

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

### **9<sup>th</sup> Joint Session of the Estonian-Latvian and Latvian-Estonian Intergovernmental Commissions for Cross-Border Cooperation**

Venue: *Ühishoone,  
Suur-Ameerika 1, Tallinn, Estonia*

10<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Beginning of the Joint Session: 13:00

End of the Joint Session: 16:30

Chairman: Mr. Janek Mäggi, Minister of Public Administration of Estonia

Co-Chairman: Mr. Kaspars Gerhards, Minister for Environmental Protection and Regional Development of Latvia

Annex 1: Agenda

Annex 2: List of participants

Annex 3: Rules of Procedure

## **OPENING OF THE MEETING**

The Chairman Mr. Janek Mäggi, Minister of Public Administration of Estonia and the Co-Chairman Mr. Kaspars Gerhards, Minister for Environmental Protection and Regional Development of Latvia opened the 9<sup>th</sup> Joint Session of the Estonian-Latvian and Latvian-Estonian Intergovernmental Commissions (hereinafter 'IGC') emphasizing the significance of the IGC format which has been, since 2004, an important platform for the border regions' local and regional governments', enabling them, as equal members, to address their development needs and obstacles in the field of cross-border cooperation directly, at government level.

## **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Parties agreed on the proposed agenda (Annex 1).

## **OVERVIEW OF THE IGC WORK IN 2017 AND 2018**

### **1. Summary of 2017 Joint Session follow-up activities**

Mr. Hannes Nagel, Chief-Specialist of the European Territorial Cooperation of the Ministry of Finance of Estonia, informed the participants that by January 2018, the Secretariat of the Joint Session drafted the specific joint form for the identification of the future initiatives and cross-border obstacles. In 2018, several surveys using the form have been successfully carried out in both countries mapping new legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context that require involvement at the intergovernmental level. He also presented the amendments and technical changes of the Rules of Procedure of the IGC prepared by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat of the Joint Session notified that the information about the 'B-solutions' initiative promoted by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy and its opportunities – to collect concrete and replicable actions which aim at

identifying and testing solutions to cross-border obstacles of legal and administrative nature in EU internal land borders in five fields: employment; health; public transport of passengers; multi-lingualism; institutional cooperation – have been spread on national level in both countries in 2018. The overall response to the “B-solutions” initiative was low on European level. Unfortunately none of the governmental commissions organisations participated in the call of proposals and thus missed an opportunity.

## **2. Report on progress of the joint activities agreed by the Joint Session in 2017**

### **2.1. Taxation in border regions**

Ms. Tiina Hansson, the Chief-Specialist of the Tax Policy Department of the Ministry of Finance of Estonia, informed the participants that in 2017 and 2018, a number of meetings and conference calls took place between Estonian and Latvian officials in order to find a solution to the question of the application of the non-taxable minimum (basic exemption) to the employment income earned by cross-border employees of both states on monthly basis.

In 2017, both sides discussed the possible revision of 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 and on Capital (hereinafter – the Convention) in order to find a solution. From 2018, Estonia and Latvia changed their rules for the calculation of tax exempt basic allowance. Both countries now use the so-called regressive non-taxable minimum system, which means that from a certain level of income the non-taxable minimum is 0. The final tax liability becomes apparent upon submission of a natural person's income tax return at the end of the year.

At their meeting on 13 September 2018, experts from both countries found that it would be best to resolve the problem of applying the non-taxable minimum on monthly basis by changing the domestic law in Latvia and Estonia, rather than changing the tax treaty (the Convention). The same applies to Latvian residents residing in Latvia and working across the border in Estonia. In such cases, the application of non-taxable minimum depends on the tax laws of one or another country. At the September meeting, both sides also agreed to inform each other about the cases of double taxation (if any such cases should occur) and these issues will be solved by cooperation between the two parties.

**Both sides came into conclusion that in the new situation amending the Convention is not an appropriate solution, as both sides must seek the possibilities for taking unilateral steps by considering amendments to domestic legislation, if appropriate. Parties agreed not to include the issue to the 2019 IGC agenda. At the same time parties agreed to continue the cooperation on the issue at the level of respective responsible institutions.**

### **2.2 Healthcare and health care related public services in cross-border regions**

#### **A) Emergency medical assistance**

Ms. Līga Šerna, director of Healthcare Department of the Ministry of Health of Latvia, informed the participants that Latvian-Estonian cooperation in the provision of emergency assistance is based on the 2010 Agreement between the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia, the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs and the Estonian Ministry of the Interior on Mutual Assistance in the Provision of Emergency Medical Services in the Border Area (hereinafter – the Agreement). During the period from 2011 to July 1, 2018, the Latvian brigade has gone to call in Estonia 54 times, while the Estonian brigade has gone to call in Latvia 57 times.

The Agreement provides for the possibility for an emergency medical aid team to cross the border of Latvia and Estonia in order to provide emergency medical care to the residents of the respective country and, if necessary, to bring the person across the border to their country of residence for further treatment. Currently the Agreement only allows ambulance crews to take patients to a hospital in their country of residence. In some cases, it would be more efficient to transfer patients to the closest hospital, which is oftentimes Valga Hospital.

