

Co-operation agreement
between
the Government of Flanders
and
the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria

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Co-operation agreement
between the Government of Flanders
and the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria

THE GOVERNMENT OF FLANDERS

AND

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

hereinafter referred as “the Parties”,

Reaffirming the relations of friendship and co-operation between the two Parties, the mutual trust and adherence to the values of freedom, democracy, justice and solidarity;

Considering the process of rapprochement between the European Union and its member-states on one side, and the Republic of Bulgaria on the other side, as an associate member, currently negotiating accession to the European Union;

Following the willingness to expand the co-operation between Flanders and the Republic of Bulgaria, to combine to the greatest extent the bilateral and multilateral programmes, to establish co-operation in new fields, as it has been set in this Agreement, and as far as they lie within the competence of the Parties;

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

ARTICLE 1

The Parties shall strengthen and expand their mutual co-operation in the fields of economy, technology, education, science, youth, culture and media policy, social welfare policy, health care, housing policy, environment, infrastructure, transport, telecommunication, agriculture and agrarian industry, vocational training and employment, tourism, sports, administration reform, etc.

To that end the Parties shall promote the co-operation between the institutions, the organisations, and companies, operating in the above-mentioned fields.

ARTICLE 2

In relation to their mutual economic co-operation, the Parties shall pay special attention to the following fields:

- developing economic structures;
- regional economic development;
- developing structures for small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's);
- attracting investments and making joint-venture deals to establish joint enterprises;
- transferring technologies (especially ecologically sound technologies) and know-how;
- expanding bilateral trade exchange, development of commercial contacts and co-operation between companies and institutions;
- sectorial programmes;
- establishing training programmes for Bulgarian management staff;
- co-operation within EU-programmes.

To that end the Parties shall promote the exchange of experts, managers, professors and lecturers who are specialized in establishing structures for small and medium-sized enterprises, and also of management programmes for SME directors and managers.

ARTICLE 3

The Parties shall enhance the development of co-operation and the exchange in the fields of pre-primary, primary and secondary education, higher education, post-graduate studies and adult education.

The Parties shall promote the establishment of short-term training courses for professors and students.

ARTICLE 4

The Parties shall encourage co-operation and exchange between public and private organisations and between their respective universities, higher institutes and research institutes, in the fields of basic and applied scientific research and development of technologies.

ARTICLE 5

The Parties:

- shall promote co-operation and exchange in the field of culture and arts and they shall attach priority importance to activities, contributing to the Parties' cultural development, as well as to the mutual propagation of their languages and cultures and the arts;
- shall promote the exchange and the co-production of audiovisual productions.

ARTICLE 6

The Parties shall support the development of co-operation in the field of tourism and sport. To that end they shall encourage the exchange of experience and information about their respective policies.

ARTICLE 7

The Parties shall co-operate in the field of social realisation, particularly with respect to employment and vocational training, labour and labour relations, in so far as these fields lie within the competence of each of them. To that end the Parties shall promote the exchange between experts and social partners in these fields.

ARTICLE 8

The Parties shall co-operate in the social field, more particularly with respect to health ~~promotion~~, social welfare and social services.

Special attention shall be paid to health care services, health promotion, prevention, integration of the handicapped, planning and programming.

ARTICLE 9

The Parties shall develop co-operation in the fields of environment, environmental planning, housing construction, municipal policy, infrastructure, transport and transport telematics. The Parties shall enhance the exchange of scientific and technical data and transfer of technologies, especially in the field of protection and-improvement of environment.

ARTICLE 10

The Parties shall develop co-operation in the fields of agriculture and rural development. To that end the Parties shall encourage the exchange of experience and information.

ARTICLE 11

The Parties shall encourage direct co-operation between their respective cities and municipalities and they shall support the process of twinning between them. To that end the Parties shall develop and sign programmes specifying the co-operation parameters.

ARTICLE 12

In the fields which have been the subject of this Agreement, the Parties shall aim at co-operation within the framework of international organizations, especially within European institutions.

To that end the Parties may inform each other about their opinipns, and in a more general sense they may discuss specific issues.

The Parties shall co-operate within the framework of programmes of international organizations in the fields that lie within the Parties' competence, thus expressing their special relations of friendship and considering each other as privileged partners.

ARTICLE 13

The Parties shall take all necessary steps within their competence, in order to contribute to the speedier implementation of full integration of the Republic of Bulgaria into the European Union.

ARTICLE 14

In order to put into practice the present Agreement the Parties shall establish a Joint Committee Flanders-Bulgaria.

The Joint Committee shall hold its meetings at least once in every two years, consecutively in Brussels and in Sofia.

During the meetings the Joint Committee agrees on bi-annual work programmes in implementation of the Co-operation Agreement.

The Joint Committee may initiate working groups to hold intersessional meetings in order to assess the process of implementation of the work programmes.

ARTICLE 15

The Joint Committee shall be presided over by ministers, designated by each of the Parties, or by their delegates.

The Joint Committee shall have the following tasks:

- making observations how co-operation has developed and assessing the results;
- adapting priorities and determining the policy, which shall be pursued at stated intervals;
- examining and approving programmes;
- supervising the appropriate financing of the programmes, resulting from this Agreement;
- considering all issues regarding the implementation, operation and interpretation of this Agreement.

ARTICLE 16

This Agreement shall be concluded for a period of five (5) years. It shall continue to be in force thereafter for the next five-year period unless either Party notifies the other Party of its intention to terminate this Agreement not later than one year before the expiry of the initial or any subsequent period.

In case of termination, the Parties shall take the necessary steps in order to ensure the accomplishment of the implemented joint projects under this Agreement.

ARTICLE 17

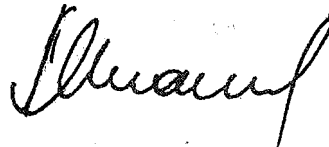
This Agreement shall enter into force on the date when both Parties have notified each other that the requirements of entry into force in accordance with the Parties' domestic legislation have been fulfilled.

Signed on May 18, 2001, in Sofia in two original copies, each one in the Dutch, Bulgarian and English languages, the three **versions being equally authentic** In case of a dispute the English text shall serve as the basis of its settlement.

For the Government of
Flanders

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop on the left, followed by a vertical stroke, and then a long horizontal line ending in a short vertical stroke on the right.

For the Government of
the-Republic of Bulgaria

A handwritten signature in black ink, written in a cursive style with several loops and a long tail extending to the right.
