

CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME
FOR THE YEARS 2015-2017
BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF FLANDERS
AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA

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

Brussels, 15 May 2014

The eight meeting of the Joint Commission to discuss the Co-operation Programme for the years 2015-2017 to implement the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of Flanders on Co-operation was held in Brussels on 15 May 2014.

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

Flemish delegation:

Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs

- Koen Verlaeckt Secretary-General
- Koen Haverbeke Representative of the Flemish Government in Riga (residing in Warsaw)
- Yves Wantens Representative of the Flemish Government in in Madrid and from autumn onward in Riga (residing in Warsaw)
- Peter Van Heesvelde Policy Advisor, Secretary

Department of Culture, Youth, Sport and Media

- Nele Haegemans Policy Advisor, international co-operation
- Lieve Caluwaerts Policy Advisor, International youth policy

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

- Pieter Lietaer Fisheries Attaché
- Eva Van Buggenhout Expert Agriculture

Department of Environment, Nature and Energy

- Jan Haers Specialist Energy
- Matthias De Moor Policy Advisor International Environmental and Energy Policies LNE
- Quirina Huet Policy Advisor International Environmental and Energy Policies LNE

Department of Mobility and Public Works

- Olivier Vandersnickt Policy Advisor, General Policy Division

Department of Public Governance

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| – Jan De Mulder | Policy Advisor, International Developments Policy Department |
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The head of the Latvian delegation thanked for the kind reception and presented the members of his delegation:

Latvian delegation:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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| – Ilze Rūse | Director of the European Department |
| – Lelde Līce-Līcīte | Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia in Belgium |
| – Sanita Pēkale | First Secretary at the Embassy of the Republic of Latvia in Belgium |
| – Aija Balcare | Third Secretary of the Western, Central and Southern European Countries Division |

Ministry of Agriculture

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| –Dace Arāja | Counsellor at the Agriculture, Food, Veterinary, Wood and Fisheries Unit, Permanent Representation of the Republic of Latvia to the European Union |
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Ministry of Economics

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| – Kristaps Soms | Deputy Director of the Entrepreneurship Competitiveness Department |
| – Inguna Ozoliņa | Desk officer of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Division |

Ministry of Education and Science

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| – Lauma Sīka | Counsellor at the Research, Education, Youth and Culture Unit, Permanent Representation of the Republic of Latvia to the European Union |
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Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

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| – Jānis Glazkovs | Head of the One – Stop Shop Division |
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Both delegations, hereafter called the Parties, agreed upon the following:

Latvia 2030 and Flanders 2020

Concerning the future development strategies Latvia 2030 and Flanders 2020 and it has been decided that both parties will exchange information about the implementation of these programs.

1. ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Both Parties shall examine ways of further optimizing their co-operation in the framework of the European open method of coordination (OMC) or the OECD between entities responsible for outlining and executing entrepreneurship policies.

Both Parties encourage exchange of experience and co-operation between employees of Latvian and Flemish ministries and competent bodies in the development and implementation of foreign direct investment attraction policy, state support policy, industrial policy and other policies related to economic growth.

In the light of Industrial Renaissance in Europe the Latvian side is particularly interested in systemic cooperation and an exchange of experience in analysis and monitoring of industrial and innovation policy, in development of “smart economy” by encouraging innovation in all actors e.g. entrepreneurs, state, scientists, higher education institutions, in commercialisation of innovation outputs, in fine tuning and increasing the efficiency of government support to entrepreneurs in general and SME’s in particular.

The conditions for co-operation in the field of entrepreneurship policies can be elaborated in a separate protocol, 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 entrepreneurship policy. They will search for suitable occasions for contacts among scientific institutions, companies, universities and administrations that are in charge of entrepreneurship policies.

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

2. FOREIGN TRADE

The Flemish Party is committed to enhancing and promoting the trade relations between Latvia and Flanders. For that purpose, they will exchange information regarding business and

investment opportunities. Ad hoc, and at the request of the other Party, the Flemish Party will also exchange information regarding its market and sectors, useful contacts, experiences and knowledge concerning the promotion of international entrepreneurship.

For Flanders, the above will be realized by Flanders Investment & Trade, the official Flemish institution supporting Flemish companies in various kinds of international entrepreneurship, as well as helping foreign companies in setting up or expanding in Flanders.

The FIT Office in St. Petersburg deals with questions from Flemish companies about doing business in Latvia and from Latvian companies about investing in Flanders. Multisectoral trade mission and road trips are planned in the coming years. The Flemish attaché visits Latvia on a regular basis to meet companies and official institutions.

