

CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME

FOR THE YEARS 2005-2007

BETWEEN

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

AND THE GOVERNMENT OF FLANDERS

IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CO-OPERATION TREATY

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Brussels, 30 November 2004

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1. ECONOMY

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1.1. In general

1.1.1. The Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of Flanders called further down “both Parties” agree upon the importance of long-term economic relations, based on the co-operation in different fields.

The co-operation shall be concretised by the exchange of knowledge and experience on the economic and regional development policy and on the use of modern management techniques.

Both Parties shall send documentation and information concerning the subjects mentioned above.

1.1.2. Both Parties shall investigate the possibility of exchanging experts in the economic fields to be determined by common agreement.

1.2. Specific actions

1.2.1. Economic, industrial and regional policies

1.2.1.1. On the request of the other Party, both Parties shall exchange information and experiences on economic, industrial, regional and regional development policies. Particular attention shall be paid to co-operation between both regions and also on co-operation with third regions in the corresponding EU programmes (Structural Funds, Interreg).

1.2.1.2. Both Parties shall exchange a delegation of officials of the administrations concerned (Economy, Regional Policy) in the fields of economy and regional policy with the aim of exchanging information, experience and knowledge concerning the following subjects:

- economic and industrial policy, especially regarding SMEs: aid to enterprises; entrepreneurship (parenthood projects); quality management infrastructure; innovation, R&D and technological development; clusters;
- regional policy (sub-regional economic policy aimed at sub-regions);
- urban economic policy;
- Structural Funds (in particular ERDF): legal basis; financial management and control of the Structural Funds in general and the establishment of effective systems and procedures for financial management and control of the Structural Funds in particular;
- contacts with the European Commission and the development of programmes (especially regarding Interreg IIIC);
- Euro Info Centres;
- new technologies to encourage rational use of energy and renewable and alternative energy sources;

The procedure for the selection of the officials in the above-mentioned fields shall be agreed upon through written notifications.

1.2.2. Economic Development policy

Both Parties shall exchange information and experience in the field of economic development.

The Flemish Party will advise the Bulgarian Party in accession-related aspects of economic development, e.g. achieving compliance of Bulgarian enterprises with the EU requirements and standards in the field of production, management, quality, etc. Special attention will be given to the SME sector. Possibilities will be examined for co-operation in the field of establishing of clusters in appropriate economic sectors using Flemish and EU best practices in the area.

1.2.3. Regional development policy

Both Parties shall exchange experience, knowledge, documentation, work models and information on their activities in the field of regional development. The Flemish Party shall put its experience in the field of Flemish sub-regional economic policy and the Strategic Plan for Spatial Economy at the disposal of the Bulgarian Party. The Flemish Party shall present to the Bulgarian Party the ideas regarding regionalisation: especially the practical evolution in:

- Flemish legislation on regional policy and its compatibility with European legislation;
- financing sources for regional support.

Both Parties shall include in their co-operation the issue of special economic areas and they shall exchange their experience about this. Special attention will be drawn to the aspect of the sustainable industrial zones.

1.2.4. Small and medium-sized enterprises

1.2.4.1. Both Parties stress the importance of developing their co-operation concerning SMEs.

1.2.4.2. Both Parties shall encourage the development of direct contacts between Bulgarian and Flemish SMEs.

1.2.5. Enterprise coaching programme: parenthood projects

Both Parties shall exchange experience and knowledge in the field of parenthood projects.

Parenthood 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.

2. TOURISM

- 2.1. Both Parties shall exchange information about legislation and regulations concerning tourism, statistical data, documentation and studies about tourism development. The Flemish Party shall provide technical assistance (e.g. consultancy) to the Bulgarian Party in the field of village and sustainable tourism, tourism on foot and bicycle.
- 2.2. The Flemish Party shall provide technical assistance (e.g. consultancy) to the Bulgarian side in the field of cultural tourism having in mind the historical traditions, rich cultural patrimony and precious Flemish experience in this area. The Flemish Party shall investigate the possibility to receive in Antwerpen two (2) public servants, active in the field of tourism in 2005 and 2006 and aiming at acquainting themselves with the Flemish experience in the field of cultural tourism management and organisation, as well as the cultural monuments preservation.
- 2.3. Both Parties shall promote mutual exchange of tourism promotion material and encourage the participation of different tourist organisations to tourist events.
- 2.4. Both Parties shall encourage the organisation of study trips for public servants, journalists, radio and television reporters and researchers in the field of tourism.

The Flemish Party is prepared to receive two (2) journalists and two (2) public servants, all active in the field of tourism in 2005 and 2006.

- 2.5. Both Parties shall promote the organisation of work-shops, round tables, seminars, colloquiums and task forces concerning tourism items proposed by the interested Party aiming at exchanging experiences and ideas.
- 2.6. Both Parties shall encourage the establishment of contacts between the relevant Branch Associations from Varna and Antwerp in the field of yachting, aiming at exchanging experiences and ideas for future common work and programme.

3. FOREIGN TRADE

Both Parties shall commit themselves to promoting trade relations between Flanders and Bulgaria.

Both Parties shall organize economic seminars and economic missions, as opportunity requires.

Actions planned (with reservation) by the Flemish Party in the period 2005-2007 are:

- In the fall of 2005 an economic mission might be organized to Sofia in view of the future accession of Bulgaria to the EU.
- Flemish businessmen might go to Sofia in 2007 to further discover the possibilities of the Bulgarian market.

By the end of 2004 Flanders Export Promotion Agency and Flanders Foreign Investment Office shall merge in a new institution called “FIT – Flanders Investment and Trade”, which shall deal with various aspects of international enterprise:

- export;
- attracting foreign investors to Flanders;
- promoting Flemish investments abroad, technological exchange, joint ventures, several forms of co-operation.

