, and at the request of the other Party, both Parties will also exchange information regarding their respective markets and sectors, useful contacts and their experiences and knowledge concerning the promotion of international enterprise. According to interests of companies, LIDA and F.I.T. will provide information about Latvian and Flemish trade, cooperation and investment opportunities.

### **3. AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTS**

- 3.1.** Both Parties shall examine the possibility to co-operate to the mutual benefit of both Parties in regard off the exchange of knowledge and information in the area of relations with the European Commission and others in the field of rural development and other agriculture related policy areas.
- 3.2.** The Flemish Party will consider the possibility to assist the Latvian Party in specific projects (in collaboration with socio-economic umbrella organisations and research institutes in Flanders and with the Flemish economical field) to elaborate and realise their Rural Development Programme.
- 3.3.** In the field of Rural Development, the Flemish Party will consider the possibility to assist the Latvian Party in implementing the National Rural Development Programme and using the structural funds for pillar II of CAP.
- 3.4.** Both Parties shall concentrate on facilitation of a cooperation and exchange with good practices in the following areas – safety and quality of food, ensuring of animal health, encouraging of rural entrepreneurship, promotion of the development of human resources and sustainable management of natural resources.
- 3.5.** Possible field of cooperation between Latvian and Flemish NGO is facilitation of the development of human resources in rural regions, taking account of a sustainable management of natural resources.
- 3.6.** Essential part of the cooperation is an exchange with experience and expertise between the competent authorities:
  - 2.1.1. prevention of bioterrorism;
  - 2.1.2. measures facilitating a development of organic agriculture;
  - 2.1.3. and improvement of the certification system of organic farms;
  - 2.1.4. handling of genetically modified organisms;
  - 2.1.5. introduction of an integrated production system of agricultural product at agricultural holdings;
  - 2.1.6. restriction of plant quarantine diseases and compensation of losses for agricultural holdings;
  - 2.1.7. a development possibilities of some sectors (flax, hemp);
  - 2.1.8. and other reciprocal areas of interest.



## **4. ENVIRONMENT, NATURE AND ENERGY**

### **4.1. Cooperation in the implementation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol.**

Latvia and Flanders are willing to cooperate within the objective of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, in particular to facilitate cooperation in the field of Joint Implementation under Article 6 and in the field of Emissions Trading under Article 17 of the Kyoto Protocol.

For this purpose a Memorandum of Understanding between the Latvian Government and the Government of Flanders can be drawn up which will detail procedures described in the Kyoto Protocol in relation to Latvian – Flemish co-operation regarding Articles 6 and 17 of the Kyoto Protocol.

### **4.2. Both Parties are prepared to invite, during the validity of the present programme, a team of experts (fluent English required) for a period of five (5) days within the scope of environment, nature and energy in order to exchange knowledge and establish contacts with the Flemish actors.**

## **5. MOBILITY AND PUBLIC WORKS**

### **5.1. Mobility and Traffic Safety**

Both Parties are willing to exchange information and experiences regarding one or more of the following topics:

#### **5.1.1. Education regarding the car use**

- Promotion of equal alternatives for road traffic to the use of the car.
- Revaluation of pedestrian and cycling traffic and not making (small) travels dependant on combustion engines.

#### **5.1.2. Evaluating, improving existing infrastructure**

- Integrated approach to public transport (intermodal transfer points between private and public transport).
- Quality design for the public space in order to have an equal and balanced used for all participants/actors in daily traffic: pedestrians, people with reduced mobility capacities, the cyclists and powered two wheel users.
- Permanent adjustment of the rational use of means to transport goods.
- Rational use of modes of transport (balance between public and private transport, carpooling, car sharing, etc as well as mobility planning at different levels -by government and industry- and similar initiatives).

#### 5.1.3.Reduction of the accident rate and the promoting of desired (traffic) behaviour

- Promoting the desired (traffic) behaviour and choices, such as adjusted speed, avoiding driving alone in a car, fighting/advising against drinking and driving, etc..
- Specific policy regarding road safety.