The economic representative returns once a year 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.

3. AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTS

Both Parties shall examine the possibility to exchange knowledge and information in the field of bio-economy. A study visit to the Bio Based Europe Pilot Plant in Ghent and other institutions in the area of bio-economy may be envisaged.

4. ENVIRONMENT, NATURE AND ENERGY

4.1 Nature and Environmental Education

The Nature and Environmental Education Services (NEE) are prepared to receive a delegation to introduce them within the NEE-working, the educative environmental care projects and the structure on the Flemish level in a profound and participative way.

Taking into account the wishes/needs, the NEE-services can organise 3 or 4 days with the following interests, possibly in a follow-up project (MOS, Ecocampus, ...):

- introduction of and making acquaintance with the working of the NEE-unit service within Flanders, with Education for Sustainable Development as the frame of reference, and with the networking on NEE (diverse target groups) and on ESD; a specific educational activity or course on NEE and ESD for educators, teachers, guides, ... can be organized for the delegation.
- making acquaintance in a profound way with the MOS-project (Environmental Care at School, eco-schools), an educational and environmental care project from kindergarten to secondary education and, if preferred, linked with one or more school visits; getting acquainted with the educational means;
- introduction of the Ecocampus project which is concerned with the particular role of universities and colleges in a sustainable society: higher education can offer the intellectual leadership –through its teaching, research, and outreach-- needed to get on track for a

sustainable future. If interested, this introduction can be linked to a visit to a Flemish higher education institution.

- introduction of the procedure in Flanders on the phasing and implementation of the Strategy on ESD in the formal education and informal or/and non-formal education; making acquaintance with examples of good practices how ESD can be introduced in NEE;
- site visit to one or more NEE-centres, linked with a Flemish nature reserve (coast, heath, forest, ...), and/or to a provincial EE-service, getting acquainted with the common educational means.

4.2 Waste Management

Both Parties are willing to exchange knowledge on support for awareness-raising among municipalities and inhabitants in the area of waste management, particularly, in separate collection of waste streams with emphasis on bio-waste, waste electric and electronic equipment, end-of-life vehicles, thermal recovery of waste and support for the recovery of secondary materials from waste.

Taking into account the wishes / needs, the follow-up projects can be prepared:

- Awareness-raising campaigns on support of separate collection of municipal waste, with emphasis on bio-waste;
- Education support activities for municipalities (mayors and delegates) in waste management;
- Site visit to one or more Flemish regions with best practices.”

4.3 Natura 2000

Both Parties are willing to co-operate in the field of the nature and landscape protection, namely through sharing experience in implementing the NATURA 2000 (exchanging information on the strategy, setting the conservation objectives, involving owners and users of the land, identifying the best economic tools).

4.4 Energy

Both Parties are willing to co-operate within the field of energy efficiency and international expertise in the following:

- energy efficiency improvement programmes;
- energy audits for large companies and SMEs;
- programmes in research and industry (theory and practical application) in the development and putting into effect of energy-efficient equipment and products;
- programmes for the improvement of the energy efficiency of buildings, including the development of district heating and cooling;
- renewable energy technologies;
- development and implementation of “green” technology;
- exchange of experience in above mentioned fields between Latvian and Flemish experts and also between Latvian and Flemish companies and institutions, for example, implementation of energy efficiency measures within requirements of the Directive 2012/27/EU.

4.5 Expert exchange

Both Parties are prepared to invite, during the validity of the present program, a team of maximum 5 experts (fluent English required) for a period up to five working days within the frame of:

1. waste management
2. policy development, management planning and implementation of Natura 2000
3. the energy sector

in order to exchange knowledge and establish contacts.

5. MOBILITY AND PUBLIC WORKS

Ports and Water Policy Division

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

- Hinterland connections from sea ports;
- Logistics developments in the hinterland;
- Application of smart logistics concepts and tools for optimising the different links in the logistics chain;
- Smarter use of the available means of transport and the existing transport infrastructure;
- Promotion and encouragement of full modal integration;
- 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.

The Flemish and Latvian governments will facilitate co-operation and the establishment of maritime connections between Flemish and Latvian ports.

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 about one or more of the aforementioned themes, according to their points of interest.

6. SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Both Parties 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 co-operation in the fields of science and technological innovation can be elaborated in a separate protocol, 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 Programmes (H2020, COST, ESFRI, JPI, ...) for Research and Development.

7. EMPLOYMENT AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Both Parties shall continue the cooperation in the field of employment policy, social economy, vocational and entrepreneurial training, and encourage the contacts between the competent bodies and the social partners in this field.