Both Parties shall exchange information with regard to business opportunities and investments. Ad hoc, and at the request of the other Party, both Parties shall exchange information regarding their respective markets and sectors and their experiences and knowledge concerning the promotion of international enterprise.

4. AGRICULTURE

4.1. The Flemish Party shall examine the possibility to support, by means of targeted projects in co-operation with Flemish socio-economic umbrella organisations, Flemish research institutes and Flemish trade and industry partners, the Bulgarian Party in elaborating the rural development programme in the framework of the EU SAPARD – programme.

4.2. The Flemish Party offers within the budgetary possibilities, to exchange know-how and experience with the Bulgarian Party in the field of the processing and marketing of fruit, vegetables and fish, in accordance with the European regulations. The Flemish Party also offers the possibility to the Bulgarian Party to exchange know-how and experience concerning the establishment and management of growers’ associations.

Important components of training could be:

- management training according to the crops and the region;
- sustainable farming techniques, biological agriculture;
- training in practical techniques: masonry, welding, maintenance and repair of farm machinery, claw nursing, milk hygiene, etc.;
- technical training: tillage, ploughing, manuring and sowing techniques, animal feed, etc.;
- other areas of mutual interest and know-how;
- livestock - breeding;
- qualification of carcass according to (S) EUROP system:
 1. possibilities for helping the training process of the classifiers;
 2. exchange of experience and information about the (S) EUROP system application.

Science and education:

1. Exchange of experience in the monitoring of the projects set by the ministries for scientific research in the agricultural scientific institutes. The Flemish Party will share its experience about the management of agricultural research projects, i.e. the determination of the criteria for project evaluation and funding, the control on

the implementation and reporting concerning projects under the Bulgarian-Flemish cooperation programme.

2. Mutual scientific and research projects in the following areas:
 - evaluation of the agro-ecological potential of the agricultural regions and agricultural production diversification.
 - irrigation technology optimization in a condition of water deficit in greenhouses.
 - new methods and technologies for ecological resource-saving production and conservation of high-quality and safe foods, drinks and organic products.
 - social and economic problems of the rural development

In view of Bulgarian EU membership in 2007 and the forthcoming application of the CAP, further development of co-operation, fitting with the EU, the Bulgarian and the Flemish agricultural policy is necessary. It will be directed to the transfer of the Flemish expertise and to joint study for the definition of:

- standards for good agricultural and environmental condition, taking account of the specific characteristics of Bulgaria, including soil and climatic conditions and the existing farming systems and farm structures;
- guidelines for the co-existence of traditional, organic and GMO farming;
- for DUS (Distinguishability, Uniformity and Stability) tests of crops for the national and common variety list, etc.

Organic farming:

- making familiar with the system for supervising the authorities who control and give certificates for the organic production in Flanders (normative regulations, procedures, documentation connected with the supervising process, sanctions, label process of the organic production etc.);
- giving help for updating the Bulgarian Regulation № 22 for organic production of plants, vegetable products and foods;
- examination of the Integrated Plan for control, suggested by the European Commission, and elaboration of an Integrated Sanctions` Guide which would be applied by the Bulgarian authorities for control and certification of the organic production;
- discussing the opportunities for reducing the transition period for the organic production in Bulgaria;
- discussing the opportunities for developing an electoral model for National Register of organic producers, processors and importers;
- discussing the draft of the Guide for how to supervise the authorities who control and give certificates for the organic production;
- discussing the contents of the draft of the Annual Report which the authorities for control and certification of the organic production should present at the Ministry of agriculture and forestry in Bulgaria;
- making familiar with the Flemish system how to help the organic farming, how to promote it and how to inform the organic products consumers.

5. ENVIRONMENT

Both Parties are, depending on possibilities of financing and within the available resources, prepared to collaborate on the following items in the field of environment:

- 5.1.** The Flemish Party (cell Environmental Impact Assessment) is prepared to organise two (2) working visits focusing on information exchange, discussions and mutual capacity building in the field of environmental impact assessment.

The visits should contain:

- contacts and meetings with environmental and planning authorities;
- contacts and meetings with proponents;
- contacts with environmental assessment experts (consultants, civil servants);
- visits on site.

- 5.2.** The Flemish Party is prepared to invite, during the validity of this Co-operation Agreement, a team of experts (fluent English required) in the fields of waste management and soil decontamination, water, nature and environmental education and forest management for a period of five (5) days in order to exchange knowledge and establish contacts with the Flemish actors.

- 5.3.** Both Parties are prepared to co-operate in an initiative concerning the optimisation of Water Framework Directive Implementation through a Decision Support System for Integrated Water Resources Management.

- 5.4.** On the basis of the Memorandum of understanding signed on the 22 of June 1999 between the Administration of Environment, Nature, Land and Water Management of the Flemish Government (AMINAL) and the Ministry of agriculture, forestry and agrarian reform, the Ministry of agriculture and forestry would like to continue its co-operation with AMINAL and a involvement of Supporting Centre GIS Flanders in the following areas: forest certification, forest planning and project processes, cares for young forests, forest protected territories management, building the network NATURA 2000 in the forest sector, creating of Data base in GIS format (Geographic Information Science) for the protected territories.

6. TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE (ROAD TRAFFIC, WATERWAYS AND HYDROTECHNICAL WORKS)

6.1. Road Traffic

Road Traffic and Transport in General

The Flemish Party is willing to receive one (1) delegation of five (5) experts for a period of five (5) days in order to give, in function of the interesting points, information, formation and documentation (including on-the-spot inspections on different locations):

- traffic plans with loops and small buses, one way traffic;
- mobility plans and mobility agreements;

- the creation and the functioning of a Flemish Traffic Centre; traffic management by the federal police (for example blockdriving and a road side emergency telephone network);
- the drawing up and interpretation of multimodal traffic models;
- variable message signing and traffic monitoring, moveable road information devices, the co-ordination of traffic lights control, priority measures for public transport in road traffic (traffic lights influencing);
- the development of an internet site on road construction works and traffic regulations;
- the development of intranet and CD-ROM applications about road signalisation at road works areas (road signs, markings, ...);
- reduction of traffic jams and unsafe situations because of road works on motorways;
- black spot management
- information about GIS (Geographic Information System), the organisation of traffic census inquiries and traffic measurements, the application of digital image processing (video cameras) for traffic management; RDS-TMS systems, in-car telematics;
- information about projects on controlled access, the introduction of an alternative merging system to join the traffic on traffic lanes, the construction of roundabouts and speed reducing designs, measures on carpooling, the construction of cycle tracks and footpaths, the construction of car parks;
- cycle tracks management;
- pedestrian tracks management;
- facilities for disabled people;
- road safety measures in school areas;
- information about road safety in general: traffic safety and communication with road users, road safety education in schools, road users awareness rising and main research methods;
- Public Private Partnership (PPP);
- the cleaning and maintenance of roads; system of road management;
- surface friction testing on road markings by the methods SRT and Grip Tester;
- the organisation of activities and principles in cases of emergency works needed;
- a temporary (on peak hours) overtaking prohibition for trucks on certain motorways;
- noise reduction barriers on motorways;
- control of overloaded trucks on motorways

At the request of the Bulgarian Party (Bulgarian ministry of Transport or ministry of the Interior), the Flemish Party is willing to assist them in providing expertise within the following fields and under conditions to be agreed upon later:

- safety audits of existing roads, as well as projects audits, the collection of data about road accidents and the setting up of a data base, including the required activities for analysis of the causes of road accidents;
- introduction of technical safety measures on urban and non-urban roads;
- organisation of a technical specialised visit (training) for three (3) experts in the field of implementation and deployment of the newest technologies for traffic management in Flanders (ITS in road management, a multimodal information centre and video processing techniques) for employees of the Ministry of Transport of the Bulgarian Republic – Directorate for Roads;

- providing expertise in the preparation of the law on road safety and the road safety programme with a view to the year 2005 (the implementation of the Bulgarian law concerning the regulation of the public road transport, according to the E;U; requirements);
- co-operation in the area of road safety communication and sharing of information methodology, exchange of expertise and know-how on road safety education and research planning;
- as regards the utilisation of the public urban and interurban transport, the following expertise can be put at the disposal of the Bulgarian Party:
 - data communication between vehicles and the fixed installation as a combination between radio, GPS and devaluation systems;
 - the integrated exploitation and information systems with, in the near future, travel information derived from those systems available on the Internet;
 - the construction of intermodal transfer points for the multimodal usage of bus and railway stations and P/R.;
 - sharing the Flemish experience in performing international non accompanied combined transportation, as well as in the construction of freight settlements in the framework of the development of combined transport.

6.2. Waterways and Marine Affairs

Both Parties shall aim at the transfer and the exchange of technology and knowhow concerning:

Integrated coastal zone management

- information in relation to environment, infrastructure and tourism shall be exchanged;
- the Flemish Party is prepared to work together with the Bulgarian Party in the framework of EU-programs in relation to the above mentioned subjects.

Port infrastructure, port management and policy

- dredging works for the maintenance of coastal areas and estuaria;
- hydrographics and hydrometrics on a tidal river;
- infrastructure dredging works and the development of the Flemish sea port infrastructure.

The Flemish Party is prepared to invite a delegation in the framework of these subjects and to organise a visit to the Flemish ports.

Both Parties shall co-operate in port related issues by:

- providing mutual support on the occasion of exhibitions and seminars, among others;
- promoting the ports of both Parties;
- attending and promoting commercial contacts.

The Flemish side will acquaint the Bulgarian side with its experience in the field of shifting road traffic to water transport.

The Flemish side will acquaint the Bulgarian side with its experience in the field of intermodal transport and short sea shipping.

7. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SOCIETY

Both Parties shall exchange information and expertise concerning information society and e-government.

8. SOCIAL CARE

Both Parties shall collaborate and exchange information, documentation and experience in the following fields:

- development of alternative social services – protected homes for people with mental disabilities, day-care centres, social rehabilitation and integration centres;
- restructuring of the existing special care institutions through full development of their potential and capacity;
- decrease of the number of children brought up at special care institutions through prevention, re-integration in a family environment or close to that, provision of alternative services to children in the community, placement in foster families and families of relatives;
- improvement of living conditions of children, people with disabilities and aged people at special care institutions;
- laying down conditions for provision of high quality social services by non-governmental organizations;
- support to working parents in bringing up their children aged between 0 months and 3 years.

9. SOCIAL POLICY, WELFARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Both Parties shall collaborate and exchange information, documentation and experience in the fields of welfare and social services.

9.1. Social welfare and health care

- the general welfare policy, in particular scientific research, the quality system, inspection and monitoring, client consultation, co-operation between the public and the private sectors at the international, federal, regional and local levels;
- programming, recognition 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);
- voluntary work;
- health and social care insurance and management of the care insurance fund providing for those people who suffer from a long-lasting seriously diminished capacity;
- co-operation with the justice in the field of welfare and health care.