#### 5.1.4. Actual policy towards legislation/management concerning the environment

- Improving and managing of the balance between available space and (car) traffic (with a special interest for (city)areas with historical valued patrimony).
- Exchanging and consulting of know-how about toll collecting, traffic pricing and other monetary techniques to curb congestional traffic in urban areas or as a mean to achieve other goals.

#### 5.1.5. General policy toward legislation/management

- Permanent improvement/management of access to airports, ports and economic poles;
- Freight transport measures (improvement of general safety and comfort);
- Passenger transport measures (adjustments to infrastructure or traffic rules);
- Implementation of relevant EU policy and EU regulation with regard to transport and mobility.

#### 5.1.6. ITS/ Computer/ High Tech

- Consultation with regard to cross border communication networks and exchanging interesting sources through the growing number of media channels and technical innovations.
- Management of an internet site with public information:
  - on laws and legislation;
  - other relevant information about the authorities;
  - in combination with linking to valuable information outside the strict institutional environment.
- Information on the applications of the Geographic Information System, the organization of the studies and the measurements concerning traffic data, the road network, special planning,...
- Application of the Geographic Information System, e.g. traffic related material, spatial planning.
- The development and use of mobility indicators – for the policy based and strategic research of passenger and freight transport on main roads and in metropolitan areas.
- Exchanging information on the management of available 'in house' data and expertise.

### 5.2. Roads and traffic

Both parties are willing to exchange information and experiences regarding one or more of the following topics:

- PPP (Public Private Partnership) – applied to the construction of motorways or strategic constructions to improve mobility and to deal with missing links in the primary road network – dealing with result-based contracting and risk management.
- Exchange of information about expertise and knowledge about :

- design, construction and maintenance of highways, including their equipment;
- maintenance (general or winter) of roads;
- telematics - network.
- Co-ordination centre for all road construction works: all road activities are geared within a certain region in order to avoid conflicts in space and time and to minimize obstructions for road users and local inhabitants.
- Development of an internet site for public use e.g. about road works and regulations, travel planners and other 'pre trip' information.
- Road safety: how to make priorities – how to deal with unsafe locations – handbook of road safety – road safety inspections and audits.
- Road Data warehouse of the Agency: all kinds of data which can be geographically referenced is stored and handled by one application and one interface. Application of the Geographic Information System for handling road and traffic related data.
- Methods and materials for the control of the road condition.
- The control of overloaded lorries running on motorways.
- Traffic light and speed cameras.
- Projects to improve the traffic circulation of public transport.
- Incident management: ensuring first aid services, emergency planning, also the hoisting of vehicles when blocking traffic during rush hour in urban areas.

### **5.3. Ports**

#### **5.3.1. Exchange of information and experience**

Both Parties are willing to exchange information and experiences regarding one or more of the following topics:

- general policy on ports;
- implementation of relevant EU policy and EU regulations;
- modal shift promotion;
- logistics and logistic innovation.

#### **5.3.2. Cooperation on port-related matters and Short Sea Shipping**

Both Parties are prepared to:

- foster contacts between Latvian and Flemish ports;
- establish favourable conditions for the generation of traffic flows between Latvia and Flanders through Short Sea Shipping;
- exchange information about Short Sea Shipping;
- exchange information and experiences on Motorways of the Sea.

The Flemish Shortsea Promotion Centre is willing to assist the creation of a Shortsea Promotion Centre in Latvia by means of exchanging information and experiences.

Both parties will jointly examine the possibility to organise a seminar for Latvian and Flemish ports and companies in Brussels, in close co-operation with FIT (Flanders Investment and Trade) and LIDA (Latvian Investment Development Agency).

#### **5.4. Work visits**

Both Parties 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 on one or more of the aforementioned themes, according to their points of interest.

