

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT COMMISSION  
FLANDERS - REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA  
HELD IN BRUSSELS  
ON 2<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 2009**

The third meeting of the Joint Commission to discuss the Co-operation Programme for the years 2009-2011 to implement the Co-operation Agreement between the Government of Flanders and the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria was held in Brussels on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2009.

The chairman of the Flemish delegation welcomed the Bulgarian delegation and presented the members of his delegation:

**Flemish delegation:**

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

- Koen Verlaeckt secretary general, president
- Etienne Schollaert policy advisor, secretary

**Tourism Flanders Brussels**

- Jan Van Praet policy advisor

**Department of Public Governance**

- Jan De Mulder policy advisor

**Department of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media**

- Arlette Thys policy advisor
- Marie Renier policy advisor

**Agency Youth Policy**

- Jan Vanhee policy advisor

**Departement Welfare, Public Health and Family**

- Machteld Wauters policy advisor

**Department of Work and Social Economy**

- Farah Nolens policy advisor

**Department of Economy, Science and Innovation**

- David Grzegorzewski policy advisor
- Mieke Houwen policy advisor
- Bart Laethem researcher

**Department of Mobility and Public Works**

- Etienne De Winne director-engineer
- Robert Peeters policy advisor
- Pim Bonne engineer
- Eline Damman policy advisor

**Department of Agriculture and Fisheries**

- Gabriel Ysebaert engineer

**Department of Environment, Nature and Energy**

- Annemie Neyens policy advisor
- Bart Van Impe expert

**Department of Country Planning, Housing and Immovable Heritage**

- Nele Haegemans policy advisor

**Department of Education**

- Dirk Lapeirre policy advisor
- Johan De Witte expert

**Flanders Investment and Trade (FIT)**

- Evelien Staelens policy advisor



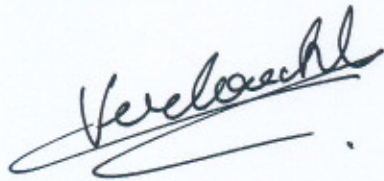
The negotiations were held in a constructive atmosphere, and resulted in a draft text of the Co-operation Programme for the years 2009-2011 which was signed by the heads of the delegations.

Both Parties also agreed to refer to each other's websites - which will contain updated information about their mutual cooperation. The Flemish Party will, in view of this, have a special link on its website [www.flanders.be](http://www.flanders.be), referring to its activities in the Republic of Bulgaria.

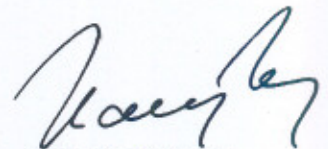
Both Parties agreed to initiate an amendment to the Co-operation treaty between the Government of Bulgaria and the Government of Flanders aiming at duty and tax exemption in Bulgaria of the projects and activities under the co-operation programme.

For all information and follow-up of this cooperation programme in both countries, the diplomatic channels will be used.

Brussels, April 2, 2009



Koen Verlaeckt



Nikola Kaludov

**COOPERATION PROGRAMME**

**FOR THE YEARS 2009-2011**

**BETWEEN**

**THE GOVERNMENT OF FLANDERS**

**AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

**IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION AGREEMENT**

**BETWEEN**

**THE GOVERNMENT OF FLANDERS**

**AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

Brussels, 2 April 2009

For the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Bulgarian Republic and the Government of Flanders that was signed in Sofia on 18 May 2001, both Parties have agreed upon the following Cooperation Programme for the period 2009-2011. It was elaborated during the third meeting of the Joint Commission Flanders - Bulgarian Republic that was held in Brussels on 2 April 2009.

## **1. ECONOMY**

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

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

### **1.2. Specific actions**

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

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

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

Particular attention shall be given to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 1.3. Exchange of delegations

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

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

## 2. TOURISM

Both Parties shall exchange information about legislation and regulations concerning tourism, statistical data, documentation and studies about tourism development.

Both Parties shall encourage the organisation of study trips for public servants, journalists, radio and television reporters and researchers in the field of tourism.

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.

## 3. FOREIGN TRADE

The Flemish Party is committed to further enhance and support the trade relations between Flanders and Bulgaria.

Flanders Investment & Trade, the agency of the Flemish government that supports Flemish companies and in particular SME with their international trade and also



assists foreign companies in setting up or expanding in Flanders, will do this by means of:

- pointing out trade opportunities on the Bulgarian market to Flemish companies;
- supporting Flemish companies that want to expand their business to Bulgaria;
- organising events related to Bulgaria, like seminars, trade missions, participations in trade fairs, etc.

