



Flanders Administrations - Taiwan
1st Joint Commission
Taipei, April 27, 2023

AGREED MINUTES

The Joint Commission between the Government of Flanders Administrations and Taiwan was established under Section 9 of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Government of Flanders Administrations and Taiwan, signed in Brussels on January 19, 2022.

The 1st Meeting of the Flanders Administrations, - Taiwan Joint Commission was held in Taipei on April 27, 2023, chaired jointly by Julie Bynens, Secretary General of the Flanders Chancellery & Foreign Office, and Alexander Tah-ray Yui, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Taiwan.

The participants reconfirm their shared spirit of partnership and cooperation aiming at further strengthening and developing their mutual relations on the basis of the friendship and the cooperation already existing between them.

The participants share their concerns on the current geopolitical challenges worldwide.

In that regard, the position of the government of Flanders with regard to the Ukraine crisis is conveyed. The government of Flanders fully endorses the sanctions imposed upon Russia, on the understanding that they are directed against the Russian Federation's responsible authorities and not against the Russian people. Flanders will continue to support Ukraine and its people.

The position of the government of Taiwan is also conveyed. As a responsible member of the international community, the government of Taiwan reiterates its solidarity with Ukraine and its people, and its opposition to the use of force or coercion to unilaterally change the status quo. Taiwan invites global like-minded partners to jointly defend the universal values of democracy, freedom, the rule of law, and human rights, and to oppose any form of military intimidation. Both parties expressed their support for maintaining regional peace and stability with regard to the Taiwan Strait.

The participants agree to exchange their viewpoints, explore future cooperation in the domains mentioned in the memorandum of understanding signed on January 19, 2022, and enlarge the discussion to all areas mentioned below.

1. Education
2. Public health and welfare
3. Environmental policy
4. Innovation and clean technologies
5. Business and investment
6. Employment and vocational training
7. Science
8. Semiconductors
9. Cybersecurity
10. Digital economy

1. Education

§1. The participants will pursue cooperation in each of the following domains:

1. Higher education
2. Adult education
3. Secondary education including vocational education and training
4. Language learning
5. Exchanges on education policy topics of mutual interest

In doing so, they will make maximum use of existing national and international exchange and cooperation programs.

§2. Higher education

1. The participants take stock of the developments of interinstitutional cooperation since the first MOU on education of 2014 came into force, finding an increasing trend in student mobility and exchanges between higher education institutions. After an interruption of physical mobility due to the COVID-19 pandemic, student exchanges have still not reached the prepandemic level.
2. The participants will step up efforts in encouraging institutions in Taiwan and Flanders to engage in mutual cooperation and exchange activities. A mapping of existing cooperation in terms of participating institutions and study fields will be done in cooperation with the networks of higher education institutions in view of underpinning further action.
3. Flanders reiterates that students from Taiwan are welcome to apply in the context of the Flemish scholarship scheme for foreign students wishing to pursue masters' studies at a Flemish university.

§3. Adult education

1. The participants note that legal and practical obstacles to cooperation should be identified in detail and remediated as far as possible. Digital modes of exchange should be considered and reinforced.
2. In a context of blurring boundaries between higher and adult education, a worldwide phenomenon that has been accelerated through the pandemic, it could be explored how the online offerings of higher education institutions could also be targeted at an adult learner public both in Taiwan and Flanders.

§4. Secondary education and vocational education and training

1. The participants note that little progress has been made in exchanges at the secondary level and that, in this context, better use could be made of digital modes of cooperation and exchange.
2. The participants will further ongoing discussions on mutually providing traineeships or other forms of practical learning under the framework of vocational study programs at both the secondary level as well as the higher professional education level.

§5. Language learning

1. The participants reiterate the importance of learning each other's national languages and the availability of scholarships for learning Chinese in Taiwan and Dutch in Flanders.
2. Students from Taiwan can apply for scholarships for summer courses in Dutch language and culture organized in Flanders by the Dutch Language Union, which is also responsible for providing support to foreign universities organizing Dutch language studies programs and for awarding the Certificate of Dutch as a Foreign Language.
3. The participants will explore whether National Chengchi University, as a university with experience in training future diplomats, could be supported by the Dutch Language Union in establishing a Dutch language course.
4. Flemish students can apply for a scholarship for Chinese language studies in Taiwan (the Huayu Enrichment Scholarship) and are encouraged to take the Test for Chinese Language Proficiency organized in Brussels. The Dutch Language Union and Taiwan could exchange good practices on language proficiency tests.
5. The participants will step up efforts to encourage higher education institutions in Taiwan and Flanders to reach out to each other with their online and face-to-face language offerings in Chinese and Dutch as a foreign language and to establish structural partnerships in this regard.