### **6. SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**

- 6.1. Both Parties shall examine ways of further optimizing their cooperation in the framework of the European Research Area, both in the field of research groups and science and innovation policies.
- 6.2. The conditions for cooperation in the fields of science and technological innovation can be elaborated in a separate settlement, in case both Parties can reach an agreement.
- 6.3. In the field of bilateral cooperation both Parties 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 scientific and technological innovation policies.
- 6.4. As far as multilateral cooperation is concerned both Parties strive for joint participation of Flemish and Latvian researchers in the Seventh European Framework Programme for Research and Development.

### **7. EMPLOYMENT AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION**

- 7.1. Both Parties shall continue the cooperation in the field of employment policy, vocational and entrepreneurial training, and encourage the contacts between the competent bodies and the social partners in this field.
- 7.2. Both Parties shall, at the request of the other Party, exchange information on the labour market, the legislation, the statistical data and any other information concerning employment policy, vocational and entrepreneurial training.
- 7.3. On request of the Latvian Party the Flemish Party (Flemish Department of Work and Social Economics) will accept a Latvian delegation (three to five experts) to Flanders during 2008-2011. The Flemish Party expects a request of the Latvian Party concerning their fields of interest in order to organise and prepare the visit.
- 7.4. Both Parties encourage the cooperation in the field of the European Social Fund and they shall exchange information and know-how concerning the management and the monitoring of the ESF.

- 7.5. The Flemish Party (Flemish Department of Work and Social Economics) shall examine the possibilities to play a stimulating role in the realisation of new projects in the field of employment, vocational and entrepreneurial training within the framework of the ‘Flemish Cooperation Programme with Central and Eastern Europe’.
- 7.6. The Flemish Party (Flemish Department of Work and Social Economics) shall act as mediator for possible cooperation with any actor or network active in the field of vocational and entrepreneurial training, labour market and employment policy.

## 8. CULTURE

- 8.1. Both Parties shall inform each other in an active way concerning important developments in cultural policies. That means that both Parties will keep each other informed on a regular basis of policy matters and their international context, including the identification of the stakeholders involved and references to other sources that may be available.
- 8.2. When common subjects, of considerable present political importance, have been detected, the Parties may decide by consensus to organise specific projects in that field, such as exchanges, training, on the job training, seminars, residences, etc.
- 8.3. When one of the Parties participates in an important international project, it will associate the other Party – as far as possible – as a privileged partner.
- 8.4. During the validity of the present Programme the Flemish Party is willing to receive one (1) graphic designer for a working visit of two (2) weeks at the Frans Masereel Centre in Kasterlee. Free accommodation shall be provided as well as a per diem of € 50,00.
- 8.5. The Flemish Party is willing to receive one (1) Latvian translator at the Vertalershuis in Louvain for a period of 1 (one) month during the validity of the present Programme. Contrary to the usual financial arrangements when receiving individuals, this translator shall be given free accommodation and an allowance of € 1000,00.  
Latvian authors also have the possibility to enter the writers-in-residence scheme of het Beschrijf. Further details regarding the eligibility requirements and the registration procedure are available from the Ministry of Culture.

The Latvian Party will invite, while this Programme is in force, writers, poets and translators up to thirty (30) days for a residency at the International Writers’ and Translators’ House in Ventpils ([www.ventspilshouse.lv](http://www.ventspilshouse.lv)) setting as a priority the translation of the Latvian literature. The International Writers’ and Translators’ house in Ventpils will cover the expenses of accommodation and a monthly allowance (scholarship) in the amount of LVL 150.

The Latvian Party, through the Latvian Literature Centre (LLC), will inform the Flemish Party about the application call for participation in the programme “Support to Foreign Publishers for Publishing the Translated Latvian Literature”.

- 8.6. Both Parties are willing to improve and to stimulate the networking of the heritage institutions of their countries for the purpose of exchange of practices, experts and competences related to movable and intangible heritage.