Flanders Investment & Trade uses for this purpose the services of the trade representative of the Walloon Region in Sofia, Mr. Eric Santkin, who is also the contact person for Flemish companies as far as the Bulgarian market is concerned.

Flanders Investment & Trade works with an action programme, based on a regional strategy. This strategy is the result of a yearly discussion between FIT's domestic and foreign network and the main economic actors in Flanders. The strategy focuses on promising sectors in a certain market. As far as Bulgaria is concerned, this strategy is focused on the sectors building and health and pharmaceuticals.

Flanders Investment & Trade plans the following initiatives in the period 2009-2010:

2009

- Seminar on EU-funds for Bulgaria (24 March).
- Product Sample Booth on trade fair Bulmedica Buldental (12 - 15 May).

2010

- Product Sample Booth on building fair Stroiko.
- Invitation of Bulgarian purchasers from the medical sector.

Both Parties are committed to exchange information regarding business opportunities and investment possibilities. Ad hoc and on the request of the other Party, both Parties will exchange information about their respective markets and sectors and share their knowledge and experience.

#### **4. AGRICULTURE**

Within the framework of budgetary possibilities/restrictions, the Flemish Party shall engage in cooperation with the Bulgarian Party for the implementation and updating of the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy (CAP and CFP) of the European Union, especially in relation to:

- sharing experiences concerning the monitoring of scientific research projects carried out by agricultural research institutions appointed by the ministries;
- coordination of positions, exchange of experience and drafting of joint proposals and visions pertinent to improving the regulatory framework and policies of the Community in the field of agriculture and fisheries, of state aid, of producers' and sectoral organizations in agriculture, market mechanisms, and crisis prevention and management tools in agriculture;
- cooperation in the field of scientific research, vocational training in agriculture and fisheries, in the implementation of framework programmes for research

and technological development of the EU and the building of the European Economic Area (EEA), including common scientific and research projects in the following fields:

- evaluation of agro-ecological potential of agricultural regions and diversification of agricultural production;
  - optimisation of irrigation technologies in cases of water shortages in greenhouses;
  - new methods and techniques dealing with environment friendly and cost-efficient production and storage of safe high-quality foodstuffs, drinks and organic products originating from vegetables and animals;
  - possibility of traceability of foodstuffs throughout the food chain in view of higher food safety;
  - socio-economic problems in the frame of rural development.
- cooperation in the field of irrigation management and development of irrigation associations in Bulgaria, in the field of registration, testing and control of agricultural and forestry equipment.

Organic farming:

- information on the system of supervision on certification-institutions dealing with organic farming in Flanders and in Bulgaria (legal framework, procedures, control documentation, sanctions, labelling of products, etc);
- information on the Flemish and Bulgarian systems of support for organic farming, and on activities for the promotion of organic farming and information addressed to consumers of organic products.

Cooperation in the field of rural development, more specifically between the established rural networks in order to promote exchange of experiences in rural development and to promote cooperation between LAG (Local Action Groups).

Cooperation in the introduction of best practices aimed at provision of safe foods and fodders, in the sector of vine-growing and viticulture, in modern veterinary and phytosanitary control, for the purpose of assuring the high quality of agricultural products.

Cooperation in the field of scientific and technological know-how on seed quality and on variety testing of agricultural crops in view of the implementation of the EU-Directive 2002/53/EC on the common catalogue of varieties of agricultural species.

Encouraging the sectoral organizations of producers and/or merchants to exchange experience in the preparation of optional programmes for the promotion of agricultural products and foodstuffs in third countries and development of joint programmes and organizing of structural chains.

Cooperation in the field of implementation of the Operational Programme for the Fisheries Sector (OPFS).

