

COOPERATION PROGRAMME
FOR THE YEARS 2015 - 2017
IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
THE GOVERNMENT OF FLANDERS
AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

For the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Slovak Republic and the Government of Flanders that was signed in Bratislava on May 30, 2002, both Parties have agreed upon the following Cooperation Programme for the period 2015-2017. It was elaborated during the fifth meeting of the Commission Slovak Republic – Flanders that was held in Brussels on June 16th, 2015.

PART 1 ECONOMY

- Both Participants are prepared to examine ways of further optimizing their co-operation in the framework of the European open method of coordination (OMC) or the OECD between entities responsible for outlining and executing entrepreneurship policies.
- The conditions for co-operation in the field of entrepreneurship policies can be elaborated in a separate protocol, in case both Parties can reach an agreement.
- In the field of bilateral co-operation both Participants will stimulate mutually beneficial exchanges and co-operation in entrepreneurship policy. They will search for suitable occasions for contacts among scientific institutions, companies, universities and administrations that are in charge of entrepreneurship policies.
- As far as multilateral co-operation is concerned both Participants strive for joint participation of researchers in initiatives in the field of “entrepreneurship” financed either through regional, national and/or European funding sources (ERDF, COSME, H2020, ...).

PART 2 FOREIGN TRADE

Trade

Both Parties are committed to enhancing and promoting the trade relations between Flanders and the Slovak Republic. For that purpose, they will exchange information regarding business and investments opportunities.

For Flanders, the above will be realized by Flanders Investment & Trade (FIT), the official Flemish institution supporting Flemish companies in various kinds of international enterprise, as well as helping foreign companies in setting up or expanding in Flanders. FIT will provide assistance wherever possible to improve the contacts with private entrepreneurs.

The Flemish Party

- Will exchange information regarding its markets and sectors, useful contacts, experiences and knowledge concerning the promotion of international enterprise.

Slovak Party in the field of trade

- offers beside exchange of information also possibility of participation Flemish entities in events orientated to trade, business and co-operation relations as matchmaking fairs, B2B meetings and business missions are organized by Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic and its agencies like Slovak investment and trade development agency (SARIO), Slovak business agency (SBA), Slovak innovation and energy agency (SIEA) and others in

connection with dissemination of information through Flanders Investment & Trade (FIT) about events for Flemish entrepreneurs and business companies.

Investment

Both Parties through SARIO (Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency) and FIT (Flanders Investment & Trade) will favour activities of the investors from their countries on their respective territories.

PART 3 ENVIRONMENT

3.1. Nature and Environmental Education Services (NEE)

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

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

- introduction of and making acquaintance with the working of the NEE-unit service within Flanders, with Education for Sustainable Development as the frame of reference, and with the networking on NEE (diverse target groups) and on ESD; a specific educational activity or course on NEE and ESD for educators, teachers, guides, ... can be organized for the delegation.
- making acquaintance in a profound way with the MOS-project (Environmental Care at School, eco-schools), an educational and environmental care project from kindergarten to secondary education and, if preferred, linked with one or more school visits; getting acquainted with the educational means;
- introduction of the Ecocampus project which is concerned with the particular role of universities and colleges in a sustainable society: higher education can offer the intellectual leadership –through its teaching, research, and outreach-- needed to get on track for a sustainable future. If interested, this introduction can be linked to a visit to a Flemish higher education institution.
- introduction of the procedure in Flanders on the phasing and implementation of the Strategy on ESD in the formal education and informal or/and non-formal education; making acquaintance with examples of good practices how ESD can be introduced in NEE;
- site visit to one or more NEE-centres, linked with a Flemish nature reserve (coast, heath, forest, ...), and/or to a provincial EE-service, getting acquainted with the common educational means.

3.2. Air quality

Both parties are willing to cooperate in the field of air quality in urban areas, with Antwerp and Bratislava as prime examples. The parties will work together by exchanging experiences and sharing solutions, with special emphasis on cases where PM10 limit values are exceeded.

3.3. Waste management

The Public Waste Agency of Flanders (OVAM) is prepared – within its financial possibilities and depending on staff availability - to invite a number of experts in the field of Waste Management in order to exchange know how and information concerning specific items in this matter.

3.4. Natura 2000

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

3.5. Sustainable Energy

The parties are prepared to cooperate in the field of energy on those themes that fall within the competencies of the Flemish party (renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy distribution and energy research), subject to the availability of financial and human resources and based upon a specific request for the exchange of information or the organisation of an expert meeting.

The parties encourage contacts between each other's companies and research institutions and are prepared to play a facilitating role, should there be a specific request.

Specifically in the context of the European financing programmes, such as for instance «Intelligent Energy for Europe», the parties encourage information exchange between the respective focal points, so as to match potential partners. In this regard, the parties wish to focus the effort of encouraging participation in European programmes that are in line with the energy policy of the parties and with a potential added value.

3.6. Climate Change

In case of mutual interest, the Slovak Party is prepared to build upon the previous cooperation between the Flemish Institute for Technological Research and the Slovak Soil Science and Conservation Research Institute on issue of impact of climate change to soil.

3.7. Expert Exchange

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

PART 4 SPORTS

Both Parties shall support co-operation in the field of sports and sports education between the organisations from both countries interested to cooperate, for example in terms of initiating exchanges of experts, coaches, athletes and good practices. The arrangement of specific activities of co-operation and their financial coverage fall within the terms of reference of the respective organisations involved.

PART 5 SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

- Both Participants are prepared to examine ways of further optimizing their co-operation in the framework of the European Research Area, both in the field of research, science and innovation policies.
- The conditions for co-operation in the fields of science and technological innovation can be elaborated in a separate protocol, in case both Parties can reach an agreement.
- In the field of bilateral co-operation, both Participants will stimulate mutually beneficial exchanges and co-operation in science and technological innovation. They will search for suitable occasions for contacts among scientific institutions, companies, universities and administrations that are in charge of science and technological innovation policies.
- As far as multilateral co-operation is concerned both Participants strive for joint participation of researchers in the European Programs (H2020, COST, ESFRI, JPI, ...) for Research and Development.

PART 6 EDUCATION

The Parties agree to facilitate cooperation in the following domains:

6.1. School and adult education

- Educational institutions of both sides will be encouraged to engage in joint projects building on existing national, EU and other international cooperation schemes.
- Both Parties agree to exchange information on education policy topics of mutual interest.

6.2. Higher education

Both Parties welcome cooperation between higher education institutes and the exchange of teachers and students.

- Higher education institutions on both sides will be encouraged to jointly develop higher education programmes at all levels, leading, where appropriate, to joint or multiple degrees issued by the higher education institutions from both sides.
- Both Parties will encourage their respective higher education institutions to participate in the mobility and cooperation schemes in the framework of educational programmes of the European Union or other international organisations and in national programmes for international student mobility.
- Both Parties agree to exchange experts and information on topics of mutual interest in higher education reform and evaluation.

6.3. Language learning

The Dutch Language Union supports Dutch language departments at the Slovak higher education institutions and offers summer courses to teachers and students of the Dutch language in Belgium. Slovak students and teachers of the Dutch language are welcome to apply for participation to the summer courses of Dutch language and culture organized by the Dutch Language Union, in Ghent (Belgium). Applicant students should demonstrate intermediate knowledge (level B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) of the Dutch language.

6.4. Mutual exchanges

- Both Parties shall, at the request of the other Party, exchange relevant information on all types and levels of education.
- Both Parties shall facilitate peer-learning at the level of the Ministries responsible for education, education institutions or other intermediate organizations.
- Both parties shall exchange information and extend invitations to the other Party on their planned conferences on educational topics open to an international audience.

PART 7 YOUTH POLICY

During the duration of the present programme both Parties shall, according to the interest of the other Party, exchange information and documentation regarding youth policy, youth work strategy, experiences and practical solutions in the field of non-formal and informal education and youth work.

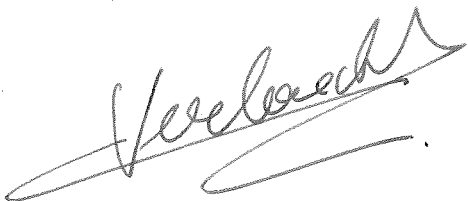
During the duration of the present Programme, both Parties shall exchange four experts (mixed delegation: responsible civil servants and youth workers/experts) for a study visit up to five days, to elaborate a youth (work)policy at all levels (local, regional and national).

During the validity of the present Programme, both Parties shall exchange delegations up to four members (mixed delegation: responsible civil servants and youth workers/experts) for a period up to five days with the aim of deepening and enlarging the ideas, themes and instruments of the new framework of the EU youth policy (resolution 27th of November 2009) and the framework of co-operation on youth policy of the Council of Europe (based on resolution CM/Res(2008)23). Both Parties agree to send or receive youth workers/experts for participation in selected international (youth) events.

For exchanges and visits in the field of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media, financial and material stipulations shall be decided upon by the specific parties involved and shall be communicated through the diplomatic channels. All activities and exchanges mentioned shall be carried out within the limits of the financial resources at the disposal of the two Parties.

Done in Brussels on the 16th of June, 2015, in two originals in the English language. The copies in the Dutch and Slovak languages shall be exchanged through diplomatic channels. In the event of different interpretations of the Cooperation Programme the English text shall prevail.

For the Flemish Party

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Verlaeckt', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Koen VERLAECKT

For the Slovak Party

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bella', written in a cursive style.

Dušan BELLA