§6. Exchange on education policy topics of mutual interest

1. The participants have identified a preliminary list of topics on which mutual learning could be furthered, namely digitalization of education and digital citizenship education, teacher training, and professionalization of teachers, and will continue to exchange good practices. In this context, the Flemish side expresses gratitude to the Education Division of the Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium for having provided a world-famous specialist on gamification and education, Prof. Ping-Cheng Yeh (National Taiwan University), as a speaker to the Council of Europe's 2023 Forum on History Education cohosted by the Flemish Department of Education and Training.
2. The participants will promote, facilitate, and encourage, as appropriate, the development of direct contacts between and among education and scientific research institutions, industries, stakeholder associations, and other organizations, both public and private.

2. Public health and welfare

§1. The participants would like to emphasize the importance of the following areas and will encourage exchange of expertise and good practices within their competencies:

1. Elderly care
2. Long-term care

Both participants focus on community-based service centers in local neighborhoods:

- Taiwan: 10-Year Long Term Care Plan 2.0
- Flanders: Project ‘Zorgzame Buurten’ (Caring Neighborhoods), in cooperation with the World Health Organization

§2. Due to an institutional reform and subsequent merger of the Department of Welfare, Public Health, and Family and the Agency Health and Care, for the partners involved in this cooperation from the side of Flanders, the name will be changed to the Department of Care (as of June 1, 2023).

3. Environmental policy

§1. The participants agree to explore the possibility of exchanges and cooperation on marine debris management and marine ecological conservation under the memorandum of understanding on cooperation and will work to establish contact between the relevant authorities for these areas in both Flanders and Taiwan.

§2. The participants recognize the importance and usefulness of addressing climate change issues through exchanges on evolving challenges, potential solutions, and initiatives proposed at the multilateral level, and will, therefore, consider conducting exchanges on the sidelines of relevant international activities, events, and conferences such as the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

4. Innovation and clean technologies

§1. The participants recognize the practical role that innovation and clean technologies, such as wind, solar, and hydrogen power generation, can play in the green transition and take note of the close ongoing bilateral cooperation between the two sides in the development of Taiwan’s offshore windfarms. The participants agree to strengthen the exchange of good practices, expertise, and

experiences through the organization of study visits, trade fairs and conferences, summits and forums, and business matchmaking (B2B) events.

5. Business and investment

§1. Flanders Investment and Trade will participate in four trade fairs in Taiwan during 2023: Taipei International Food Show, Bio-Asia Taiwan, Energy Taiwan, and the Global Offshore Wind Summit Taiwan.

§2. The 23rd Taiwan-Belgium Joint Business Council will be held in the second half of 2023 and a Taiwanese business delegation will visit its Flemish counterparts.

6. Employment and vocational training

§1. The participants, in accordance with their own laws, policies, rules, and regulations, will foster cooperation in the fields of public employment services and vocational training, with regard to:

1. Information exchange, which has been mainly organized in the form of webinars due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Webinars also allow for more frequent meetings as well as reach a wider audience. Both participants will encourage exchanges in virtual, physical, and hybrid forms to increase efficiency and utility.
2. Initiatives, with the participants emphasizing the success of recent ones:
 - In 2021, Taiwan introduced *The Maker Space*.
 - In 2022, the following webinars were organized:
 - VDAB: *The New Employers Strategy* at VDAB
 - WDA: *Employer Recruitment and Manpower Training Services*
 - *Division and Cooperation between Headquarters and Branches*—Customer Services and Partners

§2. VDAB proposes exploring the possibility of attracting Taiwanese engineers to the Flemish labor market as well as looking into exchanging best practices, specifically concerning the long-term unemployed.

7. Science

§1. The participants recognize that Flanders and Taiwan are important players in knowledge production, including investment in fundamental research in all research domains.

§2. The participants acknowledge that international collaboration is an important driving force for excellence. As a result, they seek ways to offer their research communities financial and other forms of support to develop partnerships, intensify their international networks, and contribute as such to exchange of ideas, ultimately driving knowledge creation in the most optimal way.

§3. The participants will endorse the above goals through the Agreement on Scientific Cooperation between The Research Foundation—Flanders (FWO) and The National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), Republic of China (Taiwan), signed on August 28, 2019. This agreement remains valid as a basis for the promotion and support of scientific cooperation between the participants in all of their competencies.

§4. Both the FWO and the NSTC will pursue an optimal implementation of the Agreement on Scientific Cooperation, searching for ways to perfect the current call for proposals and assessing whether other existing funding channels at the FWO and the NSTC might be broadened to include both scientific communities.

For the FWO side, this means:

1. A call for joint mobility projects
2. The Money follows Cooperation scheme within project funding
3. Scientific research networks

The NSTC proposes a joint seminar/conference to promote the aforementioned goals.

§5. In addition, both participants recognize the importance of knowledge security to establish trusted forms of R&I cooperation with third countries, in particular given the rapidly evolving geopolitical context. Both participants are willing to exchange experiences and best practices on that subject in order to strengthen their capacity to explore opportunities and assess risks regarding R&I cooperation with third countries.

8. Semiconductors

§1. The participants agree to encourage exchanges and cooperation in the field of science and technological innovation, particularly in the sphere of semiconductor technology. The participants will facilitate contact opportunities for:

1. Scientific institutions
2. Research centers
3. Companies
4. Higher education institutions
5. Research funding organizations
6. Administrative services in charge of science and technological innovation policy

§2. The participants consider it important to develop education and research cooperation in the field of semiconductor technology, covering the implementation of activities, initiatives, research, and scientific projects, as well as exchanges of experts, scientists, and talented individuals, including the potential organization of joint events.

§3. In view of the growing academic interest in semiconductors, education provides the basis for further research. Taiwan's Ministry of Education and universities have set up a Taiwan Exchange Experience Program for core technologies. This program encourages interuniversity cooperation for specific study programs. Both parties will encourage their higher education institutions to set up partnerships.

§4. For Flanders, the partners involved are:

1. Flanders Department of Economy, Science and Innovation
2. Flanders Chancellery and Foreign Office
3. Flanders Investment and Trade
4. FWO
5. Department of Education and Training (concerning teaching at higher education institutions)

§5. For Taiwan, the partners involved are:

1. NSTC
2. Ministry of Education

9. Cybersecurity

§1. The participants recognize the strategic importance of cybersecurity and acknowledge that recent global disruptions have drawn extra attention to the importance of cybersecurity.

§2. The participants acknowledge that having balanced partnerships in cybersecurity with like-minded partners in order to cooperate on initiatives of mutual interest can help ensure safety in times of crisis and improve overall resilience.

§3. For Flanders, the partner involved is:

Digital Flanders (Digitaal Vlaanderen)

§4. For Taiwan, the partner involved is:

1. Administration for Cyber Security, MODA

§5. Under the supervision of the government of Flanders and in partnership with other (local) governments, companies, and citizens, Digital Flanders has developed strategies for:

1. Information security
2. Data protection
3. Cybersecurity

§6. The main objectives of Digital Flanders are:

1. To maintain the trust of its (Flemish) citizens and businesses and to maximize their interests, rights, and privacy.
2. To be a reliable partner by guaranteeing the services of Digital Flanders.
3. To strive for a secure society.

§7. The participants agree to encourage knowledge exchange in the field of cybersecurity.

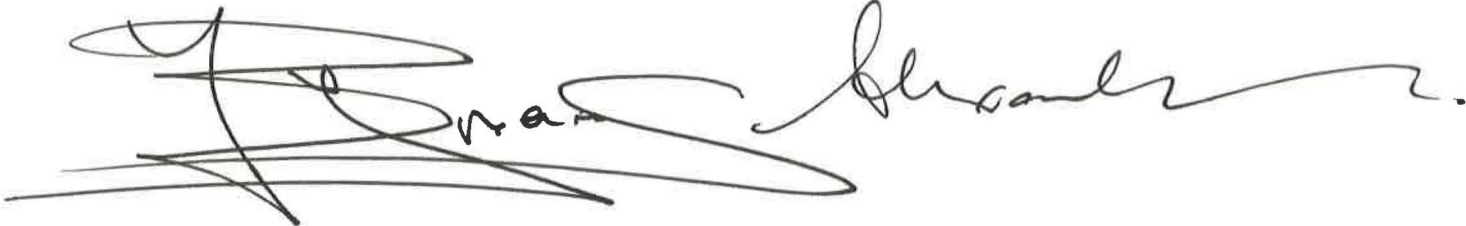
10. Digital economy

§1. The participants agree to explore potential exchanges and cooperation in the field of digital economy in due course.

Signed in duplicate in Taipei on April 27, 2023, in the English language.

Julie Bynens
Secretary-General
Flanders Chancellery & Foreign Office

Alexander Tah-ray Yui
Vice Minister
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Taiwan

Handwritten signatures of Julie Bynens and Alexander Tah-ray Yui. The signature on the left is for Julie Bynens, and the signature on the right is for Alexander Tah-ray Yui. The signatures are written in black ink and are somewhat stylized.