## **5. ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE**

### **5.1. Nature and Environmental education**

The Flemish Party, the Nature and Environmental Education Unit (EE), is prepared to invite a delegation to introduce them within the (N)EE-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 (N)EE-unit can organise 3 or 4 days with the following interests, possibly in a follow-up project (MOS, Ecocampus, ...):

- introduction of and getting acquainted with the working of the (N)EE-unit service within Flanders, with Education for Sustainable Development as the frame of reference, and with the networking on (N)EE (diverse target groups) and on ESD;
- getting acquainted in a profound way with the MOS-project (Environmental Care at School), an educational and environmental care project from kindergarten to higher education and, if preferred, linked with one or more school visits; getting acquainted with the educational means;
- introduction of and getting acquainted with the Ecocampus-project, a new project to introduce environmental care in higher education and universities (curricula, internal management, student life), and, if preferred, linked with a visit to a university or an institution of higher education;
- 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 (N)EE;
- site visit to one or more (N)EE-centres, linked with a Flemish nature reserve (coast, heath, ...), and to a provincial EE-service, getting acquainted with the common educational means.

The Flemish Party (ENE Department together with the NEE Service) and the Bulgarian Party (Ministry of Environment & Water, Directorate for Strategy, European Affairs and International Cooperation) cooperate in a project on "Environmental performance in primary education in Bulgaria (MOS-project)", financed by the Flemish Minafund.

### **5.2. Expert exchange**

Both Parties are prepared to invite, during the validity of the present programme, a team of maximum five (5) experts (fluent English required) for a period up to five (5) working days within the frame of environment, nature and energy, in order to exchange knowledge and establish contacts.

### **5.3. Waste management**

The Flemish Party (Public Waste Agency - OVAM) is prepared – within its financial possibilities - to invite a number of experts in the field of waste management and soil sanitation in order to exchange know how and information concerning specific items in this matter.

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

### **6.1. Roads and Traffic**

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

- Coordination centre for all road construction works: all road activities are geared to one another within a certain region in order to avoid conflicts in space and time and to minimize obstructions for road users and adjoining people.
- Development of an internet site for public use e.g. about road works and regulations, travel planners and other 'pre trip' information.
- Road safety: how to make priorities – how to deal with unsafe locations – handbook of road safety – road safety inspections and audits.
- PPP (Public Private Partnership) - applied for the construction of motorways or strategic constructions to improve mobility and to deal with missing links in the primary road network – dealing with contracting by result and risk management.
- Road Data Warehouse of the Agency: all kinds of data which can be geographically referred is stored and handled by one application and one interface.
- Application of the Geographic Information System for handling road and traffic related data.
- Methods and materials for the control of the road condition.
- The control of the overloaded lorries running on the motorways.
- Traffic light and speed cameras.
- Projects to improve the traffic circulation of public transport.
- Telematics – network
- Exchange of information about expertise en knowledge.
- Maintenance (general or winter) of roads.
- Incident management: ensuring first aid services, emergency planning, also the hoisting of vehicles when blocking traffic during rush hour in urban areas.
- Mitigation of the environmental impact of traffic: noise reduction barriers and other measures along highways.

### **6.2. Mobility and Traffic Safety**

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

#### **6.2.1. Education with regard to car use**

- Promotion of equal alternatives for road traffic to the use of the car; e.g. revaluation of pedestrian and cycling traffic and making (small) travels not dependable on combustion engines.

#### 6.2.2. Evaluating, improving existing infrastructure

- Permanent adjustment of the rational use of means of goods transport: logistics and intermodality of transport of goods.
- Public transport and intermodality of transport of persons:
  - models of integrated transport systems and urban planning for passenger transport (experience and plans), e.g. mobility agreements and management;
  - facilities for disabled people (design for all);
  - construction of intermodal transfer points for multimodal use of bus and railway stations, and the Park & Ride system;
  - state-of-the-art management of the public space in order to maximise the goal setting toward the benchmark, e.g. improvement for pedestrians, cyclists, improvement of junctions, ...

#### 6.2.3. Reduction of accident rate and promotion of desired (traffic) behaviour

- Promoting desired (traffic) behaviour and choices; specific topics are:
  - speeding, drinking and driving, traffic aggression, drivers' fatigue, eco driving;
  - specific policy regarding road safety.

#### 6.2.4. Actual policy toward legislation/management

- Improving and managing the balance between available space and (car) traffic.
- Exchanging and consulting know-how about toll-collecting, traffic pricing and other monetary techniques to curb general or parking congestion of cars in urban areas.
- Transport policy:
  - internalization of external costs (methodology, contents, data);
  - methodologies for the evaluation of transport policy scenarios;
  - organization of studies and measurements, laws and legislation.

#### 6.2.5. General policy toward the road network

- Permanent improvement/management of access to airports, ports and economic poles.
- Methods for the categorizing of roads.

#### 6.2.6. ITS / computer / high tech

- Management of an internet site with public information:
  - laws and legislation;
  - other relevant information about the authorities.

