

**MINUTES OF THE NINTH MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMISSION
BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
AND THE GOVERNMENT OF FLANDERS**

**CO-OPERATION PROGRAM
FOR THE YEARS 2019-2023
IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CO-OPERATION TREATY
BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
AND THE GOVERNMENT OF FLANDERS**

Vilnius, 6 November 2019

The ninth meeting of the Joint Commission between the Government of Flanders and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania was held in Vilnius on 6 November 2019.

The meeting was organised to agree a new co-operation program for the years 2019-2023. The Joint Commission implements with this text the co-operation treaty of 7 March 1996 between the two countries

Both delegations, hereafter called the Parties, took also the opportunity to discuss a number of policy themes.

The Flemish party gave a brief explanation about the new Flemish government. She emphasized that the Flemish government intends to determine a list of historical and cultural Flemish anchor points, called Flemish canon. Some countries as Lithuania already determined a comparable historical memory. The Lithuanian party explained how this process happened.

Both parties discussed about a number of European themes such as the Brexit, the new European Commission and the multiannual financial framework (MFF).

The Lithuanian party explained the plans related to Kaunas Cultural Capital 2022.

The chairperson of the Lithuanian delegation welcomed the Flemish delegation and presented the members of her delegation:

Lithuanian delegation

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania

Ms Jolanta Balčiūniene
Director of European Countries Department and chairperson

Ms. Dalia Sukackiene
Head of Western and Central Europe Division, European Countries Department

Ms. Žydra Senkuvienė
Second Secretary of Export and Investments Promotion Division, External Economic Relations and Economic Security Policy Department

Ms. Giedre Verollet
Second Secretary of Western and Central Europe Division, European Countries Department

The chairperson of the Flemish delegation thanked for the kind reception and presented the members of her delegation:

Flemish delegation

Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs

Julie Bynens
Secretary General and chairperson

Dries Willems
General Representative of Flanders to Poland and the Baltic States

Stefaan De Groote
Policy officer Central-Europe

Marianne Van Boxelaere
Policy officer cultural diplomacy

Arno Cnudde
Brexit Task Force coordinator

Flanders investment & Trade

Renata Deveikyte
Trade advisor

Both delegations agreed upon the following:

1. ECONOMY, TRADE, INVESTMENT

The Parties are prepared to examine ways of further optimizing their cooperation in the framework of the European open method of coordination (OMC) or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) between entities responsible for outlining and executing entrepreneurship policies.

In the field of bilateral co-operation, the Parties 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.

Flanders is interested in logistics and transport and aims for cooperation between companies in the field of ports and the development of the Rail Baltica Project.

The Parties are interested in attracting investment, implementing investment projects, cooperation between private and public sectors (the so-called Private-Public Partnership (PPP) projects), promotion of small and medium sized business.

The Parties are committed to enhancing and promoting the trade relations between Lithuania and Flanders. 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. Moreover, the Parties want to encourage cooperation between Flemish and Lithuanian start-ups

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2. TOURISM

Both parties encourage the collaboration and the exchange of information, experiences, knowledge and best practices in the field of sustainable, competitive, innovative and accessible tourism, in particular with regard to the implementation of the 2030 United Nations agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Both parties express the willingness to exchange knowledge, experiences, best practices and expertise in the field of smart and innovative marketing and regional branding

Both parties will continue and intensify their co-operation, consultation and exchange of knowledge and good practice within the European Commission's Advisory Committee on Tourism (TAC), the European Travel Commission (ETC) and within the framework of the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

The Parties agree to exchange information, brochures, and promotional material on tourism products of the country, tourism attraction areas and statistics on tourist flows between the countries;

- to organize the exchange of visits for experts, journalists and representatives of different media forms engaged in the field of tourism to get acquainted with tourism opportunities in both countries,
- to exchange available information and experts in the fields of tourism and hotel staff training in both countries;
- to co-operate at the international tourism organizations: the UNWTO, the European Travel Commission, etc.

Units involved in cooperation from the Lithuanian side:

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3. ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

The Parties are interested in development and management of eco-friendly public transport, waste management, energy efficiency, modernization and development of street illumination infrastructure.

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4. CULTURE

4.1. Culture policy

The Parties will inform each other in an active way concerning important developments in cultural policies. That means that the 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 organize specific projects in that field, such as exchanges, training, on the job training, seminars, residencies.

4.2. Arts and culture

The Parties will encourage networking and direct cooperation between institutions, organizations and experts of professional performing arts, visual art, literature, cinema, architecture, design and cultural heritage (libraries, archives and museums).

Both Parties would welcome initiatives in respect of residencies as residencies for artists, writers, translators and other creative professionals are an excellent instrument to stimulate contacts and exchanges.