9.2. Health care

- mental health care (e.g. integrated mental health care, psychiatric home health care, ambulant psychiatry, psychotherapy);
- preventive health care policy (i.a. cancer prevention; prevention of suicide and depression; prevention of problematic use of alcohol and drugs;
- co-ordination and monitoring of vaccination programmes and prophylactic of infectious diseases (i.a. fighting sexually transmittable diseases (e.g. HIV));
- primary health care and home health care;
- inspection, counselling and treatment of complaints about environmental licences;
- creation of a communication and risk management system for the impact on human health of harmful environmental factors;
- setting up long-term research on the evaluation of the health risk resulting from the pollution of life environment;
- determining the population risk groups, subject to negative impacts of the environmental factors;
- development and improvement of a prevention, treatment and rehabilitation programme for drug-addicts.

9.3. Welfare

- social cohesion, in particular community development work, preventive social policy, integration of migrants in society, anti-poverty and social inclusion policies;
- general welfare work, in particular multifunctional care units, crisis care and urgent shelter, care and shelter for the homeless, care and shelter for mentally and physically abused women, forensic care, help for victims and victim support, teleservice;
- family help and home care;
- child and youth care particularly residential, semi-residential and ambulatory care;
- comprehensive and preventive youth welfare policy and integrated youth care
- child and family: child care, preventive child care, help in case of child abuse, adoption etc.;
- care for the handicapped people;
- mediation: in family and divorce mediation, neighbourhood mediation, corrective action mediation, debt mediation and intercultural mediation.

10. EMPLOYMENT WITH AN EMPHASIS ON CERTAIN GROUPS AT RISK ON THE LABOUR MARKET

10.1. Both Parties shall co-operate in the field of employment and professional training and they shall encourage contacts in this sphere between specialised public and private organisations.

10.2. At the request of one of the Parties they shall exchange information in the field of labour market policy, regulations, employment policy, legislation, statistical data and other information concerning employment and professional training.

- 10.3.** At the request of the Bulgarian Party the Flemish Party (Employment administration) shall receive a Bulgarian delegation of three (3) to five (5) persons for five (5) working days in the course of 2005-2006. In order to enable them to organise and prepare this visit the Flemish Party expects the Bulgarian Party to send a request concerning the specific topics and themes they are interested in.
- 10.4.** Both Parties shall further the co-operation in the field of the European Social Fund and they shall exchange information and know-how concerning the management and monitoring of the ESF.
- 10.5.** The Flemish Employment administration shall provide technical support to the projects, concerning employment and vocational training which are approved in the framework of the co-operation programme with Central and Eastern Europe.
- 10.6.** The Flemish Employment administration shall act as facilitator for possible co-operation with every actor or network active in the field of vocational training, the labour market and employment.
- 10.7.** The Flemish Party (Service for Employment and Vocational Training VDAB) is prepared to investigate all questions raised by the Bulgarian Party in the fields of labour market issues, guidance and training and possibly to propose a form of co-operation:
- exchange of experience with Flanders on the mechanisms of introduction of Gender Mainstreaming Approach to the policy development;
 - prevention of the social isolation of groups at risk for their long-term sustainable inclusion into the labour market –flexicurity;
 - promotion of those employers who provide opportunities and ensure vocational training to their workers and employees (especially aimed at supporting aged workers) with the purpose to keep and develop further their career. Active policy on social inclusion of disadvantaged groups on the labour market;
 - creation of a national information system for supply and demand of vocational training in short- and long-term perspective;
 - survey, advertisement and introduction of good practices in the field of continuous training.

11. CULTURE

11.1. In general

Both Parties shall exchange, if requested, information and publications regarding visual arts, design, architecture, museums, cultural heritage, popular culture, literature, translations, performing arts, music, artists' accommodations, amateur arts, socio-cultural work for adults, libraries, cultural centres, local cultural policy, festivals and competitions with an international dimension, including information and documentation regarding cultural co-operation in general.

During the validity of this programme the Flemish Party shall allocate forty (40) days for the exchange of experts in the fields mentioned above.

Both Parties wish to enhance their European cultural co-operation and effectively co-operate in the framework of the cultural programmes of the Council of Europe and UNESCO, thereby availing themselves of the possibilities offered by the cultural programmes of the European Union.

Both Parties shall promote direct contacts between cultural institutions and associations.

11.2. Visual Arts

Both Parties are willing to exchange yearly three (3) experts each in visual arts, architecture and design for a period of one (1) week each.

Both Parties are willing to exchange yearly one (1) visual artist/expert, each, in visual arts for a maximum of fourteen (14) days.

If this involves a graphic designer he/she shall be hosted at the Frans Masereel Centre in Kasterlee. He/She shall be offered free accommodation as well as a daily allowance of EUR 50.00.

If this involves a visual artist/an expert/an critic he/she shall be hosted by AIR (Artists in residence) in Antwerp. He/She shall be offered a daily allowance of EUR 75.00.

The Bulgarian Party wishes to receive one (1) visual artist, which stay shall be covered in the financial provisions, determined by the Bulgarian legislation.

Both Parties are willing to exchange information and documentation about architecture, design, visual arts, residence centres for artists, international competitions, artist-led organisations and the general cultural policy.

11.3. Cultural Heritage

Both Parties are willing to exchange four (4) experts each, in the field of cultural heritage - tangible and intangible - (e.g. museums, folk culture), to analyse the possibilities of developing joint projects (e.g. in the field of digitising cultural heritage).

In the framework of the UNESCO convention of October 17th 2003, both Parties shall study the possibilities of developing joint projects regarding, amongst i.a. the inventory-making and the preservation of the immaterial heritage in Bulgaria and in Flanders. In a first phase experiences and know-how can be exchanged between the Flemish administration of Culture and the ministry of Culture of Bulgaria.