### 6.3. Division Traffic Centre

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

- Development and exploitation of traffic models for management purposes and for application on traffic management.

- Application of measurement systems to collect traffic related information.
- Use of instruments for dynamic traffic control on motorways and in metropolitan areas.
- Organization of services related to traffic information.
- Organization and operation of traffic centres.

#### **6.4. Ports and Maritime Affairs**

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

- general management related to (inland) ports;
- foster contacts between Bulgarian and Flemish ports;
- exchange information and experiences on Motorways of the Sea;
- exchange information about Short Sea Shipping;
- sustainable management of the coastal area.
  - Information will be exchanged in connection with the protection of the environment, recreation and tourism, coastal protection, infrastructure, administrative and legal procedures, communication.
  - The Flemish Party is prepared to collaborate in this field with the Bulgarian Party in fields related to the EU programmes.

#### **6.5. Waterways**

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

##### **6.5.1. Inland Shipping**

###### **Policy**

- General policy
  - general management on waterways.
- Regulations
  - regulations for the handling of hazardous goods in port areas;
  - regulations for inland navigation;
  - regulations for environment protection.
- Implementation of relevant EU policy and EU regulations
  - implementation of directive 2005/44/EG the ("RIS directive = River Information System);
  - implementation of the NAIADES programme concerning promotion of inland waterways;
  - integrated water policy and the implementation of Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EG on navigable waterways.
- Freight transport
  - promotion of modal shift (shift from road transport to rail, inland Shipping and Short Sea Shipping);
  - promotion and stimulation of initiatives in new traffic flows.

- Navigation
  - creation of favourable conditions to generate traffic flows between Bulgaria and Flanders through inland navigation and Short Sea Shipping.

#### Infrastructure

- Design and construction
  - design and construction of inland port infrastructure;
  - design and construction of structural waterworks;
  - re-use of building materials for structural waterworks.
- Maintenance
  - maintenance of waterways;
  - renovation of port infrastructure (design and execution);
  - dredging.
- Management
  - elaboration of co-operation strategies between Bulgarian and Flemish inland ports and / or waterways administrators;
  - development and implementation of marketing plans, tools and strategies;
  - elaboration of a co-operation model for border-crossing waterway centre between the EU en non-EU member states, resulting from the ILDE project, linking Hungary/Baja , Serbia and Montenegro/Sombor, Bulgaria, Romania and Flanders;
  - elaborating of a marketing co-operation strategy between Bulgarian and Flemish organisations.
- New techniques
  - dredging, processing and storing of polluted dredged materials;
  - development and implementation of innovative transshipment and transport techniques.

#### 6.5.2. Water Control

##### Management

- Low and high-water control:
  - the Flemish Party is willing to participate in a study for solutions for low water levels on the Danube;
  - water control and the fight against flooding.
 The Bulgarian partner will be the Ministry of Environment and Waters and the Ministry of Emergency Situations.

#### 6.6. Work Visits

Both Parties are prepared to consider receiving three (3) delegations of maximum five (5) Bulgarian/Flemish experts for a period of five (5) days at the most in Flanders/Bulgaria 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.

## **7. WELFARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

Both Parties shall collaborate and exchange information, documentation and expertise in the field of welfare/well-being, health care and care for the disabled.

### **7.1. General**

- the general welfare/well-being policy, in particular scientific research regarding welfare/public health, quality management, inspection and monitoring, client consultation, cooperation between the public and the private sectors at the international, national, regional and local level;
- support to services and facilities.

### **7.2. Public Health & (Health) Care**

- preventive health care policy (i.a. cancer prevention and screening programmes; suicide prevention; 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);
- planning, monitoring and subsidising of welfare and health facilities;
- primary health care and home health care;
- elderly care, particularly in rest homes, nursing homes, and service flats;
- mental health care (e.g. residential and non-residential mental health care, integrated mental health care, psychiatric home nursing, patient consultation, non-residential psychiatry, forensic psychiatry, cooperation with justice);
- improving quality (Integral Quality Control), inspection and monitoring;
- inspection, counselling and treatment of complaints about environmental licences;
- management of the care insurance fund providing for those people who suffer from a long-lasting seriously diminished capacity;
- preventive health care for the young child (organisation and expertise): development, hearing screening, vaccination, breastfeeding, toy safety, ...