In the framework of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of 17 October 2003, both Parties will study the possibilities to develop joint projects regarding the methods of registration and preservation of the intangible heritage of Latvia and Flanders. During the first phase, the responsible units of the Flemish and Latvian Ministry of Culture can exchange experiences and know-how.

- 8.7. During the validity of the present Programme, both Parties shall exchange four (4) persons (mixed delegation: civil servants and field workers) for a study visit of seven (7) days at the most to get a general picture of the policies and practices in the field of social-cultural work, amateur arts and local cultural policies (public libraries and cultural centres).

## **9. YOUTH**

The work programme regarding Youth shall be discussed at the Youth subcommission. This subcommission meeting (for multilateral and bilateral co-operation) is meant to be held in Brussels before the end of 2008. The minutes of this meeting will be distributed afterwards.

## **10. SPORTS**

Both Parties shall promote co-operation between the institutions of both countries in the field of sports through exchange of information, encouraging the contacts between the competent bodies and the social partners.

Annually, both parties shall make a quota of fifteen (15) days available to provide athletes, trainers and policy-makers with the possibility to take part in apprenticeships, clinics, study trips and congresses and seminars in the field of sports in the other country.

## **11. YOUTH WELFARE**

Both Parties will cooperate and exchange information, documentation and expertise in the fields of:

- special youth care, i.e. ambulant, semi-residential and residential youth care;
- integrated youth care, i.e. youth care and general prevention regarding youth welfare.

## **12. WELFARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

Both Parties shall collaborate and exchange information, documentation and experience in the fields of welfare, social services and care for persons with disabilities.

### **12.1. Social welfare and health care policy**

- the general welfare/welbeing policy, in particular scientific research, the quality system, inspection and monitoring, client consultation, cooperation between the public and the private sectors at the international, national, regional and local levels;
- planning, monitoring and subsidising of welfare and health facilities;
- elderly care, particularly in rest homes, nursing homes and apartments for the elderly;
- support to services and facilities;
- improving quality (Integral Quality Control);
- management of the care insurance fund providing for those people who suffer from a long-lasting seriously diminished capacity;
- cooperation with judicial authorities in the field of welfare and health care.

### **12.2. Health care**

Priority issues for both parties to cooperate in the field of health care are:

- mental health care, especially the organisation of ambulatory mental health care centers;
- palliative care, especially the organisation of palliative networks for support of home care;
- preventive health care policy (especially cancer screening programmes; suicide prevention action plan; prevention of problematic use of alcohol and drugs);

Other collaboration could be established on:

- coordination and monitoring of vaccination programmes (including the ICT-tools) and prophylactic of infectious diseases (i.a. fighting sexually transmittable diseases such as HIV/AIDS);
- organisation of primary health care (especially coordinating systems) and home health care (including ICT-tools);
- inspection, counselling and treatment of complaints about environmental licences;
- preventive health care for the young child (organisation and expertise): development, hearing screening, vaccination, breastfeeding, ...

### **12.3. Social Services**

- social cohesion, in particular primary health care, preventive social policy, anti-poverty and social inclusion policies;
- general welfare work, in particular multifunctional social work units, crisis intervention and crisis relief, care and shelter for the homeless, care and shelter for mentally and physically abused women, forensic care, help for victims and victim support, telephone counselling services;
- family help, home care and family friendly policy;
- special youth assistance, particularly ambulatory, semi-residential and residential care;
- integrated youth care, in particular coordination of the social services for youngsters and general prevention;
- children and families: preventive child care (including injury prevention), parenting support, child care services, help in case of child abuse, adoption, ECEC (early childhood education and care) etc.;
- mediation: family mediation (divorce mediation, child custody mediation and access mediation), mediation in the context of criminal law (restorative justice, reparation of harm, settlement of conflict, restorative justice), debt mediation, community mediation (neighbours, neighbourhood mediation).