Residencies in Lithuania are to be found on

- for visual arts <http://nidacolony.lt/en/residence>, <http://iupert.lt/en/about-residency-program/>
- for performing arts <http://www.menuspaustuve.lt/en/residency/international-residency>

Residencies in Flanders are to be found on

- for arts www.kunsten.be/internationaal/residencies-workplaces

- for writers <http://writersinresidence.passaporta.be/index.php?q=residences/en/request/>

- for translators <http://www.re-cit.org/2018/04/10/vertalershuis-antwerpen-translators-house-antwerp-belgium/>

Candidates for residencies should meet the criteria and pass the selection of the involved institution.

4.3. Cultural Heritage

The Parties will encourage networking of cultural heritage institutions (libraries, archives, museums) for the purpose of exchange of knowledge and good practices, experts and competences concerning the preservation, sustainable use, promotion and digitization of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

The Lithuanian side is particularly focusing on management and monitoring of tangible and intangible cultural heritage as well as on cultural heritage education and installing digitization in presenting information at cultural heritage sites.

For the Lithuanian side museum cooperation in the field of exchange of collections, museum management and museum educational programs development, as well as cooperation between restorers in the field of preservation and restoration, are important issues. In the field of archives the focus is on the organization of specific projects, the exchange of archives related information, experts and competences on professional development, legislation relevant to archives, preservation of analogic and digital archives and archival information systems.

On the Flemish side the museum sector is open to opportunities, demands and news from the Lithuanian side.

4.4. Multilateral framework

Both Parties will cooperate in the field of culture and cultural heritage in the framework of the multilateral organizations and fora, European and global, such as the European Union, the Council of Europe, UNESCO, etc. Both Parties participate in related working groups, exchange best practices and look closer into opportunities for common projects.

The Lithuanian side informs that Kaunas was selected as the European Capital of Culture 2022. In this regard, both Parties will encourage cooperation between Kaunas and the Flemish city Kortrijk especially in the fields of design and modernist architecture regarding the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (creative field: Design) and the programme "Modernism for the future" of the project "Kaunas – European Capital of Culture 2022".

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Special attention will be paid to the implementation of international conventions of the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO).

The development of direct joint activities between institutions, organisations and experts regarding the methods of registration and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage of Lithuania and Flanders, as well as of preservation and management of the World Heritage Sites in their territories is also strongly encouraged.

The involved partners¹ will send/receive selected experts to exchange knowledge, experience and know-how during a reciprocal visitors' programme. To maximise (policy and practice) exchanges the organisation of a study group, study meeting or an international conference during that period could be envisaged e.g. on intangible cultural heritage policy².

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5. YOUTH

The Parties will co-operate in the youth policy field through youth subcommissions bilaterally and multilaterally. The latter co-operation (2019-2022) includes the other two Baltic States – Latvia and Estonia and will focus on smart youth work as thematic priority. The Parties will follow goals, thematic priorities and activities agreed in Minutes of the meeting of the non-formal Youth Sub-commission held in Tallinn, Estonia, on 12-13 of February:

¹ Partners in Flanders could be The Department Culture Youth and Media, division 'Knowledge and Policy' and division 'Waarborgen en Beheren', www.cjm.be, Faro, Vlaams steunpunt voor cultureel erfgoed, www.faro.be, Werkplaats Immaterieel Erfgoed, www.werkplaatsimmaterieelerfgoed.be

Partners in Lithuania could be the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania, the Department of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture, the Lithuanian National Centre for Culture

² E.g. In Flanders Flanders' Inventory craftsmanship fair 'Living Human Treasures'

- Developing, in each country, youth policy in accordance with the European discussions and developments;
- implementing and developing youth policy through multilateral co-operation in European, national, regional and local level;
- stimulating local partnerships;
- empowering and upgrade the quality of the key actors in the youth field;
- raising visibility and recognition of multilateral cooperation established under the co-operation programme.

The bilateral co-operation (2020-2022) between Lithuania and Flanders will focus on the following thematic priorities:

- Recognition of competences in volunteering;
- information and consultations for youngsters;
- youth guarantee

Units involved in co-operation from the Lithuanian side:

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6. WELFARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

The Parties are interested in promoting contacts between Lithuanian and Flemish local authorities in the field of social services, social housing management and development. The municipalities are also interested in the cooperation experience of the Flemish municipalities and business associations and/or business communities in implementing common educational, cultural, social projects; establishing relationships with Lithuanian communities in Flanders is likewise of interest for the municipalities.

The Parties are interested in co-operation and sharing best practices in child screening (eye, rare diseases, etc), child health promotion; policies related to healthy nutrition, physical activities promotion; community mental health, non-communicable diseases screening effectiveness,

quality improvement and metrix of health; efficiency improvement and metrix in health care, hospital network and capital investment planning; human resource in health care planning.