Both Parties shall, at the request of the other Party, exchange information about the labour market, the legislation, the statistical data and any other information concerning employment policy, social economy, vocational and entrepreneurial training.

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.

The Flemish Party (Vlaams Departement Werk en Sociale Economie) shall act as mediator for possible cooperation with any actor or network active in the field of vocational and entrepreneurial training, labour market, social economy 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. The Latvian Party invites one (1) folk dance group from Flanders to participate in the International Folk Dance Festival „Sudmalinas” in 2015.

- 8.4** The Flemish Party wants to draw attention to the possibilities for artists, writers and translators to enter the residence programme of the following organisations (participants should meet the criteria and pass the selection):
- Frans Masereel Centre in Kasterlee: offers residences in the field of graphic arts, (www.fransmasereelcentrum.be)
 - Passa Porta: offers residences in Brussels and Vollezele for writers and translators, (www.passaporta.be)
 - Flemish Literature Fund: offers residences for translators in the Translators' House in Antwerp, (www.fondsvoordeletteren.be)

The Latvian Party wants to draw attention to the possibilities for writers and translators to enter the residence programme of the following organisations (participants should meet the criteria and pass the selection):

- International Writers' and Translators' House in Ventspils, (www.ventspilshouse.lv)
- Culture and Arts Project "NOASS": contemporary arts projects in urban environment, (www.noass.lv).

- 8.5** 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 safeguarding 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 experience and know-how.

- 8.6** The Latvian Party, through the New Theatre Institute of Latvia, and the Flemish Party, through the Flemish contemporary performing arts collectives, are willing to cooperate in the field of contemporary performing arts and implement common projects, including guest performances programmes and networking activities of Flemish and Latvian partners in Latvia in 2015-2017.

9. CREATIVE SECTORS

- 9.1** Both Parties are willing to exchange experience and knowledge on the methodology and results of mapping the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) and points of view about possible improvements regarding the approach when carrying out mapping in the future.

For this purpose, both Parties are prepared to consider receiving two (2) experts during the validity of this Programme for a period of four (4) days at most in Latvia/ Flanders.

- 9.2** The Latvian Academy of Art and the Latvian Academy of Culture would be interested in Flemish experience and expertise in incorporating entrepreneurship in higher education in the arts, including design.

- 9.3 The Latvian Party, through the Creative Industries Platform "Fold" (www.fold.lv), is willing to gain expertise from the relevant Flemish organization in developing communication tools and spreading information on different matters relevant to creative industries operators.
- 9.4 The Latvian Party informs that in May 2015, in the framework of the Latvian Presidency in the Council of the European Union, the Creativity week *radi!* will be organized in Riga. The Latvian Party invites a representative from the key creative industries organization in Flanders to participate in the above mentioned event in order to share experience.
- 9.5 Both Parties shall continue the successful exchange of information between the Creative Europe Desks of the countries within the European network.

The Latvian Party invites the representatives of the coordinating body and Culture and Media offices of the Creative Europe Desk Flanders to take part in Creative Europe Desks meeting, which will be held in Riga in March 2015 in the framework of the Latvian Presidency in the Council of the European Union, in order to share their experience in establishing the new communication structure.

The Latvian Party, through the Creative Europe Desk Latvia, is willing to foster the exchange of project partnership proposals among Latvian and Flemish cultural institutions and organizations in the framework of the new EU programmes "Creative Europe" and "Europe for Citizens".

- 9.6 Both Parties are willing to exchange information on the newest developments regarding financial support (funding) possibilities and new investment models for culture and creative industries.

10. YOUTH

The work programme regarding Youth shall be discussed at the Youth sub-commission. This sub-commission meeting (for multilateral and bilateral co-operation) is meant to be held in Vilnius before the end of 2014. The minutes of the meeting will be distributed afterwards.

11. WELFARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

The Flemish Agency Kind en Gezin (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.

12. EDUCATION

12.1 Exchange of information and documentation

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

Both Parties shall inform each other in an active way concerning important developments in educational policies: academic recognition of degrees and qualifications, initial teacher education and further professional development, accreditation, sustainable higher education, international mobility.

Both parties will seek cooperation and exchange in the framework of the EU programmes and of initiatives of the Council of Europe, the OECD, the ENIC-NARIC network and the European Higher Education Area.

12.2 Exchange of experts / policymakers

Both Parties offer mutually three weeks of scholarship annually to exchange experts for exchange-based learning in the ministry responsible for education, higher education institutions or other intermediate organizations.

