

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

OF THE JOINT SESSIONS OF THE ESTONIAN-LATVIAN AND LATVIAN-ESTONIAN INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMISSIONS FOR CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION

Venue: *Smiltene Cultural Centre,
Gaujas iela 1, Smiltene, Latvia*

March 10, 2017

Beginning of the Joint Session: 11:30

End of the Joint Session: 16:00

Chairman: Mr Kaspars Gerhards, Latvian Minister for Environmental Protection and Regional Development

Vice-Chairman: Mr Mihhail Korb, Estonian Minister of Public Administration

Participants:

Participants from Estonia:

Tõnis Nirk	Estonian Ambassador to Latvia
Piret Nõmmela	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Aleksandr Zdankevičš	Ministry of Finance
Margarita Golovko	Ministry of Finance
Hannes Nagel	Ministry of Finance
Kadri Jushkin	Ministry of Finance
Jürgen Ojalo	Ministry of Social Affairs
Kristel Siiman	Ministry of Social Affairs
Vaiko Vatsfeld	Estonian Rescue Board
Margus Lepik	Valga County Government
Helena Jarviste	Joint Technical Secretariat of the Estonia-Latvia programme
Vineta Šnore	Joint Technical Secretariat of the Estonia-Latvia programme

Participants from Latvia:

Juris Bone	Latvian Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Estonia
Gints Kukainis	Smiltene County Council
Vita Zivtiņa	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Iveta Staņislavska	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Oskars Vizbulis	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development
Sandis Cakuls	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development
Iruma Kravale	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development
Andrejs Birums	Ministry of Finance
Elīna Sakniņa-Šakale	Ministry of Finance
Ēriks Miķītis	Ministry of Health
Patriks Markevičš	Ministry of Transport
Liene Jenerte	Ministry of Economics
Intars Zītāns	Fire and Rescue Service of the Republic of Latvia
Leonarda Ķestere	Ministry of Culture
Evija Zurģe	Vidzeme Planning Region
Laila Gercāne	Vidzeme Planning Region
Guntis Gladkins	Rūjiena County Council

Harijs Rokpelnis	Mazsalaca County Council
Arturs Dukulis	Alūksne County Council
Edīte Balode	Valka County Council
Dace Vilne	Aloja County Council
Astrīda Harju	Ape County Council
Jānis Zuments	Naukšēni County Council
Ieva Zemīte	Rūjiena County Council
Ilze Bogdanova	JSC „Smiltenes Piens“
Ilze Krieva	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

Minutes-Secretary: Anna Škabireva, Latvian Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development
 Vita Prokopoviča, Latvian Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development

Agenda: Annex 1 (*Agenda of the Joint Session*)

OPENING SPEECH

The Joint Session of the Estonian-Latvian and Latvian-Estonian Intergovernmental Commissions for Cross-border Cooperation (hereinafter – the IGC) was opened by the Chairman Mr. Kaspars Gerhards, Minister for Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia. The Chairman emphasised the significance of the IGC format in addressing the challenges and issues of the border regions, noting that IGC format has been highly appreciated by the European Commission. This is considered to be a good format that currently exists only among very few EU countries with a common border.

OPENING SPEECH

The opening was followed by the speech of the Co-chairman Mr. Mihhail Korb, Minister of Public Administration of the Republic of Estonia. The Co-Chairman emphasized the role of the IGC being an essential platform for constructive dialogue on national, regional and local levels between both countries and also gave some conclusion on the achievements of the IGC work. The Co-Chairman also pointed out that some topics and issues (e.g. health care related public services and taxation issues in cross-border regions) during the last two years have reached certain progress and some have lost its actuality as the cooperation in those fields have reached to their natural and fertile phase between the interested and relevant Estonian and Latvian government institutions and agencies, local municipalities and specialists.

WELCOMING SPEECH

Mr. Gints Kukainis, Head of Smiltene Districts Council addressed a welcoming speech to the members of the IGC.

REPORT ABOUT THE ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE PRECEDING PERIOD

The Chairman gave floor to Ms Iruma Kravale from the Latvian Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development who presented information on IGC agenda issues of the preceding period and coordination of IGC work up to date.

The speaker gave a short summary about the organisation of IGC work since the last Joint Session. Following the decisions of the IGC in 2015 the work was concentrated on examination of the topical issues of the Agenda of 2015, and identifying new cooperation fields and obstacles that could hamper the cooperation. The work proceeded in collaboration with the responsible institutions and municipalities of both countries. As a result: proposals for solutions have been formulated; or detailed justification have been provided on the possibilities and usefulness to solve the issues in the framework of IGC.