### **7.3. Welfare / Well-being & care**

- social cohesion, in particular community development work, preventive social policy, anti-poverty and social inclusion policies;
- general welfare work; primary care, crisis intervention and crisis relief, care and shelter for the homeless, care and shelter for mentally and physically abused women, forensic care, help for victims and victim support, telephone counselling services;
- voluntary work;
- cooperation with justice in the field of welfare and health care;
- family help, home care and family friendly policy;
- special youth care, particularly residential, semi-residential and ambulatory care;
- integrated youth care, i.e. youth care and general prevention regarding youth welfare;



- children and families: preventive child care, parenting support, child care services, child abuse counselling, adoption, ECEC (early childhood education and care) etc.;
- mediation: family mediation (divorce mediation, child custody mediation and access mediation), mediation in the context of criminal law (restorative justice, reparation of harm, settlement of conflict, restorative justice) and debt mediation, community mediation (neighbours, neighbourhood mediation).

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

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

## **8. PUBLIC GOVERNANCE**

### **8.1. Administrative services, communications and information society**

The Flemish Party (Public Governance Department) and the Bulgarian Party (Ministry of State Administration and Administrative Reform) will cooperate:

- by means of exchange of experience, working models and good practices in the field of provision of administrative services;
- in the development of e-government solutions and the provision of electronic services to the public and the business community in Bulgaria.

### **8.2. The Parties shall cooperate in implementing the administrative reform in Bulgaria, more specifically through:**

- exchange of experience and European good practices and legislation in the field of organizational structure and development of administrative bodies;
- streamlining the structure of the public administration by avoiding the duplication of bodies having similar functions;
- improving coordination in the operation of administrative bodies.

**8.3. The Parties shall engage in partnership in the field of human resources management through:**

- short-term visits aimed at mutual familiarity with the work organization of the Bulgarian administration and with that of the Region of Flanders;
- exchange of experience with regard to the design of training and qualification programmes for civil servants and assistance for the organisation of seminars and study visits for Bulgarian civil servants.

**9. EMPLOYMENT**

- 9.1.** Both Parties shall continue the cooperation in the field of employment policy, vocational and entrepreneurial training, and encourage the contacts between the competent bodies and the social partners in this field.
- 9.2.** 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, vocational and entrepreneurial training.
- 9.3.** The Flemish Party (Vlaamse beleidsdomein Werk en Sociale Economie) shall examine the possibilities to play a stimulating role in the realisation of new projects in the field of employment, vocational and entrepreneurial training within the framework of the 'Flemish Cooperation Programme Central and Eastern Europe'.
- 9.4.** The Flemish Party (Vlaamse 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 and employment policy.

**10. CULTURE**

**10.1. Culture policy**

- 10.1.1. 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.

The Flemish Party wishes to clarify that the Flemish cultural policy also includes policy making concerning non-formal adult education, the amateur arts, the local libraries and cultural centres; the circus and the initiatives that aim at increasing the participation of specific target groups in culture.

- 10.1.2. 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.

- 10.1.3. 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.

## **10.2. Visual Arts**

- 10.2.1. During the validity of the present Programme the Flemish Party is willing to receive one (1) graphic designer for a working visit of two (2) weeks at the Frans Masereel Centre in Kasterlee. Free accommodation shall be provided as well as a per diem of 50.00 euros.

## **10.3. Literature**

The Flemish Party shall receive one (1) Bulgarian translator at the Vertalershuis in Antwerp for a period of 1 (one) month during the validity of the present Programme. Contrary to the usual financial arrangements when receiving individuals, this translator shall be given free accommodation and an allowance of 1,000.00 euros.

Bulgarian authors also have the possibility to enter the writers-in-residence scheme of Het Beschrijf. Further details regarding the eligibility requirements and the registration procedure are available from the Ministry of Culture.

## **10.4. Public Libraries**

The Parties shall encourage cooperation in the field of library work and book publishing, as well as in mutual participation in book expositions organized on the territory of the respective other country.

## **10.5. Cultural Heritage**

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

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

# **11. EDUCATION**

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

- 11.1.1 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.

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

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

- regional technological Centres and co-operation between schools and enterprises;
- co-operation between VET ( vocational education and training ) stakeholders and enterprises and social partners;
- role in education of Public Service for Professional Training;
- education programs and safety.