11.4. Performing arts

During the validity of the present programme, the Flemish Party is prepared to send a small dance group of maximum six (6) persons to Bulgaria for a period of five (5) days at most. The modalities shall be agreed upon in due time and according to the financial possibilities of both parties.

During the validity of the present programme both Parties shall exchange one (1) expert from the theatre and dance sectors for a period of three (3) days at most.

11.5. Music

During the validity of the present programme, the Flemish Party is prepared to send a small music ensemble (trio or quartet) for a concert tour of maximum five (5) days. The modalities shall be agreed upon in due time and according to the financial possibilities of both parties.

Both Parties shall send two (2) experts in the field of music for a maximum of five (5) days during the validity of the present programme.

11.6. Literature

The Flemish Party shall receive one (1) Bulgarian translator at the Vertalershuis in Louvain for a period of one (1) month during the validity of the present programme. Contrary to the usual financial arrangement when receiving individuals, this translator shall be offered free accommodation as well as a subsidy amounting to EUR 1,000.00.

More information about the conditions of admission and the registration procedure can be provided by the Culture administration.

After his/her stay in Louvain the translator shall be offered the possibility to stay in a residence of the literary association "Het Beschrijf" where he/she can collaborate with a Flemish author. More information about the conditions of admission and the registration procedure can be provided by the Culture administration.

Bulgarian authors shall equally be offered the possibility to stay in a residence of Het Beschrijf. More information about the conditions of admission and the registration procedure can be provided by the Culture administration.

11.7. Socio-cultural work for adults

During the validity of the present programme the Flemish Party shall yearly receive a Bulgarian delegation of four (4) people for a specific training visit of ten (10) days.

Possible themes are: detecting needs in programmes of socio-cultural work for adults (gaining an insight in the needs of the learner or the potential learner), creating partnerships between the providers of adult education, developing a learning culture, improving the accessibility of the supply, migrant education, local cultural policy, the role of support centres, volunteer work, etc. A good knowledge of French or English is required.

11.8. Libraries

The Flemish Party proposes to develop, in mutual consultation, a training programme for experts in the public library, in view of supporting the promotion of expertise in Bulgaria.

The Flemish Party shall, annually, receive three (3) experts for an apprenticeship of seven (7) days. A good knowledge of French or English is required.

Annually, three (3) Flemish experts shall go to Bulgaria for seven (7) days in order to organise a training programme.

Both parties commit themselves to sharing and promoting the “best practices” of both countries.

11.9. Amateur arts

The Flemish Party proposes to develop projects in the field of amateur arts in mutual consultation. In this context it has in mind the sponsorship of projects, the exchange of knowledge and experience, the training and apprenticeship programmes, the exchange of groups, and the exchange of publications, documentation and information.

Both Parties exchange three (3) experts in the field of amateur arts for four (4) days, so as to examine the possibility of these joint projects.

12. NON-FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION

The Flemish Party proposes to develop a training programme for people responsible for non-formal education in mutual consultation. During the validity of the present programme the Flemish Party shall receive each year four (4) people for a period of at most ten (10) days for a specific training programme.

Possible themes are: detecting needs in adult education programmes (acquiring an insight into the needs of learners or future learners), creating partnerships between providers of adult education, developing a culture of learning, increasing the provision's accessibility, activities with immigrants, the role of the support centres, volunteer work, etc.

A good command of French or English is required. In preparation of these training programmes both Parties shall first of all exchange a delegation of three (3) people at the most (at least one of whom is a civil servant) for a maximum of seven (7) days.

13. YOUTH

During the validity of the Programme both Parties shall exchange four (4) experts (civil servants, youth workers) for a study visit of each time seven (7) days to elaborate a youth (work) policy at all levels (local, regional and national) and bring about better co-operation among these levels.

In the course of this work-programme both Parties shall exchange delegations of up to four (4) persons (responsible civil servants and youth workers) for a maximum of seven (7) days in order to elaborate on the ideas of the White Book of the European Commission "A new impulse for Europe's youth" by exchanging good practice, based on the themes dealt with in the White Book.

Both Parties agreed to send or receive youth workers for participation in selected international (youth) events.

14. EDUCATION

14.1. Exchange of information

At the request of the other Party, both Parties shall exchange information and experiences regarding the structure and organisation of education, professional recognition on the basis of the Community Directives and the implementation of the Bologna Declaration, the development of an accreditation system, and other topical education-related issues, as subsequent Master programmes

14.2. Exchange of professors / teachers / experts / policymakers

As Bulgaria is to become one of the future EU members, Flanders can cooperate with the Bulgarian Republic, in the fields of higher education, by means of educational programmes, training of public servants and experts, the devolution of legislation on the level of education – fields for which a certain Flemish expertise exists.

The Parties may annually exchange two (2) experts/professors, affiliated with an institution of higher education or government body, for a period of up to seven (7) days in order to discuss educational reforms resulting from the implementation of the Bologna Declaration or to participate in short-term seminars, conferences, congresses or symposia or to build a network of contacts and exchanges between institutions of higher education.

14.3. Specialisation scholarships

The two sides shall grant on a reciprocal basis 2 (two) fellowships for each of the academic 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 years, as their duration will depend on the curriculum. (min. 9 months and max. 12 months)

14.4. Research Scholarships

The two sides shall also grant on a reciprocal basis one six-month fellowship for scientific and research activity in the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 academic years. On request of the sending Party, these months can be divided in periods of three (3) months at least.

14.5. Summer scholarships: Language and Culture Studies

The entry of the Republic of Bulgaria into the EU shall reflect on a great demand for people who understand and speak the language because not only the Bulgarian language shall be used as a current language with the European institutions but also the political and commercial relations shall increase. For this reason it will be very useful to stimulate the study of foreign languages through summer courses.