#### **12.4. Care for persons with disabilities**

- exchange of information, documentation and expertise concerning the different support services and other ways of supporting disabled people inter alia disabled children, as far as –from Flemish point of view- these support systems are being recognised and subsidised by the Flemish Minister for Welfare, Public Health and Family;
- exchange aiming at improving the quality of care;
- exchange in order to realise gradually deinstitutionalisation and to attain more personalised care and community living;
- exchange in order to agree on a commonly accepted definition on persons with disabilities (“PwD”) in the European and international context;
- exchange in order to agree on a cross-border standardisation and uniformization of assistive devices and special tools for disabled people;
- exchange, referring to the execution of international treaties and European directives;
- exchange in order to realise an inclusive society for all, and to realise full participation of disabled persons in all domains of social life and across borders (mainstreaming policy for disabled policy);
- exchange of statistical data and results of scientific research in the field of policy for disabled persons.

### **13. EDUCATION**

#### **13.1. Exchange of information and documentation**

During the validity of the present programme, the Parties shall, at the request of the other Party, exchange relevant information on all types and levels of education.

The higher Education Policy Unit of the Department for Education and Training of the Government of Flanders takes a particular interest in advanced academic programmes for foreign students, in the exchange of experience regarding the implementation of the Bologna Declaration and in the challenge the Bologna process “beyond 2010” entails.

The Latvian Rectors’ Council takes a particular interest in information exchange on the recognition of prior learning and defining of learning outcomes in the context of lifelong learning.

#### **13.2. Exchange of professors / teachers / experts / policymakers**

The Parties shall exchange annually two (2) experts / professors from a higher education institution/experts from government bodies for a stay of seven (7) days (2 x 7 days) as a maximum in order to participate in seminars, symposiums and colloquia regarding accreditation systems, education of students enrolled in doctoral study programmes and doctoral schools providing such education and to discuss the educational reforms following the implementation of the Bologna Declaration.

This quota may be used to make preparatory visits in order to start projects within the framework of European programmes or to build a network of contacts and exchanges between institutions of higher education.



### **13.3. Scholarships**

#### **13.3.1. Specialisation scholarships**

The Flemish Party shall offer to the Latvian Party, for each of the academic years 2008-2009; 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, one (1) scholarship for graduates from accredited master study programmes implemented by the Latvian public institutions of higher education to cover study stays in the length of ten (10) months in recognized postgraduate programs of Flemish higher education institutions.

The scholarships offered by the Flemish Party are valid for one academic year only. For a specialisation programme of two years, a new application needs to be made after the first year.

All information on study opportunities in Flanders (useful addresses of university colleges and universities, accredited non Dutch-language courses) can be found at <http://www.studyinlanders.be/>.

The Flemish Party shall provide the admitted applicants with a sum designed to cover enrolment fees payable to a Flemish Community institution or an institution subsidised by the Flemish Community. The maximum amount of which shall be determined annually (in the academic year 2007-2008 the maximum amount is EUR 533,10); if an applicant applies for a more expensive programme, she/he has to cover the difference between the actual enrolment fees and the amount awarded by the Flemish Party by herself/himself.

#### **13.3.2. Research Scholarships**

The Flemish Party shall offer to the Latvian Party, for each of the academic years 2008-2009; 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, nine (9) scholarship months for research. Upon request of the sending Party, these scholarship months can be divided in three periods in the length of three (3) months each.

### **13.4. Scholarships for participation in summer language and culture courses**

In order to promote the study of the Dutch language and culture in the Republic of Latvia, the Flemish Party shall offer annually the Latvian Party a number of scholarships for participation in the “Dutch Language and Culture” summer course, held either at the University Hasselt or at the Talencentrum of Ghent University. These three-week courses are intended mainly for students of the Dutch language and literature enrolled in Latvian public higher education institutions. Applicants are expected to have a reasonable command of the Dutch language at the Elementary Knowledge Level of the Certificate of Dutch as a Foreign Language.