According to Minutes of the last IGC Joint Session in 2015 there were 8 issues in the Agenda and 3 new topics were proposed after the last Joint Session in 2015:

- 1. Health care and health care related public services in cross-border regions;**
- 2. Vocational education, life-long learning and retraining of the unemployed;**
- 3. Development of cross-border railway connection (Tallinn – Riga);**
- 4. Renovation of gravel roads in border regions;**
- 5. Fire-fighting and rescue services in border-regions and maritime areas;**
- 6. Development of tourism;**
- 7. Planning of joint events in border regions;**
- 8. Taxation issues in border regions;**

- 9. Labour force mobility in border regions;**
- 10. Joint intercity public transport in Valga/Valka;**
- 11. Agreement between Estonia and Latvia on exchange of data from the population register.**

Discussions on 3 issues out of 11 proceeded in format of Joint Expert groups: Taxation Joint Expert Group; Medical Joint Expert Group and Railway and Transport Joint Expert Group. These issues were further presented by the representatives of the Joint Expert groups.

The rest of the issues were shortly introduced to the members and participants of the IGC.

Vocational education, life-long learning and retraining of the unemployed:

The issue was initially proposed by the Estonian side, therefore a sectoral analysis and a review has been provided by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia. According to the information from the Ministry of Education and Science provided in 2016 during the last two school years the number of applicants from Latvia has not been sufficient to complete the full students group with the Latvian study language for studying in Valga Vocational Education Centre. Taking into account that in recent years Latvia has developed modern and attractive opportunities to acquire professional education the question of the Latvian students' financing for studies in Valga Vocational Education Centre has lost its significance for Latvia. Moreover taking into account the demographic situation, professional education institutions network optimisation plans and financial resources it will not be deemed

possible for at least the next few years to find a solution to the financing of studies of the Latvian students' in the Valga Vocational Education Centre.

IGC decision: not to include the issue to the next IGC Agenda.

Labour force mobility in border regions

The issue of labour force mobility in border regions has been analysed and it was concluded to withdraw it from the IGC Agenda because the issue does not require the changes in the Latvian or in the Estonian national legislation and therefore in accordance with the IGC rules, is outside the IGC competence. Moreover taking into account that the respective priority (which focuses on the expansion of employment opportunities, speeding up the filling of vacancies and improving the availability of information for job seekers and employers in the opposite side of the border) was included in the Estonia–Latvia Cross Border Cooperation Programme 2014–2020 (hereinafter – the Estonia–Latvia programme or the Programme). This will result in improved employment opportunities, for example, set up a database of vacancies and organized a retraining-related activities.

IGC decision: not to include the issue to the next IGC Agenda, and to continue the cooperation on the issue at the level of respective responsible institutions and organisations.

Repairment of the gravel roads in cross-border region

The issue is significant for both countries and taking into account previous successful cooperation of both countries in repairing several cross-border gravel roads the issue was asked to be further investigated, namely the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Latvia proposed to examine the possibility to implement the two cross-border road infrastructure improvement projects within the Estonia–Latvia programme 2014–2020 that were previously agreed between Estonian and Latvian Road Administrations. At the time of the Programme preparation this issue was proposed for inclusion into the Programme, but was further rejected by the European Commission in light of the need to ensure that the current period of the Programme concentrates on no more than 4 thematic axes / priorities and the limited funding of the Programme.

IGC decision: not to include the issue to the IGC agenda of 2017, taking into account the fact that it is not possible to finance such types of projects in the framework of Estonia–Latvia cross-border cooperation programme 2014–2020, as well as the fact that no changes are required in Latvian or Estonian legislation, thus for solving the issue the IGC format is not necessary.

Joint intercity public transport in Valga/Valka

The issue was proposed by Estonian side and a legislation review has been provided by the responsible authority in Latvia. According to the requirements of the public transport regulatory framework the proposed route Valka - Valga does not correspond to the intercity route status. According to the laws, this connection is considered to be international as the final destinations are located in two different countries.

On the basis of the European Parliament and Council Regulation No.1073/2009 on common rules for access to the international market for coach and bus services and the Public Transport Services Law, public transport services within the country, including transport intercity routes are subsidized from the state budget. Such state aid regime does not apply to the carriage of

international importance, and consequently, they cannot be included into the Latvian public transport route network.