The Bulgarian side shall ensure on an annual basis to the Flemish side 2 (two) fellowships for participation in summer Bulgarian language courses that will be organized by the St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia and the St. Cyril and Methodius University of Veliko Turnovo. The applicants should have a basic knowledge of Bulgarian.

The Flemish Party shall provide to the Bulgarian Party each year (2) summer scholarships for the "Dutch Language and Culture" summer course which shall be organised either at the *Limburgs Universitair Centrum* in Hasselt Diepenbeek or at the *Talencentrum* of Ghent University. These summer courses shall be organised on an annual basis. The three-week courses shall be above all intended for Dutch language and literature students at the Bulgarian institutes of higher education. The applicants are expected to have a reasonable command of Dutch at the Elementary Knowledge Level of the Certificate of Dutch as a Foreign Language.

14.6. Secondary professional agricultural education

Both Parties shall promote the exchange of experience on the organization of the management, education and agricultural advice in agrarian and forest schools.

15. SPORTS

Both Parties shall set aside each year a quota of twenty (20) days to create the opportunity for athletes, trainers and policy makers in the other country to participate in trainings and clinics in the field of sports.

16. CAPACITY BUILDING

16.1. College of Europe in Natolin

The Flemish Party shall offer a contribution of 10,000 EUR to a postgraduate scholarship for one (1) Bulgarian student to study at the College of Europe in Natolin (Warsaw) during the academic years 2005-2006, 2006-2007.

The selection of the student shall be done by the College of Europe in Natolin in concert with the competent Bulgarian authorities.

16.2. Port Training and Port Management

The Flemish Party offers to the Bulgarian Party the possibility to send experts to seminars, in the field of port training and port management, organised by APEC (Antwerp/Flanders Port Training Center vzw) in the course of 2005 and 2006.

The Bulgarian Party shall present its candidates for these seminars and the participants shall be selected by APEC.

The Flemish Party shall cover the costs of the participation. Travel expenses are to the account of the participant.

16.3. Regional and local authorities co-operation

The Flemish Party shall provide, by sending experts, assistance to the Bulgarian Party to transfer expertise in the field of developing projects for regional, interregional, inter-municipal and cross-border co-operation.

16.4. Public sector financial management

The Flemish Party offers to the Bulgarian Party:

16.4.1. The possibility to send experts from Bulgaria to seminars in the field of public sector financial management organized by the Flemish Party in the course of 2005, 2006 and 2007. The Bulgarian Party shall present its candidates for these seminars and the relevant Flemish institution shall select the participants. The Flemish Party shall cover the costs of the participation. Travel expenses are to the account of the participants.

16.4.2. To provide assistance to the Bulgarian Party by sending Flemish experts to transfer expertise in the field of public financial management.

The specific areas in which capacity will be built through the above two forms of assistance are:

- multi-annual budgeting;
- programme and performance budgeting;
- public sector investment management (i.a. public procurement, tendering procedure, ..);
- curriculum design of training programs in public sector financial management.

17. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF THE STRUCTURAL FUNDS

Regarding the willingness of both Parties to expand the cooperation between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of Flanders to establish cooperation in new fields promoting the strengthening of the administrative capacity concerning Structural Funds, the following is agreed:

1. Both Parties shall agree upon the importance of cooperation relations in the field of sound financial management of the Structural Funds regarding the preparation of Republic of Bulgaria, in its capacity of a candidate country, to fully participate in the Structural Funds.

2. Both Parties shall exchange information about legislation and regulations concerning the financial management of the Structural Funds.
3. Both Parties shall encourage the organization of study trips, seminars, visits concerning Structural Funds aiming at exchanging experiences and ideas for the establishment of the financial control procedures for the Structural Funds.
4. The exchange of experts and officials will be determined by common agreement.
5. The Flemish administration shall provide technical support aiming at establishing appropriate systems and procedures for financial management and control in order to fulfill the specific requirements of the Structural Funds regulations.

18. GENERAL AND FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

18.1. General

Both Parties shall send their proposals for the new co-operation programme at the latest six (6) weeks before the date foreseen for the meeting of the joint committee.

They agree that their future co-operation should be developed in as concrete a way as possible, starting from realistic projects. It should avoid general points such as exchange of information or proposals without a real commitment from the Parties involved.

The following general provisions and regulations were endorsed:

- all activities and exchanges mentioned in this programme shall be carried out within the limits of the financial resources at the disposal of the two Parties;
- the activities and exchanges envisaged in this programme shall not exclude other initiatives or visits which might be proposed and agreed in advance by both Parties through diplomatic channels or by direct mutual agreement;
- the organisation of music, dance and theatre performances and exhibitions, other than those mentioned in this programme, should a priori be based on a direct agreement covering financial and other terms between the organisations and artists involved in such events;
- both governments can subsidise projects as well.

Other conditions are to be agreed upon by the partners on a case by case basis.

All the details related to the specific cooperation programmes carried out under this Programme, shall be agreed upon between the competent authorities of the two Governments, which will be coordinators in the relevant sectors. The competent authority/coordinator in the sectors "Economy", "Foreign trade" and "Tourism" of the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria is the Ministry of Economy.