The scholarships for the Dutch Language and Culture summer course are allocated by the Dutch Language Union in cooperation with the Flemish organisers.

The Dutch Language Union will send the “Dutch Language and Culture” brochure to all institutions where the Dutch language is instructed and also to the Belgian Embassy in Riga. The brochure, which comprises the registration form (including the English version), can also be found at the website of the Dutch Language Union: [www.taalunieversum.org/taalunie/summer\\_courses\\_in\\_dutch/](http://www.taalunieversum.org/taalunie/summer_courses_in_dutch/)

In order to promote the studies of the Latvian language and culture, the Latvian party offers to the Flemish Party each year up to two (2) scholarships for the summer courses in the Latvian language and culture at the Baltic International summer school at the Vidzeme University College and at the International summer school of the Riga Technical University. The Latvian Ministry of Education and Science will send the brochures with application forms to the Ministry of the Flemish Community for dissemination to all interested institutions. The brochures and application forms can also be found at the website of the Baltic International summer school: [www.va.lv/biss](http://www.va.lv/biss) and at the website of Riga Technical University [www.rtu.lv/summerschool](http://www.rtu.lv/summerschool).

The candidates should send the applications directly to the Baltic International Summer school or to the Riga Technical University, but the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science will select the most suitable candidates among the submitted applications. The shortlist with selected candidates will be sent to the Ministry of Flanders for information.

#### **14. TOURISM**

- 14.1. The Flemish Party shall exchange information on legislation and regulations concerning tourism, statistical information, the instruments used for measuring the effects of promotion actions, documentation and studies concerning the development of tourism.
- 14.2. The Parties shall encourage the mutual exchange of tourism promotional activities and materials in the field of tourism.
- 14.3. The Flemish Party shall encourage the organisation of study trips for journalists, radio and television reporters, researchers and experts in the field of tourism.
- 14.4. The Flemish Party shall stimulate the organisation of seminars, colloquia and workshops on tourism items that may be proposed by the other Party, in order to exchange ideas and experience.
- 14.5. The Parties shall collaborate and exchange information, documentation and experience in the field of tourism concerning quality standards, Spa/health resorts, new product development and other issues that are of importance for one or another Party.

#### **15. TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING, HOUSING POLICY AND IMMOVABLE HERITAGE**

The Flemish Party (Urban Development Policy and Non-Movable Heritage) and the Latvian Party (State Inspection for Heritage Protection) are willing to present each other their policy concerning immovable heritage. Subject to budgetary and staff constraints, a supplementary follow-up and further development of this proposal can be discussed on the occasion of meetings of competent intergovernmental organisations (Council of Europe, UNESCO).

As far as town and country planning and housing are concerned, the Flemish Party is willing to receive a Latvian delegation and give a brief presentation of the spatial planning or housing policy in Flanders.

The Latvian Party informs that in autumn 2009 the 4th Cultural Heritage Forum in the Baltic Sea Region "Heritage - Contemporary Challenge" will be organized in Riga. The Latvian Party invites the Flemish Party to participate in the above mentioned event in order to encourage the exchange of experience in the field of cultural heritage among the regions of Europe.

## **16. CAPACITY BUILDING**

### **Port Training**

The Flemish Party offers to the Latvian Party the possibility to send experts to seminars in the field of Port training, organised by APEC (Antwerp/Flanders Port Training Center vzw) in the course of 2008 - 2011.

The Latvian Party shall present its candidates for these seminars. The participants shall be selected by APEC. The Flemish Party covers the costs of the participation. Travel expenses are to the account of the participant.

## **17. PUBLIC GOVERNANCE DEPARTMENT**

The Flemish Party and the Latvian Party will cooperate by exchanging information, experience, know-how and best practices between the administrations. The concerned administrations are:

- for Flanders: the Public Governance department, the Government Personnel Agency, and other agencies or services that belong to the public governance policy field;
- for the Republic of Latvia: the Policy Co-ordination Department of the State Chancellery and the Public Administration institutions working in the field of public administration policy.