The Latvian Academy of Culture is interested in continuation of the financial support by the *Nederlandse Taalunie* to Flemish lecturers, who work at the Latvian Academy of Culture. The Latvian Academy of Culture shows a strong interest in lectures on Flemish culture (art, theatre, music and public) given by visiting experts.

The Latvian Academy of Culture plans to open, in the study year 2014/2015, a new intercultural communication sub-programme "Latvia-France/Belgium" for studies of French and Dutch (Flemish) language and the respective national cultures.

12.3 Summer courses

12.3.1 Dutch Language and Culture summer courses

The Dutch Language Union offers support for Dutch language departments, teachers and students of the Dutch language abroad.

The Dutch Language Union offers two summer courses: one in Ghent (BE) and one in Zeist (NL). During the course in Ghent, special attention goes to the Flemish culture.

More information about the support and the summer courses can be found at the website of the Dutch Language Union <http://taalunieversum.org/inhoud/dutch-worldwide/summer-courses-dutch>

12.3.2 Scholarships for participation at the international summer schools in Latvia

The Latvian party offers the Flemish Party each year during the validity of this Programme up to two (2) scholarships for participation at the international summer schools organized by higher education institutions of the Republic of Latvia.

Information about the international summer schools, application dead-lines and requested documents can be found on the website of the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia <http://www.izm.gov.lv> and the State Education Development Agency <http://www.viaa.gov.lv>.

13. 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).

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.

14. PUBLIC GOVERNANCE

Both Parties will cooperate by exchanging information, experience, knowhow and best practices.

The concerned administrations are:

- for the Republic of Latvia: the Department for Public Administration Development of the State Chancellery, the Public Services Department of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development and the Public Administration institutions working in the field of public administration policy.
- for Flanders: the Public Governance department, The Flemish Agency for the Interior, and other agencies or services that belong to the public governance policy field;

Both Parties agree to focus future contacts and cooperation on public sector modernization.

Specific cooperation themes may cover issues like strategic planning and performance management, human resources management, integrity policy, diversity and integration policies, urban policy approaches and relationships with local authorities, facility management, regulatory management and policy evaluation, as well as research activities.

More specific and detailed topics will be outlined and agreed upon by the institutions, administrations and units at central and local levels, in accordance with their specific competences.

Further to the past efforts by both Parties, including the cooperation on the successful Latvian project "Radi Rīgu", both Parties will explore further opportunities to exchange information and good practices concerning particular urban planning developments and instruments such as public participation and innovative institutional arrangements.

In particular, the Flemish Party is also willing to present its policy concerning public architecture as implemented by the Flemish Government Architect's team.

In case of further mutual interest, particular exchanges or a joint initiative could be outlined and agreed upon by the services concerned within both administrations and parties.

The Flemish Agency for the Interior and the Latvian Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development will cooperate and exchange information about the following subjects: the organization of local elections; local finances and local statistics; autonomous local enterprises; cooperation between local authorities; internal multi-level governance including issues concerning scale and competencies; the relationship between central and local authorities focusing on policy support and administrative control, and digitalization initiatives.

15. GENERAL AND FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

15.1 Scholarships

The exchange of scholarships under Article 12.3 (scholarships for participation in summer language courses) shall be governed by the following general and financial provisions:

Regarding the scholarships in accordance with Article 12.3.2 the State Education Development Agency shall inform the Flemish Party about the submission of applications by Flemish candidates for participation in international summer schools organized by higher education institutions according to the rules laid down by these institutions.

The Latvian Party shall cover tuition fee (participation expenses in the programme, accommodation, living, local transport expenses and field trip).

The application deadline for scholarships for participation at the international summer schools is 1 May.

15.2 Exchange of experts/policymakers

The exchange under 12.2 shall be implemented according to the following criteria:

- a) The sending party shall provide the receiving party with a curriculum vitae, a letter of invitation and information on the goals and programme of the visit as well as the dates of arrival and departure of the nominees concerned, at least three months in advance.
- b) The receiving party shall confirm that it is prepared to receive the nominees concerned six weeks before their departure.
- c) Both parties will bear their own costs.
- d) Participants are responsible for taking their own insurances before entering the country.

15.3 Exchange of persons

Exchange of persons: criteria & financial conditions to be agreed on a case-by-case basis by the parties concerned.

15.4 Film

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

15.5 Other conditions will be agreed on through diplomatic channels.

15.6 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 2017.

Drawn up in Brussels, on 15 May 2014, in two (2) original versions in English.

For the Government of Flanders

For the Government of the Republic of Latvia



Koen Verlaeckaert



Ilze Rūse