18.2. Scholarships

The exchange of scholarships under articles 14.3. (specialisation) and 14.4. (scientific research) shall be governed by the following general provisions:

- a) The applicants should be under 35 years of age and they must have a master's degree or equivalent and an excellent academic record.
- b) The nominees shall be selected by the sending Party.
- c) The sending Party shall submit to the receiving Party the nominees' filled out scholarship application forms and other documents required in the scholarship application forms before April 1st of each calendar year. All documents can be submitted in Dutch for Bulgarian applicants and in Bulgarian for Flemish applicants or in the English, French or German languages:
 - a detailed curriculum vitae mentioning the knowledge of languages;
 - a detailed study- or work programme which one wants to take at a recognized institution in the guest country;
 - letters of recommendation and eventual admission to the institution.
- d) The receiving Party shall inform the sending Party, before July 1st of each calendar year, whether the nominees have been admitted and shall simultaneously communicate to the sending Party the names of institutions accepting them for the study periods.
- e) The sending Party shall give precise details concerning each scholarship-holder's arrival at least two (2) weeks prior to the commencement of his/her stay.

The exchange of scholarships under Article 14.3. (specialisation) shall be governed by the following financial provisions:

- To be covered by the sending Party: the travel expenses to and from the place of study.
- To be covered by the receiving Party:

In Flanders:

- a monthly allowance of EUR 720.00;
- enrolment fees to be paid to a Flemish Community institute or to an institute subsidised by the Flemish Community, limited to a maximum amount that shall be readjusted annually (academic year 2005-2006: EUR 502.00);
- health insurance and third Party insurance in accordance with Belgian legislation;

In Bulgaria:

- accommodation in a students' boarding house in exchange of a charge (between 25 and 35 BGL monthly);
- monthly fellowship of 210 (two hundred and ten) BGL;
- health insurance in compliance with the Bulgarian legislation;
- exemption of educational fees except for musical and medical education.

The exchange of scholarships under article 14.4. (Scientific research) shall be governed by the following financial provisions:

- To be covered by the sending Party: the travel expenses to and from the place of study.

- To be covered by the receiving Party :

In Flanders:

- a monthly allowance of EUR 690.00;
- a starting allowance of EUR 124.00 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;

In Bulgaria:

- accommodation in a students' boarding house in exchange of a charge (between 25 and 35 BGL monthly);
- monthly fellowship of 210 (two hundred and ten) BGL;
- health insurance in compliance with the Bulgarian legislation;
- exemption of educational fees except for musical and medical education.

18.3. Allowances for summer courses /article 14.5/

Since 2000 the scholarships for the Dutch Language and Culture summer course have been allocated by the Dutch Language Union in co-operation with the Flemish organisers. The applicants shall be divided over the two centres by the Dutch Language Union, which means that the division no longer takes place according to the country of origin. The Flemish Party draws attention to the new registration procedure for the summer courses: the applicants for the summer course are to send their application / registration form, initialled by their Dutch language teacher, directly to the Higher Education Administration. The Dutch Language Union shall select the most suitable applicants among the submitted applications. The shortlist of selected applicants shall be sent for information to the body responsible for the allocation of the scholarships in the Republic of Bulgaria.

The Dutch Language Union shall send the "Dutch Language and Culture" brochure to all institutions where the Dutch language is instructed. The brochure (including the English version) can also be found at the web site of the Dutch Language Union: www.taalunieversum.org/taalunie/summer_courses_in_dutch.

The Flemish Party informs the Bulgarian candidates for the summer course Nederlandse taal en cultuur of the commissions decision ultimately by April 1st.

The Flemish Party shall cover the enrolment fees, board and lodging, expenses for participation in excursions within the framework of the course programme, and health insurance and third Party insurance in accordance with Belgian legislation.

For the participants in the summer seminars the Bulgarian side shall provide accommodation in a students' boarding house, board and a cultural program. The participants in the seminar shall be exempt from an educational fee. The participants in the seminar shall pay for their insurance.

The travel costs to the venue of the seminar and back shall be borne by the candidate.

18.4. Exchange of persons

The terms and conditions mentioned in this paragraph apply to all exchanges of individual persons mentioned in the work programme, unless otherwise agreed upon.

The short-term exchange of persons (for 15 days at the most) as determined in the present programme shall be implemented according to the following criteria:

- the sending Party shall provide the receiving Party with the curriculum vitae, the invitation, plan of activities and the dates of the departure and arrival of the people concerned at least two (2) months in advance;
- the receiving Party shall inform the sending Party, at least one (1) month in advance whether the candidates have been accepted;
- the sending Party shall provide the receiving Party with the exact dates of departure and arrival at least three (3) weeks in advance.

To be covered by the sending Party: the travel expenses to and from the place of destination.

To be covered by the receiving Party:

In Flanders:

- accommodation and breakfast;
- a fixed allowance of 50.00 EUR/day;
- health insurance and third-Party insurance within the framework of the Belgian legislation.

In Bulgaria :

- accommodation, meals and travel expenditures within the country, in accordance with the work programme and with the approval of the receiving authorities;
- persons are responsible for taking their own insurance before entering the country.

Both Parties shall send their proposals for the new co-operation-programme at the latest six (6) weeks before the date foreseen for the meeting of the joint committee.

The following general provisions and regulations were endorsed:

- all activities and exchanges mentioned in this programme shall be carried out within the limits of the financial resources at the disposal of the two Parties;
- the activities and exchanges envisaged in this programme shall not exclude other initiatives or visits which might be proposed and agreed in advance by both Parties through diplomatic channels;
- the organisation of music, dance and theatre performances and exhibitions, other than those mentioned in this programme, should a priori be based on a direct agreement covering financial and other terms between the organisations and artists involved in such events;
- both governments can subsidise projects as well.

Other conditions are to be agreed upon by the partners on a case by case basis.

18.5. Film

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

18.6. Exchange of exhibitions

Arrangements shall be discussed and agreed upon on a case by case basis by the Parties concerned. If not, the following rules are applicable:

The sending Party takes care of:

- design, preparation, production and packing of the exhibition;
- international transport to its first location in the receiving country and return transport from its last location to the country of origin or to another country;
- insurance from nail to nail;
- supply of the material for the production of the catalogue (texts, photos, slides, etc.);
- travel expenses of one (1) expert accompanying the exhibition to supervise the mounting and/or dismantling as well as packing and /or unpacking of the works.