### **11.2. Exchange of professors / teachers / experts / policy makers**

11.2.1 Both Parties shall exchange each year two (2) experts / professors from a higher education institution / government for a stay of seven (7) days (2 x 7 days) at most in order to discuss the educational reforms following the implementation of the Bologna Declaration, to participate in seminars, symposiums, colloquia ...

These days can be used to make preparatory visits in order to start projects within the frame work of European programmes or to build a network of contacts and exchanges between institutions of higher education.

11.2.2 Both Parties are interested in the possibility of exchanging a limited group of experts and officials (max. 4 experts) for a period of five (5) working days in the field of regional technological centres, VET-schools, competence centre, role of education of Public Service for Professional Training.

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

### **11.3. Specialisation scholarships**

During the validity of the present programme both Parties offer annually two (2) scholarships for recognized postgraduate programmes (full-time programme of 60 study points) at higher education institutions.

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

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

All information on study opportunities in Bulgaria (useful addresses of universities and the Bulgarian educational system) can be found at <http://www.enic-naric.net>.

#### **11.4. Research Scholarships**

During the validity of the present programme both Parties offer six (6) months annually for research. On request of the sending Party, these months can be divided in periods of three (3) months at least.

#### **11.5. Summer scholarships: “Dutch Language and Culture” summer course**

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

The Dutch Language Union will send the “Dutch Language and Culture” brochure to all institutions where the Dutch language is instructed, also to the Belgian Embassy in Sofia. 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/](http://www.taalunieversum.org/taalunie/summer_courses_in_dutch/)

#### **11.6. Summer scholarships: summer seminars on “Bulgarian Language and culture”**

In order to promote the study of the Bulgarian language and culture in the Flemish Community, the Bulgarian Party shall annually offer the Flemish Party four (4) scholarships for participation in the summer seminars “Bulgarian Language and Culture”, which are organised by the University of Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski” and by the University of Veliko Turnovo.

The applicants are expected to possess rudimentary knowledge of the Bulgarian language. More information on summer seminars in Bulgaria can also be found at the web site of the universities:

<http://www.slav.uni-sofia.bg/Pages/summerseminar.html>

<http://www.uni-vt.bg/2>

## **12. YOUTH POLICY**

- 12.1. During the validity of the present programme both Parties shall, according to the interest of the other Party, exchange information and documentation regarding youth policy and youth work strategy.

- 12.2.** During the validity of the present Programme, both Parties shall exchange four (4) experts (mixed delegation: responsible civil servants and youth workers/experts) for a study visit up to seven (7) days, to elaborate a youth (work)policy at all levels (local, regional and national).
- 12.3.** During the validity of the present Programme, both Parties shall exchange delegations up to four (4) members (mixed delegation: responsible civil servants and youth workers/experts) for a period up to seven (7) days with the aim of deepening and enlarging the ideas and themes of the new framework of the EU youth policy and the framework of cooperation on youth policy of the Council of Europe based on resolution CM/Res(2008)23.
- 12.4.** Both Parties agree to send or receive youth workers/experts for participation in selected international (youth) events.

### **13. SPORTS**

During the validity of the present programme, both Parties shall provide, each year, a quota of twenty (20) days so as to enable coaches, athletes and decision makers to participate in work placements, clinics, study tours or congresses and seminars in the field of sport in the other country.

The amount of days actually taken up may vary, according to the demand of both Parties.

If sports federations are interested in closer cooperation, both Parties shall offer any useful support to realise this cooperation.

### **14. SCIENCE AND INNOVATION TECHNOLOGY**

The Flemish Party proposes to align their cooperation with Bulgaria entirely with the European Framework Programme for Research and Development.

For the Flemish Party the National Contact Point of the Institute for the Promotion of Innovation by Science and Technology in Flanders (europrogs@iwt.be) will be the one stop shop.

For the Bulgarian Party, the functions of Coordinator are to be carried out by the Department of Science Research of the Ministry of Education and Science (g.jecheva@mon.bg).

## **15. CAPACITY BUILDING**

### **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 2009 and 2010.

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 borne by the participant.

## **16. GENERAL AND FINANCIAL PROVISIONS**

### **16.1. General**

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

They agree that their future cooperation 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 economy, foreign trade and tourism and energy sectors of the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria shall be the Ministry of Economy and Energy.

**16.2. The exchange of scholarships under Articles 11.3. and 11.4. shall be governed by the following general provisions:**

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

**16.3. The exchange of scholarships under Article 11.3. (scholarships for postgraduate programmes) shall be governed by the following financial provisions:**

- a) The sending Party shall cover:

In Flanders:

- the return expenses for international travel to and from the predetermined destination.