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7. SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

7.1. In general

The Parties 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 Parties are interested in promoting co-operation in the fields of research, technological development and innovations by stimulating exchanges of information and visits with the aim to identify sustainable and mutually beneficial areas of cooperation,

- to co-operate in the fields of their Smart specialization implementation,
- to share best practices on effective functioning and implementation of support instruments of their R&D systems,
- to encourage their respective academic, research and research funding institutions to employ available national and international instruments to enhance mutual academic and scientific exchanges, inviting institutions to consider strategic and sustainable cooperation,
- to promote participation of their institutions at the R&D&I events of mutual interest (e.g. Innovation Drift 2019/2021, Life Sciences Baltic 2020, the new technology and innovation festival SuperNova, October 2020)

The Parties note the role of education in promoting youth entrepreneurship, the implementation of pupils' career planning and entrepreneurial training programmes, encouraging co-operation between education institutions and businesses.

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7.2. Life Sciences Baltics and Knowledge for Growth (Gent)

Life Sciences Baltics is the only Baltics' life sciences forum gathering global biotechnology, pharmaceutical and medical devices leaders. The forum provides a unique platform that features a variety of opportunities to get insights and seek process of life sciences through the conference, plenary and educational sessions, exhibition area, potential one-on-one meetings and scientific posters area. It provides unique opportunity to explore the new horizons of partnerships, exchange ideas and seeks progress through networking.

Flanders Bio organises annually the 'Knowledge for Growth' business conference in Gent, attracting decision makers from biotech, pharma and medtech, agricultural and chemical industry as well as investors, universities, top notch research institutes, policymakers and competence providers. The 15th edition took place in May 2019 with 550 companies and organisations and 1.200 actors.

Enterprise Lithuania and Flanders Investment & Trade will promote the cooperation in the field of life sciences and use these events as a platform to foster this cooperation.

Flanders Investment & Trade and Enterprise Lithuania will approach experts from the academic sphere as well as companies and research centers in this field to invite them to the Life Sciences Baltics forums and by doing so diffuse relevant information related to the forum.

Both Parties also encourages its life sciences companies, universities and other science institutions to participate in both forums, in order to present their ideas, products and services at the international exhibition, B2B partnership event, meet Flemish and Lithuanian life sciences industry and scientists.

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8. HIGHER EDUCATION

The Union for the Dutch Language (Nederlandse Taalunie), a Flemish-Dutch intergovernmental organization, offers funding to institutes of higher education abroad that offer Dutch as a major or minor subject. Any institution in Lithuania interested in setting up Dutch as a foreign language can apply for a starting grant by the Taalunie. More information on these grants can be found on <http://taalunieversum.org/inhoud/dutch-worldwide/115-guidelines-new-departments-dutch>

Apart from the starting grants for new departments of Dutch, the Taalunie has a number of other funding mechanisms, such as various ways to assist existing departments of Dutch, support to

academic networks, scholarship funds, summer courses for teachers and students and on-location workshops on literary translation.

Unit involved in co-operation:

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The Education Exchanges Support Foundation, a Lithuanian governmental institution, offers three types of Lithuanian state scholarships for students, lecturers and researchers of Flemish higher education institutions:

- students, lecturers and researchers can attend Lithuanian language and culture summer and winter courses at Lithuanian higher education institutions, which organise such courses,
- students can apply for short-term studies of all study fields in Lithuanian higher education institutions,
- students, lecturers and researchers (in linguistics or philology) can apply for short-term Lithuanian studies in Lithuanian higher education institutions, which offer such programmes.

More information on these scholarships can be found on <https://studyin.lt/scholarships/>

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9. PORTS AND WATERBORNE TRANSPORTATION

9.1. Transport safety and ports activities

The Parties will encourage co-operation in maritime and inland waterways transport safety related issues, exchange of experiences and best practices between maritime and inland water transport regulatory authorities.

The Parties are interested in facilitating networking between the Lithuanian and the Flemish port sector (port authorities), exchange of experiences and best practices on implementation of general policies on ports, inland ports and inland waterways, design and construction of ports and water related infrastructure.

9.2. Port Training and Port Management

The Parties will facilitate co-operation of the maritime connections between Lithuanian and Flemish ports depending on Memorandum of Co-operation between Klaipeda and Antwerp Seaports signed on 10th May 2016 in Vilnius, Lithuania.

The Flemish Party offers the Lithuanian 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) during the validity of this Programme.

The Lithuanian Party shall present its candidates for these seminars and APEC shall select the participants.

The Flemish Party shall cover the costs of the participation. The participants cover travel expenses

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10. GENERAL AND FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

The Parties shall send their proposals for the new co-operation Programme at the latest six weeks before the date foreseen for the meeting of the joint committee.

They agree that their future co-operation should be developed in as concrete as possible, starting from realistic projects.

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.

11. FINAL PROVISIONS

The Parties shall agree on the conditions for each specific event through diplomatic channels or by direct mutual agreement.

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

The Parties agree to hold the next meeting of the Joint Commission in Brussels during the second half of 2022

Signed in Vilnius on 6 November, in two original English versions.

On behalf of the
Government of the Republic of Lithuania,

On behalf of the
Government of Flanders,

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Julie Bynens
Secretary general
Department of Foreign Affairs