Routes of international importance are opened by the initiative of private enterprises, and they are conducted in line with principles of free competition.

IGC decision: not to include the issue on joint intercity bus in Valka/Valga until there is an examination made by the specialists on the options on exemption from EU regulation.

Fire-fighting and rescue services in border-regions and maritime areas

The issue has been analysed and it was concluded that currently it does not require the changes in the Latvian or in the Estonian national legislation. Further cooperation for provision of fire-fighting and rescue services in border-regions and maritime areas is possible in other formats (e.g. between both countries institutions, within implementation of joint projects.)

IGC decision: not to include the issue to the next IGC Agenda.

Development of tourism

After assessing the current legislation in the field of tourism, the Ministry of Economics of the Republic of Latvia has not identified the need for amendments or additions to it, and is not aware of the Latvian and Estonian cross-border problems in the field of tourism, which might create the obstacles due to regulatory gaps.

The cooperation between Latvia and Estonia in the field of tourism is facilitated also in the frames of the Agreement between Latvian Government Estonian Government and Lithuanian Government on cooperation in the field of tourism, as well as by the national tourism administrations contracts and annually renewed joint marketing activities plan - additional activities in the level of the IGC are not required.

IGC decision: not to include the issue to the next IGC Agenda.

Planning of joint events in border regions

The analysis of the situation revealed no need to deal with the issue within IGC format. The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia has informed about the ongoing cultural cooperation between the two countries, as well as on common measures which are planned to be implemented in co-operation with Estonia during Latvian centenary celebrations.

IGC decision: not to include the issue to the next IGC Agenda.

Agreement between Estonia and Latvia on exchange of data from the population register

Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Estonia proposed to include in the IGC agenda the issue of the conclusion of the Agreement between Estonia and Latvia on exchange of data from the population register between the two countries. It is noted that the signing of such an agreement will strengthen and develop cooperation between two countries in the field of free movement of persons, improving the public authorities' responsibility and performance efficiency. In addition to the need to maintain and analyse statistical data on Latvians, who live

and have received a residence permit in Estonia and vice versa. Such an agreement was drawn up in 2010 and it is necessary to complete the ongoing process of signing the agreement, with clear results and timetable that will enable ministries to better plan the contract-related activities.

According to the information provided by the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia in August 2016 the process of text harmonisation of the Agreement took place. IGC involvement would not be useful because mentioned harmonization process is in the final stages.

IGC decision: not to include the issue to the next IGC Agenda.

INTRODUCTION OF ACTUAL IGC ISSUES

Taxation issues in border regions

The Chairman gave floor to Mr. Andrejs Birums from the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Latvia – the representative of the Taxation Joint Expert Group – to present the issue on amendments to the Convention between the government of the Republic of Latvia and the government of the Republic of Estonia for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income (hereinafter – the Convention). The speaker gave an overview of the issue initially being suggested by the Estonian side and the proposed solution discussed on February 17, 2017 between the taxation specialists of both countries.

Both sides recognises the significance of the amendments to be made to the Convention – the supplementary technical provisions to the Convention to facilitate opportunities to apply the monthly tax relief for cross-border workers on both sides. These are the situations when one state resident is working for the company in the other country, and his/her taxes are withheld without application of any reliefs, for instance the non-taxable minimum, and it is possible to apply the reliefs in the end of a calendar year submitting income declaration when the state tax administration takes a decision on application of tax reliefs. Convention amendments would allow to apply the tax reliefs immediately in first working months without having to wait a whole year.

The Taxation Joint Expert Group concluded that the situation is currently is more essential for Latvians working in Estonia (especially in Valka/Valga). Moreover these tax reliefs should apply to the cases of long-term working relations (min 6 months). The principle of reciprocity should be respected. The application of the new provisions will be much wider. It will not apply to only one region in the border area, but absolutely to all workers in the both countries.

IGC decision: the work of the Taxation Joint Expert Group will proceed. The proposal for wording of the amendments to the Convention will be further negotiated in format of correspondence. Once negotiated, coordinated and agreed the amendments will undergo a formal procedure of international treaty amendments.

Health care and health care related public services in cross-border regions

The Chairman gave floor to Mr. Ēriks Miķītis from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia and Ms. Kristel Siiman from the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Estonia - the representatives of the Medical Joint Expert Group - to present the conclusions of the work

of the Expert Group on Health care and health care related public services in cross-border regions.