In Bulgaria:

- either the sending Party or the applicant shall cover international travel costs to and from the preset destination.

- b) The receiving Party shall cover:

In Flanders:

- a monthly allowance of 840.00 euros;
- health insurance and third party insurance in accordance with Belgian legislation;
- the Flemish Party shall provide the admitted applicants with a sum designed to cover enrolment fees payable to a Flemish Community institution or an institution subsidised by the Flemish Community. The maximum amount of which shall be determined annually (in the academic year 2008-2009 the maximum amount is 540.00 euros); if an applicant applies for a more expensive programme, she/he has to cover the difference between the actual



enrolment fees and the amount awarded by the Flemish Party by herself/himself.

In Bulgaria:

- state-subsidized accommodation at student rooms at the rate of up to BGN 60.00 per month;
- the amount of monthly scholarship of BGN 450.00;
- health insurance subject to the terms and procedure for health insurance of Bulgarian nationals;
- exemption from tuition fees.

**16.4. The exchange of scholarships under Article 11.4. (Scientific research scholarships) shall be governed by the following financial provisions:**

a) The sending Party shall cover:

In Flanders:

- return expenses for international travel to and from the predetermined destination

In Bulgaria:

- either the sending Party or the applicant shall cover international travel costs to and from the preset destination.

b) The receiving Party shall cover:

In Flanders:

- a monthly allowance of 800.00 euros;
- a starting allowance of 185.00 euros granted at the first arrival in Flanders, on condition that the stay in Flanders takes at least one month;
- health insurance and third Party insurance in accordance with Belgian legislation.

In Bulgaria:

- state-subsidized accommodation at student rooms at the rate of up to BGN 60.00 per month;
- amount of monthly scholarship of BGN 450.00;
- health insurance subject to the terms and procedure for health insurance of Bulgarian nationals;
- exemption from tuition fees.

**16.5. The exchange of scholarships under Articles 11.5. and 11.6. (scholarships for participation in summer language courses) shall be governed by the following general and financial provisions:**

1. The organizational arrangements applying to the submission of applications by Bulgarian candidates for participation in the Dutch language and culture summer courses are specified by the Dutch Language Union (cf. brochure).

2. The Flemish Party shall inform the Bulgarian candidates for participation in the Dutch language and culture summer course about the selection by 1 April at the latest.
3. The Bulgarian Party shall inform the Flemish Party at the latest by 15 May of each calendar year, whether the nominees have been admitted and shall simultaneously communicate to the Flemish Party the names of institutions admitting them.
4. The Flemish Party shall cover the enrolment fees incurred by applicants admitted under Article 11.5. as well as their board and lodging, expenses for their participation in excursions within the framework of the course programme, and their health insurance and third Party insurance in accordance with Belgian legislation.
5. The Bulgarian Party shall provide for participants in summer seminars: accommodation in student rooms, food and an entertainment program. Participants shall be exempted from a tuition fee. Travel costs to the venue of the seminar and back, as well as any insurance, shall be covered by the sending Party.

#### **16.6. Exchange of persons**

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

- a) The sending Party shall provide the receiving Party with the curriculum vitae, the letter of invitation and information on the goals and programme of visit as well as the dates of arrival and departure of the nominees concerned at least three (3) months in advance.
- b) The receiving Party shall confirm it is prepared to receive the nominees concerned six (6) weeks before their departure. The time of departure shall be confirmed at least two (2) weeks beforehand.
- c) The sending Party shall cover:
  - In Flanders:
    - the return expenses for international travel to and from the predetermined destination.
  - In Bulgaria:
    - international travel costs to and from the preset destination.
- d) To be covered by the receiving Party:
  - In Flanders:
    - accommodation and breakfast;
    - a fixed allowance of 37.00 euros per day (excluding transport costs) or 50.00 euros per day (including transport costs);
    - health insurance and third Party insurance in accordance with Belgian legislation.

In Bulgaria:

- accommodation and breakfast;
- fixed per diems in accordance with the applicable legislation and travel costs inside the country in accordance with the work schedule;
- health insurance subject to the terms and procedure for health insurance of Bulgarian nationals.