The receiving Party takes care of:

- making available appropriate exhibition halls with the necessary security infrastructure (climatic conditions, guards, etc.);
- providing the necessary staff for loading and unloading, packing and unpacking, mounting and dismantling of the exhibition;
- printing of the catalogue, if agreed by both Parties, and the posters and invitations;
- organising general publicity as well as the opening ceremony for the exhibition;
- accommodation expenses of one (1) expert accompanying the exhibition and supervising the mounting and/or dismantling; the duration of any such visit shall be agreed upon in advance;
- providing the sending Party with ten (10) copies of all material published in connection with the exhibition (catalogue, poster, invitation, etc.).

In case of damage, the receiving Party shall not proceed with the restoration of the works without the prior approval of the sending Party, but shall supply all relevant documentation and assistance to enable the sending Party to pursue any claim for compensation from the relevant insurance company.

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.

19. AGREEMENT CONCERNING THE COLLABORATION VIA PROJECTS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FLEMISH PROGRAMME FOR CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Both Parties agree on extending their co-operation by means of mutually supported projects.

The Flemish Party proposes to put at the disposal of the Bulgarian Party the expertise and experience present in Flanders and the Bulgarian Party wishes to collaborate preferably in the following priority fields: SME-development, economy, tourism, and investments, employment, structural funds, regional co-operation, agriculture, environment, transport and capacity building, administrative competence and management, infrastructure, professional education and trilateral co-operation in order to assist the country to meet the requirements demanded of the country to make its entry in the EU.

The Bulgarian Party wishes to collaborate preferably in the fields of infrastructure, environment and public health, agriculture, employment and economic and industrial policy, (SMEs) in order to assist the country in meeting the requirements demanded of the country to make its entry in the EU.

In accordance with the Flemish policy towards Central and Eastern Europe, central contact points have been designated in the Foreign Affairs administration in Flanders and in the ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bulgaria in order to collect and select project proposals and to transmit them to the respective contact point.

The Parties agree that members of the Flemish and Bulgarian contact points have regular meetings, alternately in Flanders and in Bulgaria aiming to review the procedure of the handling of project proposal, collecting, assessing, approving, implementing and monitoring of the projects and to examine the execution of the projects already approved, in co-operation with the representatives of the competent Flemish administration and Bulgarian ministries – sectoral coordinators.

All the proposals have been evaluated by both Parties on the basis of their own criteria and procedures.

Both Parties have established a ranking list on either side.

The following project proposals have been registered:

BUL/001/04	CLO	Organic farming in Bulgaria "Orfabul"
BUL/002/04	Lab.Epistemol.	E-GOV-ENHANCE
BUL/003/04	UGent	Support to sustainable development in Bulgaria
BUL/004/04	VFG	VIDRARE - Social assessment of disabled children
BUL/005/04	CLO	Test of Ryegrass Germplasm for breeding value
BUL/006/04	VITO	Improvement of groundwater protection
BUL/007/04	UGent	Training in Textile Technology
BUL/008/04	ADO Icarus	STAMINA
BUL/009/04	AGRIV	ECOTRAINING BULGARIA
BUL/010/04	Sequoyah	BPCS Bulgarian Port Community System
BUL/011/04		withdrawn
BUL/012/04	HEMMIS	Water treatment policy Ecological Criteria
BUL/013/04	Eurogen	Beekeeping
BUL/014/04	EURAS	Optimisation pesticide monitoring strategy

BUL/015/04	UGent	Stimulating market awareness in agriculture
BUL/016/04	Belconsulting	Integrated water management in Agropolychim
BUL/017/04	CPM	Regional development capacity building
BUL/018/04	EUROSENSE	PILCOROM
BUL/019/04	ANY FAIR	EURO-PARTNER
BUL/020/04	GIM	Nature Parks
BUL/021/04	MJA	Drug Prevention by non-formal Education
BUL/022/04	MPI	Steps
BUL/023/04	Febezo	Middle Class Development
BUL/024/04	Boerenbond	BULAGRI

Both Parties have agreed to submit the following project for possible funding to the Flemish government within the available budget of EUR 770,000.00 for 2004 in a priority order proposed by the Bulgarian Party:

Project number	Project name	Co-ordinator	Proposed budget
BUL/007/04	Training in Textile Technology	U Gent	100.000 EUR
BUL/006/04	Improvement of groundwater protection	VITO	130.000 EUR
BUL/001/04	Organic farming	CLO	130.000 EUR
BUL/010/04	Bulgarian Port Community System	Sequoyah	90.000 EUR
BUL/014/04	Pesticide monitoring	EURAS	130.000 EUR
BUL/008/04	Accessibility, Mobility and Independence	ADO Icarus	130.000 EUR

Both Parties agree to hold the next meeting of the Joint Committee in Sofia in November 2006.

This program shall come into force from the day of its signing.

Drawn up in Brussels on November 30th, 2004, in two (2) original versions, each one in Dutch, Bulgarian and English languages. Both texts are legally valid. In the case of dispute, the English text shall prevail.

On behalf of the
government of Flanders,

On behalf of the government
of the Republic of Bulgaria,

Diane Verstraeten

Atanas Mladenov

Both Parties agree to hold the next meeting of the Joint Committee in Sofia in November 2006.

This programme shall come into force from the day of its signing.

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On behalf of the government
of the Republic of Bulgaria,

On behalf of the
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Diane Verstraeten