Mr. Ēriks Miķītis informed on Emergency medical assistance issues. In addition to the general set of EU regulation on possibilities to receive health care services in another country already since 2010 a special Agreement on Mutual Aid for Providing Ambulance Services in Border Areas¹ has been concluded between Latvia and Estonia. This Agreement foresees the possibility for the ambulance crew to cross the Latvian and Estonian border in order to provide emergency medical care to the inhabitants of the respective country and transfer the patient to the closest hospital in its country of origin. But it does not foresee the possibility, for example, for Latvian ambulance crew to transfer Latvian patient to the hospital in Estonia.

During the Medical Joint Expert Group Meeting on 20 February 2017 in Riga Latvia's side suggested to amend the Agreement in order to foresee the possibility to conclude additional agreements on:

- Patient hospitalization/transfer.
- Payments between the countries for services provided in the hospital.

Additional agreements would cover: definition of patient health condition cases when a patient should be transported to the Valga hospital as the geographically nearest hospital; patient transfer to Latvia after patient's condition has been stabilized; Estonian patient transportation from Latvian border area to the Valga hospital, if they give their permission; basic principles of payment order between the competent authorities.

Moreover Mr. Ēriks Miķītis informed that the Medical Joint Expert Group discussed also the issue on application of the EU Directive 2011/24/EU on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare. It must be admitted that the Directive has been fully taken over and incorporated into national legislation in both countries (in Latvia the Rules of the Cabinet of Ministers of 17 December 2013 No 1529). Currently Valka inhabitants may receive planned health care services in Valga hospital, but have to pay upfront. Afterwards they have the right to obtain reimbursement for health care services, if the services (in accordance with Latvian national regulations) are paid from the Latvian state budget. To receive reimbursement, Valka district residents must apply to the National Health Service, by submitting the documents listed in the Rules of the Cabinet of Ministers of 17 December 2013 No 1529. As of March 2016 the reimbursement procedure was simplified and there is no need to submit notarised translation for medical documents anymore.

Ms. Kristel Siiman presented the issue on Cooperation in health emergencies and disasters. She informed that during the Medical Joint Expert Group meeting on 20 February 2017 both sides presented their systems in the field of health emergencies and disaster medicine. Estonia's side informed that they are preparing cooperation agreement between Estonia and Finland in the field of emergencies and crises and proposed to conclude similar agreement with Latvia. Nevertheless it was concluded that before starting discussions on a possible agreement, it is necessary to identify areas of bilateral cooperation in health emergencies:

- Responding to crises (cross-border emergency response plans for mass casualty, mass burn casualty etc.)
- Response planning (exchange of knowledge and experience; joint education, training and exercises etc.)

¹ Agreement between the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Estonia and the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Estonia on Mutual Aid for Providing Ambulance Services in Border Areas

IGC decision: Medical Joint Expert Group will proceed working on the amendments to the Agreement on Mutual Aid for Providing Ambulance Services in Border Areas; as well as proceed with identification of the areas of bilateral cooperation in health emergencies.

Development of cross-border railway connection

The Chairman gave floor to Mr. Tõnis Nirk Ambassador of Estonia to Latvia - the representative of the Railway and Transport Joint Expert Group. The Presenter informed that representatives of the railway companies Eesti Liinirongid Ltd (ELRON) and JSC "Pasažieru vilciens" met in Riga on 16 February, 2017. The aim of the meeting was to find ways how to ensure successful cooperation between the two companies in providing passenger traffic services in Rīga-Tartu line. The Mayors of Valga and Valka also participated.

It was agreed that both companies will appoint a representative who will be responsible for exchange of information between them, including information on train schedules and changes therein.

It was also agreed that the objective of two companies is to harmonize the train schedules so that there will be at least one synchronized train connection in Rīga-Tartu line a day in both directions, starting from 2018.

It was noted that all the questions related to possible re-opening of Rīga-Tartu direct train line, including potentially conducting a comprehensive feasibility study of such a line, are in the competence of Ministries responsible for transport of Latvia and Estonia.

In addition, possibilities of further harmonisation of ticketing systems of two companies was discussed.

IGC decision: the cooperation on the issue on the development of cross-border railway connection should proceed in the level of responsible Ministries of both countries.

CONCLUSIONS AND TASKS TO THE IGC FOR THE NEXT PERIOD

Summarizing the information and the opinions of specialists and experts of both countries on IGC issues presented, as well as considering future initiatives to be dealt with in the framework of the IGC, the Chairmen and the national delegations recognized the need for the work of IGC to continue in the following period. **The Chairman concluded on the decisions to be taken by the IGC in 2017.**

THE JOINT SESSION DECIDED:

- 1) **to keep the following issues in the IGC agenda for the next period and to continue working on solutions in the framework of established according Joint Expert Group:**
 1. Taxation issues in border regions;
 2. Health care and health care related public services in cross-border regions;
 3. Development of cross-border railway connection;
- 2) with regard to the **introduction of the new initiatives and issues** into the Agenda of the IGC the delegations of both countries are invited **to follow the certain procedure** (namely):

- to formulate new initiatives or re-evaluate once again those already considered initiatives and issues on the local and/or national level;
- to examine and review the background on the issue or obstacle internally within each country's delegation (looking for joint understanding and formulating a common position of local municipalities and responsible institutions and/or line ministries);
- involving IGC coordinating Ministries of both sides to exchange opinions between specialists of both countries in format of Joint Expert Groups created ad hoc upon necessity and with the purpose of better flexibility and efficiency for solving the issues involving relevant specialists and field experts;
- to evaluate if the format of the IGC would suit for solving the issue and bring the issue to the Agenda of the next period.

Adding to the main conclusions, **Co-chairman emphasised the following issues to be taken into account** formulating new initiatives and re-evaluating those previously considered within IGC that might need to be further tackled by the specialists of both countries:

- cross-border vocational education, arranging the expert-level meetings including ministries, vocational education institutions, larger employers in the border regions and representatives of local government;
- Agreement between Estonia and Latvia on exchange of data from the population register, monitoring the situation until the Agreement is concluded and signed;
- Valka-Valga cross-border urban transport, arranging the expert-level meeting to map the opportunities and obstacles of creation of a common cross-border urban transport;
- organization of the Estonian and Latvian border region municipalities' round table, upgrading cross-border cooperation agreements and encouraging additional professional contacts;
- organising seminars for Latvian local government representatives, informing about the conclusions of the Estonian administrative reform and introducing new Estonian administrative system.

Moreover representative of Mazsalaca municipality (Latvian delegation) emphasised the role of the IGC in solving previously set issues and suggested to monitor them further in order to notice the necessity to bring some of the most crucial issues back to the Agenda if there is a need for that or the status/situation changes. Also the idea of organising the communication of border region municipalities of both countries in formats of round tables, working groups etc. in the frameworks of IGC was highly welcomed.

INFORMATIVE PART OF THE IGC JOINT SESSIONS 2017

The second part in the IGC meeting was dedicated to providing the outlook on Latvian and Estonian cooperation in the framework of cross-border cooperation Programme as well as other issues of common interest for both countries.

The outlook on Latvian and Estonian cooperation

The Chairman gave floor to Ms. Helena Järviste, Head of Joint Secretariat of Estonia-Latvia Programme. The Presenter informed on cooperation opportunities provided within Estonia-Latvia INTERREG -VA Programme 2014-2020 including a general information on the priorities, specific objectives and budget of the Programme; as well as conclusions of the 1st call for proposals of the Programme. The presentation of the representative of the Programmes Secretariat was followed by introduction of the ongoing cross-border cooperation project “Whey valorization” by Ms. Ilze Bogdanova, Chair of Board of AS “Smiltenes Piens”.

EU discussions on solutions to cross-border obstacles - state of play 2017

The Chairman gave floor to Ms Iruma Kravale from the Latvian Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development who presented information on:

- **European Commission’s (DG REGIO) initiative**

In the end of 2015 European Commissions public consultation on existing barriers and the challenges of EU border regions took place, which resulted with 623 responses received. In 2016 the European Commission summarised the results of the public consultation and carried out further study and consultations with experts and Member States. The final report “Cross Border Review” will be drawn up by summer 2017 and formally presented in September.

- **Luxembourg Presidency’s initiative**

In 2015 the Luxembourg presidency opened the discussion on the need to develop a specific regulatory framework for cross-border cooperation. A special Working group has been established with the purpose to continue the discussions on a specific legal framework for cross-border cooperation at the EU level – the European Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation, as well as to agree on the appropriate instruments and to prepare a proposal for submission to the European Commission by the end of 2017. If the proposal will be accepted by the European Commission and the Member States, the European Commission, working on the new framework package for post 2020, will also elaborate the new Regulation on this Convention

- **EU level discussion on post 2020**

Taking into account that discussions on the EU Multiannual Financial Framework after 2020 has already started, the reflection process takes place also with regard to the future of the Cohesion policy after 2020 including European Territorial Cooperation. Latvia highly appreciates the existing cooperation with Estonia on the strategic issues and encourages Latvian and Estonian colleagues to work together in a variety of formats and levels during Estonian presidency, as well as during European Union’s debate on the future of the Cohesion policy after 2020 and cross-border cooperation.

Information on Latvian and Estonian collaborative centenary projects

The Chairman gave floor to Ms. Leonarda Kestere from Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia, who presented Latvian and Estonian collaborative centenary projects, for example - Cesis town and Estonia joint projects dedicated to the Cesis Battle centenary; joint activities in Valka-Valga town dedicated to the centenary of both countries; collaboration programme of Alūksne and Estonia and others.

CLOSING THE IGC JOINT SESSIONS 2017

Mr. Kaspars Gerhards thanked all the participants for a fruitful working day and closed the meeting. The next meeting of the Joint Session of the Estonian-Latvian and Latvian-Estonian Intergovernmental Commissions for Cross-Border Co-Operation shall be held next year in Estonia.

Concluded in Smiltene on March 10, 2017 in two equally binding copies, each in English.

Kaspars Gerhards
Minister for Environmental Protection
and Regional Development of the
Republic of Latvia

Mihhail Korb
Minister of Public Administration
of the Republic of Estonia



Ministry of Environmental
Protection and Regional
Development
Republic of Latvia

Joint Session of the Latvian-Estonian Intergovernmental Commission for Cross- Border Cooperation

Agenda

10 March 2017

Venue & Address : Smiltene Cultural Centre - Big Hall,
Gaujas Str.1, Smiltene, Latvia

From 11:30	Registration of participants
12:00-13:00	Joint lunch <i>In Small Hall of the Cultural Centre</i>
13:00-13:15	Opening of the Joint Session of the IGC Opening speeches by the Chairman and Co-Chairman of the IGC 2017 <i>Mr. Kaspars Gerhards, Latvian minister for Environmental Protection and Regional Development</i> <i>Mr. Mihhail Korb, Estonian minister of Public Administration</i> Welcoming speech by Hosting Municipality <i>Mr. Gints Kukainis, Head of Smiltene District Council</i>
13:15-13:30	Report about the issues and activities of the preceding period Information on IGC agenda issues of the preceding period and coordination of IGC work up to date <i>Ms. Iruma Kravale, Latvian Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development</i>
13:30-14:30	Introduction of actual IGC issues Presentations and discussions on topical agenda issues of the IGC in 2017 1). Amendments to the Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income <i>Mr. Andrejs Birums, Latvian Ministry of Finance;</i> 2). Health care and health care related public services in cross-border regions - Emergency medical assistance <i>Mr. Ēriks Miķītis, Latvian Ministry of Health</i>

-Cooperation in health emergencies and disasters

Ms. Kristel Siiman, Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs

3). Cooperation in providing passenger traffic services in Rīga-Tartu line

Mr. Tõnis Nirk, Ambassador of Estonia to Latvia

14:30-14:40	<p>Conclusions and tasks to the IGC for the next period Summary and Statements</p> <p><i>Mr. Kaspars Gerhards, Latvian minister for Environmental Protection and Regional Development</i> <i>Mr. Mihhail Korb, Estonian minister of Public Administration</i></p>
14:40-15:00	<p>The outlook on Latvian and Estonian cooperation Cooperation opportunities provided within Estonia-Latvia INTERREG-VA Programme 2014-2020</p> <p><i>Ms. Helena Järviste, Head of Joint Secretariat of Estonia-Latvia Programme</i></p> <p>An introduction of the ongoing cross-border cooperation project “Whey valorization” <i>Ms. Ilze Bogdanova, Chair of Board of AS “Smiltenes Piens”</i></p>
15:00-15:30	<p>Coffee break <i>Foyer of the Cultural Centre and Cinema Hall</i></p>
15:30-15:40	<p>EU discussions on solutions to cross-border obstacles - state of play 2017 <i>Ms. Iruma Kravale, Latvian Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development</i></p>
15:40-15:55	<p>Information on Latvian and Estonian collaborative centenary projects <i>Ms. Leonarda Kestere, Latvian Ministry of Culture</i></p>
15:55-16:00	<p>Closing the IGC Joint Session Reflections and farewell</p> <p><i>Mr. Kaspars Gerhards, Latvian minister for Environmental Protection and Regional Development</i></p>