#### **16.7. Film**

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

#### **16.8. 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.

## **17. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

- 17.1.** The provisions of the present Cooperation Programme do not preclude the possibility of implementing other activities, exchanges or projects that will be agreed upon by the Parties through diplomatic channels.
- 17.2.** Any disputes concerning the interpretation or implementation of the present Cooperation Programme shall be solved by negotiation between the Parties through diplomatic channels.

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

Both Parties agree on extending their cooperation 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, economic and industrial policy, tourism, and investments, employment, structural funds, regional cooperation, agriculture, environment and public health, transport and capacity building, administrative competence and management, infrastructure, professional education and trilateral cooperation.

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 points.

The Parties agree that members of the Flemish and Bulgarian contact points have regular meetings, alternatively in Flanders and in Bulgaria aiming at collecting, assessing, approving, implementing and monitoring of the projects and to examine the execution of the projects already approved.

The following projects have been selected for the years 2007 and 2008. Both Parties agree to participate in promoting and monitoring those projects.

Project number	Project name	Co-ordinator	Bulg. Partner
BUL-001-07	Mistagenco	ILVO	Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry
BUL-007-07	Bourgas and Varna Bays at Risk	Ecolas	Black Sea River Basin Directorate
BUL-012-07	Bulgarian Land & Soil Information system	GIM	Soil Resources Agency
BUL-013-07	Simplified Early Flood Warning	Hemmis	Ministry of Environment and Waters
BUL-017-07	Inland Vessels and SSS Manoeuvring Simulator	Dep. MOW	Bulgarian Ship Hydrodynamics Centre
BUL-021-07	COBAB	Syntra West	Federation of Bread Producers and Confectioners in Bulgaria
BUL-022-07	Rural Tourism	Syntra West	Pirin Tourism Forum
BUL-026-07	Enterprise Organisational Management	Unizo	Plovdiv Chamber of Commerce and Industry
BG_08_001	Sharing solutions for drop-out prevention	SOS Schulden op School vzw	Paideia Foundation
BG_08_002	Sustainable management of city traffic in Veliko Tarnovo	U Gent Afd. Mobiliteit	Road Research Center Sofia
BG_08_004	Insight in disability	VFG	ARCADIA Association Sofia
BG_08_007	Extra childcare	ZEWOPA vzw	Association Vratsa 2007
BG_08_008	Sustainable development of the Bulgarian network of service providers	Pluralistisch Platform Gehandicaptenzorg	Agency for Social Development – VISION Varna

For 2009 the following projects have been presented. All the proposals will be evaluated by both Parties on the basis of their own criteria and procedures. Both Parties will establish a ranking list on either side. Both Parties will agree on the best projects to be proposed for possible funding to the Flemish Government within the available budget for 2009 in a priority order proposed by both Parties:

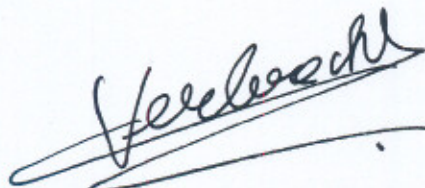
BG_09_001	Training good practices bed & breakfast Bulgaria	F.G. Productions vzw	Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
BG_09_002	Development of expertise in organic farming and processing of fruits and small fruits	Agriv-Consult vzw	Fruit Growing Institute Plovdiv
BG_09_003	Care and Quality for Social Assistants	VFG	REHA Association

BG_09_004	Preparation of the Danube river basin flood management monitoring network	Hemmis	Ministry of Environment and Waters
BG_09_005	Independent Living	Zewopa vzw	National Social Rehabilitation Centre
BG_09_006	Young Drivers	Responsible Young Drivers	Open Youth
XX_09_001	Plato Kooperera	VokaOVI	Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce & Industry + Serbia + Oltenita-Dolj

Both Parties agree to hold the next meeting of the Joint Committee in Sofia in April 2011.  
This Programme shall come into force from the day of its signing.

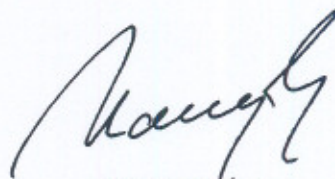
Drawn up in Brussels on 2 April 2009, in two (2) original versions, each one in Bulgarian,  
Dutch and English languages. Both texts are legally valid. In the case of dispute, the  
English text shall prevail.

On behalf of the  
Government of Flanders,



Koen Verlaeckt  
secretary general  
Foreign Affairs Department

On behalf of the Government  
of the Republic of Bulgaria,



Nikola Kaludov,  
director of "Europe II" Directorate,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs