

COOPERATION PROGRAMME
FOR THE YEARS 2016-2018
IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION TREATY
BETWEEN
THE GOVERNMENT OF FLANDERS
AND
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

BRUSSELS, 24th of November 2015

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The eighth meeting of the Joint Commission to discuss the Cooperation Programme for the years 2016-2018 to implement the Cooperation Agreement between the Government of Flanders and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania was held in Brussels on the 24th of November 2015.

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

Flemish delegation

Flanders Department of Foreign Affairs

Koen VERLAECKT	Secretary General, chairman
Yves WANTENS	General Representative of the Government of Flanders in Lithuania (based in Warsaw)
Sam VANDENABEELE	Director Bilateral Affairs
Elijah PEETERS	Secretary of the Joint Commission
Yves BEAURAIN	Flanders Investment & Trade Regional Director
Anke VANDERSTAPPEN	Flanders Investment & Trade Regional Director (starting 2016)
Henk JOOS	Managing Director FlandersBio

The chairman of the Lithuanian delegation thanked for the kind reception and presented the members of his delegation:

Lithuanian delegation

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Vidmantas PURLYS	Director of the European Countries Department, Head of delegation
Gediminas VARVUOLIS	Ambassador of Lithuania to Belgium
Ramunė STIRPEIKAITE	Counsellor of the European Countries Department
Liliana JAROSLAVSKA	2nd secretary of the Lithuanian Embassy

Both delegations, hereafter called the Parties, agreed upon the following:

CHAPTER 1: ECONOMY, TRADE, INVESTMENT

1.1 Cooperation in multilateral European framework

Both Parties are prepared to examine ways of further optimizing their cooperation in the framework of the European open method of coordination (OMC) and the OECD between entities responsible for outlining and executing entrepreneurship policies.

As far as multilateral cooperation is concerned, both parties strive for joint participation of researchers in initiatives in the field of entrepreneurship financed through regional, national and/or European funding sources (ERDF, COSME, H2020).

1.2 Bilateral cooperation between the Parties

In the field of bilateral cooperation, both Parties will stimulate mutually beneficial exchanges and cooperation in entrepreneurship policy. They will search for suitable opportunities for contacts among scientific institutions, companies, universities and administrations that are in charge of entrepreneurship policies.

Since 2002, the Flemish export to Lithuania has been increasing year after year (with exception of 2009). The Flemish export to Lithuania did grow by 134% between 2009 and 2013, while in the same period the export worldwide for Flanders only grew by 34%. In 2014, Flanders exported for 721,7 million Euro to Lithuania and imported for 286,4 million Euro.

Both Parties are committed to enhancing and promoting the trade relations between Flanders and Lithuania. For that purpose, they will exchange information regarding business and investment opportunities. Ad hoc, and at the request of the other Party, they will also exchange information regarding its market and sectors, useful contacts, experiences and knowledge concerning the promotion of international entrepreneurship. Both Parties will strengthen their cooperation in the field of investments.

For Flanders, trade promotion initiatives will be realized by Flanders Investment & Trade. For Lithuania this will be realized by Enterprise Lithuania.

1.3 Opening of a new Flanders Investment & Trade office in Vilnius, Lithuania

Flanders envisages the opening of a new Flanders Investment & Trade office for the region of the Baltic States. This office will be located in the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius.

The Minister-President of Flanders will formally open the new regional Flanders Investment and Trade office during his visit to Lithuania, on the 10th of May 2016.

The opening of this office aims at optimizing the bilateral trade and investment cooperation between the two Parties.

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CHAPTER 2: ENVIRONMENT

2.1 Waste management

Both parties will exchange expertise and good practices in the field of waste management and express the desire to exchange knowledge in these areas of interest.

For Flanders, the Public Waste Agency of Flanders (OVAM) is prepared to invite a number of experts in the field of Waste and Materials Management and Soil Remediation in order to exchange know-how and information concerning specific items in this matter.

The Lithuanian Party is interested in cooperating within the areas of municipal and industrial waste management. Specifically the topics of interest focus on the exchange of knowledge on the systemic approach that has been used, the responsibilities and good practice examples.

Whenever both Parties are convinced of common interests and opportunities to exchange valuable information and know-how with regard to the above mentioned fields, the possibility of site visits and exchange of experts will be discussed.

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CHAPTER 3: CULTURE

3.1 Culture policy

Both Parties will 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.

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.

When one of the Parties participates in an important international project, it will associate the other Party, if possible, as a privileged partner¹.

3.2 Movable and intangible cultural heritage

Both Parties are willing to improve and to stimulate the networking of the heritage institutions of their countries for the purpose of exchange of practices, experts and competences related to movable and intangible heritage. The Lithuanian party will invite Flemish experts to exchange experience and good practice in the field of cultural heritage education.

3.3 Multilateral UNESCO framework

3.3.1 Intangible Heritage

In the framework of relevant UNESCO Conventions and cooperation in the EU framework both Parties will study the possibilities to develop joint projects regarding the methods of registration and preservation of the intangible heritage of Flanders and Lithuania. During the first phase, the responsible units of the Flemish Department of Culture, Youth, Sport and Media and the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture will receive up to two experts from each Party to exchange experience and know-how.

3.3.2 Multilateral UNESCO cooperation

Furthermore, the Flemish and Lithuanian Parties have collaborated closely on several projects in the past, among others :

¹ The Flemish Party wants to draw attention to the possibilities for artists, writers and translators to enter the residence programme of the following organisations (participants should meet the criteria and pass the selection): Frans Masereel Centre in Kasterlee: offers residences in the field of graphic arts (www.fransmasereelcentrum.be), Passa Porta: offers residences in Brussels and Vollezele for writers and translators (www.passaporta.be) and the Flemish Literature Fund: offers residences for translators in the Translators' House in Antwerp, (www.fondsvoordeletteren.be). For the purpose of developing contemporary visual art projects the Lithuanian Party wants to draw attention to the possibilities for artists, art critics and curators to enter the programmes of Vilnius Art Academy (in particular the Nida Art Colony (nidacolony.lt): offers residencies in the field of visual arts) and Contemporary Art Centre.

- The Flemish National commissions, in collaboration with the Dutch and German National commissions, established on the 4th and 5th of February 2015 the European Network of National UNESCO commissions. This network was founded in order to support and strengthen the think-tank function of UNESCO. Lithuania is an active member of this network.
- The Lithuanian Party has sent a youth representative to the Preparatory Youth Meeting in Brussels organized by the Flemish counterpart (www.pym2015.com).
- The Flemish and Lithuanian Parties worked in close collaboration on completing the financial side of the UNESCO Summer School on digitalization and audio-visual archives (www.soima.org).

Other forms of cooperation in UNESCO's field of expertise will be explored in close consultation with the UNESCO Commissions involved. The current cooperation between the Flemish and the Lithuanian Commission for UNESCO (e.g. in the field of 'Periodic Reporting on World Heritage' or concerning 'UNESCO Youth and Climate Change') can be intensified, both in a bilateral way and within the framework of the European Network of National Commissions for UNESCO.

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CHAPTER 4: YOUTH

The work programme regarding Youth is discussed at the Youth Subcommission. This meeting (for multilateral and bilateral cooperation) was held in Vilnius on the 20th and the 21st of November 2014.

The next meeting of the Youth Subcommission, including evaluation and follow-up of the agreed activities in the framework of the cooperation programme for the year 2015-2017 shall take place at the end of 2017.

Both Parties agree to promote contacts between Flemish and Lithuanian local authorities in the field of youth policy and promote the usage of the available international funding for their joint activities in the area.

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CHAPTER 5: SPORTS

Both Parties will support cooperation in the field of sports and sports education and between organisations interested in initiating exchanges of experts, coaches, athletes and good practices. The arrangement of specific activities of cooperation and their financial coverage fall within the terms of reference of the respective organisations involved.

In the field of sport and physical activity Both Parties will encourage cooperation and exchange good practices on health enhancing physical activity projects in Flanders and in Lithuania.

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CHAPTER 6: WELFARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Both Parties express their eager to cooperate in the Child and Family domain and Public and Welfare area. The parties will cooperate and exchange information, knowledge, experience and tools in the field of preventive healthcare and wellbeing of children, particularly on issues of care of young children, integrated assistance for children and families and community based programs.

The Flemish Agency 'Child and Family' (Kind en Gezin) is eager to exchange with their Lithuanian counterparts, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, best practices on their experience with community based programs, the involvement of volunteers and the functioning of family centres and integrated health care facilities.

The Flemish Agency Kind en Gezin (Child and Family) is able and willing to exchange information, knowledge, experiences, documentation and/or tools in the domain of preventive healthcare, about the wellbeing of young children, in the domain of childcare and concerning target groups and social vulnerable families.

More specifically, the Flemish Agency Kind en Gezin (Child and Family) can exchange information, experiences and documentation on postnatal depression and breastfeeding. Online webcourses on postnatal depression are online available in English. At the end of 2015, the Flemish Agency Kind en Gezin envisages the launch of an English online webcourse on breastfeeding.

The Lithuanian Party, Ministry of Health, is willing to cooperate on preventive healthcare, especially in the domain of vaccination and early eye and hearing screening. The Flemish Agency Kind en Gezin (Child and Family) can provide tools in the domain of unsafe children's articles, pictographic material, material about child development, family supporters, vaccination, experience in early eye or hearing screening, etc.

The exchange on the above mentioned items can be realized through different channels of communication:

- Mutual exchange visits (seminars, working visits, etc.)
- Video conferencing when this proves to be the most feasible option for both Parties

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(early eye and hearing screening projects)

CHAPTER 7: SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

7.1 Bilateral cooperation

Both parties are prepared to examine ways to cooperate in implementation of their Smart specialization strategies and to stimulate exchanges of information and visits with the aim to identify mutual interests and business cases for cooperation in science and both technology and non-technological innovation as well as exchange of best practices in intellectual property management in research organizations. Both parties express the wish to foster cooperation between research and academic institutions.

The Flemish cluster organization FlandersBio and Lithuania Enterprise express their wish to explore possibilities to establish mutually beneficial cooperation. Close partnership between the different partners will be examined thoroughly during the timespan of this work programme. The Lithuanian partner considers attending the Knowledge for Growth convention, annually organized by FlandersBio. Likewise, FlandersBio shows keen interest in attending the biannual Life Sciences Baltics forum in September 2016. In order to formalize the cooperation, Lithuania Enterprise and FlandersBio envisage discussions on signing a specific Memorandum of Understanding.

7.2 Life sciences Baltics 2016

Life Sciences Baltics 2016 is the major international forum in the Baltic region for world-class biotechnology, pharmaceutical and medical devices experts from all around the world. It provides a unique opportunity to explore the new horizons of partnerships, exchange ideas and seek progress through networking.

Both Parties will promote the cooperation in the field of life sciences and use Life Sciences Baltics 2016 as a platform to foster this cooperation.

The Flemish Party encourages its life sciences companies, universities and other science institutions to participate in Life Sciences Baltics 2016, in order to present their ideas, products and services at the international exhibition, b2b partnership event, meet Lithuanian life sciences industry and scientists.

Flemish Agencies, such as Flanders Investment & Trade and FlandersBio, will approach experts from the academic sphere as well as companies and research centers in this particular field to invite them to the Life Sciences Baltics 2016 forum and by doing so diffuse relevant information related to the forum.

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CHAPTER 8: PORTS AND WATERBORNE TRANSPORTATION

8.1 Maritime connections and port activities

Both Parties will facilitate cooperation and the establishment of the maritime connections between Flemish and Lithuanian ports, depending on human and technical resources available, regarding:

- support the initiatives on joint marketing activities and/or market studies
- promote advertising the information about the two Parties among the interested stakeholders

Both Parties will exchange and share information, deemed to be non-confidential and depending on human and technical resources available, regarding the following points in order to contribute to increase maritime trade and to participate in the sustainable development of port activities:

- statistical and marketing studies
- port infrastructures development projects
- port, maritime policy (both regional and EU policy)

8.2 Port training and Port Management

APEC

The Flemish Party (the Department of Foreign Affairs) offers to the Lithuanian Party the possibility to introduce course candidates to Antwerp/Flanders Port Training Center (APEC) in order for them to participate to the standard seminar which are listed on their website. These seminars will take place during the validity of this work programme.

The Lithuanian Party will present its candidates for these seminars and the participants will be selected by APEC, taking into account the availability of the course places and grants. The Flemish Party will cover the participation costs of the selected participants. Any other costs will be covered by the course participant or the organization for which he/she works.

C-MAT

The Flemish Party (the Department of Foreign Affairs) offers the Lithuanian Party, for the academic year 2016-2017 and the academic year 2017-2018, the possibility for students to follow the 'Master's Programme in Transport and Maritime Economics' (MTME) at C-MAT.

The Lithuanian Party will introduce suitable candidates to C-MAT who will make the final selection, taking into account the entry requirements and the number of available grants. The Flemish Party will cover a part of the subscription fees and accommodation costs. Any other cost will be covered by C-MAT or the participant or his/her educational institution.

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CHAPTER 9: 20 YEARS COOPERATION WITH BALTIC STATES

In May 2016, Flanders and Lithuania will celebrate their 20 years of cooperation. On the 7th of March 1996, the Flemish Minister-President Luc Van den Brande and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania Povilas Gylys signed the cooperation Treaty in Vilnius that covered all policy areas for which Flanders is competent.

On September 23th 1997, the first work programme (for the period 1997-1999) was signed as an implementation of the above-mentioned Treaty.

Within the context of the celebrations of 20 years of cooperation, the Flemish Minister-President Geert Bourgeois plans a visit to the Baltic States from the 8th till the 12th of May 2016. The celebrations in Vilnius will be concluded with cultural festivities. The Minister-President envisages attending the New Baltics Dance Festival. Also, The General Representative of the Government of Flanders in Poland and the Baltic States, Yves Wantens, plans several cultural activities in 2016 to celebrate the 20 years of cooperation.

CHAPTER 10: GENERAL AND FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

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

They agree that their future cooperation should be developed as concrete as possible, starting from realistic projects. It should avoid general points 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 are free to subsidise specific projects as well

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

CHAPTER 11: FINAL PROVISIONS

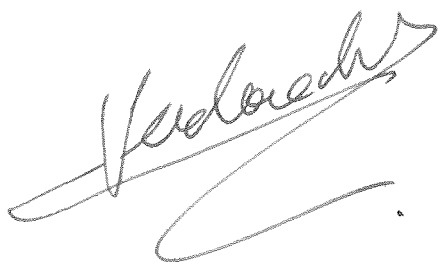
Both Parties shall agree on the conditions for each specific event through diplomatic channels.

All disputes concerning the interpretation or realisation of this programme of activities shall be settled through negotiation between the Parties.

Both Parties agree to hold the next meeting of the Joint Commission in Vilnius during the second half of 2018.


Signed in Brussels on the 24th of November 2015, in two original English versions.

For the Government of Flanders,



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For the Government of the Republic of
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