In particular contacts will be established among specialists in the fields of human resources management, recruitment policy, integrity policy, ICT, E-government, integration policy, urban policy and relationships with local authorities, the Flemish government architect and facility management, Better Regulation, policy planning and evaluation, as well as research activities.

The following specific cooperation topics were outlined and agreed upon by the services concerned within both administrations:

- methodologies for job classification, rationalisation of ranks and grades;
- pay scales, rewarding systems, the implementation of competency based and performance-based management;
- relevant ICT systems (e.g. VLIMPERS);
- policies on administrative burden reduction, simplification and evaluation of regulatory management approaches including indicators, participatory and electronic tools.

The cooperation will be implemented through mutual visits and the organisation of seminars.

## **18. PROJECT COOPERATION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FLEMISH COOPERATION PROGRAMME WITH CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE**

Both Parties confirm their willingness to continue their co-operation by means of projects in 2008 – 2011.

Both Parties will try to build on previously built-up contacts and networks and concentrate on those sectors where cooperation provides a mutual advantage and may lead towards a win-win situation.

The Flemish Party annually launches a call for proposals. For 2008 a call has been launched and project proposals could be filed until 31 March 2008. Unfortunately, there were no applications for projects in Latvia during this call.

The Flemish Party is willing to fund 50% of the budget within its budgetary limits. The other 50% must be borne by a partnership of the Flemish promoter, the Latvian partner(s) and/or the Latvian authorities.

All project proposals shall be evaluated by both Parties on the basis of their own criteria and procedures. During a bilateral meeting the projects proposed for funding shall be ranked and selected.

## **19. GENERAL AND FINANCIAL PROVISIONS**

### **19.1. Scholarships**

19.1.1. The exchange of scholarships under Articles 13.3. and 13.4. shall be governed by the following general provisions:

- a) The applicants should be under 35 years of age and they must have an excellent academic record. Latvian applicants must hold a Master's degree or equivalent at the time of commencement of their stay in Flanders.
- b) The candidates shall be selected by the sending Party.
- c) By 1 April of each calendar year, the sending Party shall submit to the receiving Party the candidates' completed scholarship application forms and other documents as specified in the application form. All documents shall be submitted in Dutch or in English, French or German in the case of Latvian applicants, and in Latvian or in English, French or German in the case of Flemish applicants:
  - a detailed curriculum vitae mentioning the knowledge of languages;
  - a detailed study- or work programme which the applicant wants to pursue at recognized institution in the host country;
  - letters of recommendation and possibly also a letter of invitation or acceptance issued by the respective department of the receiving institution;
  - transcript of records.

- d) By 1 July of each calendar year, the receiving Party shall inform the sending Party whether the candidates have been accepted, and shall at the same time communicate to the sending Party the names of the institutions accepting them for study stays.
- e) The sending Party shall provide precise and detailed information about each scholarship holder's arrival at least two (2) weeks before the commencement of his/her stay.

19.1.2. The exchange of scholarships under Article 13.3.1. (specialisation scholarships) shall be governed by the following financial provisions:

- a) The sending Party shall cover the return expenses for international travel to and from the predetermined destination in the receiving country.
- b) The receiving Party shall cover:

In Flanders:

- a monthly allowance of EUR 770,00;
- enrolment fees payable to a Flemish Community institution or an institution subsidised by the Flemish Community, the maximum amount of which shall be determined annually (in the academic year 2007-2008 the maximum amount is EUR 533,10; if an applicant applies for a more expensive programme, she/he has to cover the difference between the actual enrolment fees and the amount awarded by the Flemish Party by herself/himself;
- health insurance and third Party insurance in accordance with Belgian legislation.

19.1.3. The exchange of scholarships under Article 13.3.2. (Scientific research scholarships) shall be governed by the following financial provisions:

- a) The sending Party shall cover the return expenses for international travel to and from the predetermined destination in the receiving country.
- b) The receiving Party shall cover:

In Flanders:

- a monthly allowance of EUR 740.00;
- a starting allowance of EUR 125.00 granted at the first arrival in Flanders, on the condition that the stay in Flanders takes at least one month;
- health insurance and third Party insurance in accordance with Belgian legislation.

19.1.4. The exchange of scholarships under Article 13.4. (scholarships for participation in summer language and culture courses) shall be governed by the following general and financial provisions:

- a) The Flemish Party shall inform the Latvian candidates for participation in the Dutch language and culture summer course about the selection by 1 April at the latest.
- b) The Latvian Party shall inform the Flemish Party, by 1 June of each calendar year, whether the nominees have been admitted and shall simultaneously communicate to the Flemish Party the names of institutions admitting them.
- c) The organizational arrangements applying to the submission of applications by Latvian candidates for participation in the Dutch language and culture summer courses are specified by the Dutch Language Union (cfr. brochure).
- d) The Flemish Party shall cover the enrolment fees incurred by applicants admitted under Article 13.4. as well as their board and lodging, expenses for their participation

in excursions within the framework of the course programme, and their health insurance and third Party insurance in accordance with Belgian legislation.

- e) The Latvian Party shall cover the admission fees, board and lodging and expenses for participation in excursions organized within the summer language and culture courses, the necessary and urgent medical care in the case of a sudden illness or injury suffered by accepted individuals during their stay in Latvia, with the exception of treatment of chronic diseases and dental prosthesis.

## **19.2. Exchange of persons**

The short-term exchange of persons (for 30 days as a maximum and at the invitation of the receiving Party) as determined in the present Programme shall be implemented according to the following criteria:

- a) The sending Party shall provide the receiving Party with the curriculum vitae, the letter of invitation and information on the goals and programme of visit as well as the dates of arrival and departure of the nominees concerned at least three (3) months in advance.
- b) The receiving Party shall confirm it is prepared to receive the nominees concerned six (6) weeks before their departure. The time of departure shall be confirmed at least two (2) weeks beforehand.
- c) To be covered by the sending Party:
  - return international travel expenses incurred by its nominees.
- d) To be covered by the receiving Party:

In Flanders:

- accommodation and breakfast;
- a fixed allowance of EUR 37.00 per day (excluding transport costs) or EUR 50.00 per day (including transport costs);
- health insurance and third Party insurance in accordance with Belgian legislation.

In the Latvian Republic the precise conditions shall be communicated by specific parties involved through the diplomatic channels.

## **19.3. Film**

- To be covered by the sending Party: forwarding expenses.
- To the receiving Party: organisation costs.

## **19.4. Other conditions will be agreed on through diplomatic channels.**

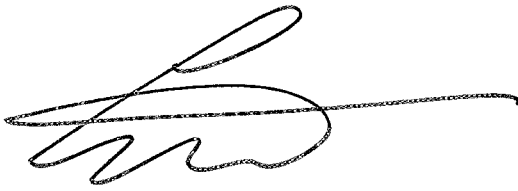
## **19.5. This programme does not exclude the possibilities to organise other events or exchanges or to start new projects on which both Parties will agree.**

Both Parties shall agree on the conditions for each specific event through diplomatic channels. All disputes concerning the interpretation or realisation of this programme of activities shall be settled through negotiation between the Signatories.

Both Parties agree to hold the next meeting of the Joint Commission in Riga in the first half of 2011.

Drawn up in Brussels, on 28 May 2008, in two (2) original versions, each one in Dutch, Latvian and English languages. Both texts are legally valid. In the case of dispute, the English text shall prevail.

For Flanders,

A stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large loop at the top and several smaller loops below it.

Freddy Evens

For the Republic of Latvia,

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a long horizontal stroke at the top and a series of smaller, more complex strokes below it.

Inta Vasaraudze