To that end, in 2016 Latvia made the request to find a way to enable ambulance crews to transport patients to the nearest hospital whether it is in Estonia or Latvia. After a discussing the matter, it was concluded that an agreement between the Latvian authority responsible for health insurance and Valga Hospital would need to be signed. In 2018 Latvia notified Estonia that it had made changes to its legislation to make signing this agreement possible. Estonia encouraged Latvia to proceed with this and offered to help as necessary.

### **C) Cross-border use of Valga hospital services**

Mr. Margus Lepik, mayor of the Municipality of Valga, informed the participants that the municipalities of Valga and Valka are deeply concerned that residents of Valka and other nearby Latvian border regions who cannot receive hospital services in Valka are suggested to get medical assistance in Valmiera, which is 50 km away from their place of residence although they could receive such assistance in Valga hospital.

This approach is not in the interests of the inhabitants of the border regions, and as a result the overall availability of health services in the region is lower than its' true potential. Furthermore, he added, that searching for the national-level solution has been ongoing for the last 15 years without success. The municipality has made numerous attempts to solve the cross-border obstacle through different negotiations directly with the governments, prime ministers and ministries.

Mr. Vents Armands Krauklis, mayor of the Municipality of Valka, mentioned that another aspect of the problem is that the healthcare financing systems in Estonia and Latvia are very different, and at the moment, Latvian citizens are only able to receive the medical service by paying for it themselves. The cross-border obstacle dates back to 1990s and negotiations without real results have been ongoing since 1999.

When the problem is resolved, both residents of Valka and the nearby Latvian border regions would have the opportunity to receive local medical services. At the same time, the region's universal provision and availability of healthcare services will increase significantly, thereby also helping to increase the well-being of the border region residents.

Ms. Līga Šerna, director of Healthcare Department of the Ministry of Health of Latvia, informed the participants that the Latvian Cabinet's Regulation No. 555 of 28 August 2018 "Health Care Services Organization and Payment Procedures" stipulates that health care services paid from the state budget are provided by medical institutions that have entered into an agreement with the National Health Service regarding the provision of inpatient health care services.

Paragraph 5.3.3 of these Regulation gives the National Health Service the right to conclude contracts for the provision of health care services with medical treatment institutions of other countries. Latvia would like to receive information on the health services offered from the Valga hospital. Then, during this year, a meeting between the representatives of the National Health Service and the Valga Hospital could be arranged.

The Chairman, Mr. Janek Mäggi, pointed out that there is a need to find ways how to solve the issue in the near future and expressed hope that it would be possible to find a solution to the problems already before the 2019 Joint Session.

### **B) Cooperation in health emergencies and disasters**

Ms. Kristel Siiman, Advisor of Health System Development Department of the Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia, informed the participants that in June 2017 Estonia proposed specific points of cooperation in preparing and responding to crises in the field of healthcare to Latvia. By March 2018, Latvia expressed its' willingness to move forward with this topic and proposed to have a teleconference to discuss further details.

In May 2018, a teleconference took place between Estonian and Latvian authorities. After an analysis of the relevant legal framework, it was concluded that a new agreement is necessary, as the trilateral agreement between the government of the Republic of Estonia, the government of the Republic of Latvia and the government of the Republic of Lithuania on mutual assistance and cooperation in the field of disaster prevention, preparedness and response does not cover the field of healthcare. Both sides agreed to move forward with a bilateral framework agreement between the relevant ministries that would allow the specific national competent institutions (for example, the Estonian Health Board) to make further agreements on the specific details regarding procedures and contact points. Furthermore, it was agreed, that Estonia would send the first draft of the framework agreement to Latvia at the beginning of June 2018.

In June 2018, Estonia sent the first draft of the framework agreement to Latvia with a request for feedback by the end of August. The agreement between Estonia and Latvia would cover healthcare related mutual assistance and cooperation in field of emergency prevention, preparation and response. Furthermore, both sides will also appoint on the basis of the agreement, 24-hour point(s) of contact for submitting and receiving early warnings and requests for assistance.

Ms. Līga Šerna, director of Healthcare Department of the Ministry of Health of Latvia, informed the participants that the draft agreement received from Estonia has been forwarded to the Latvian ministries. After receiving all the opinions, they will be summarized and sent to the Estonian side by the end of the year with Latvian proposals for the conclusion of the contract.

**Parties agreed to proceed working on the issue on provision of health care and health care related public services in cross-border regions including it to the 2019 IGC agenda. The issue of cross-border use of Valga hospital services will remain under the IGC topic “healthcare and healthcare related public services in the cross-border regions” as subtopic.**

### **3. Cooperation in providing passenger traffic service on Riga-Tartu railway line**

Mr. Ain Tatter, head of Road and Railways Department of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, informed the participants that the National Budget Strategy 2019-2023 of the Republic of Estonia does not foresee funds for opening the direct connection of the Tartu-Riga passenger train as a state commission.

The provision of high-quality service for servicing this line requires, based on initial estimates, the acquisition of three new express-type trains with a total cost of 30 million euros, plus a subsequent grant from the state budget to cover the operating costs, since incoming ticket revenue does not cover a significant part of the costs of servicing the line. At the same time, in the course of the Estonian budgetary strategy, the acquisition of three new express trains in the

directions of Tallinn-Tartu and Tallinn-Narva is a national priority, as the demand for these lines exceeds the capacity of today's trains.

The expediency of establishing a direct link to the South-East Estonian passenger train line with Riga is to be assessed separately on the basis of the analysis of the logistics and business solutions of the Rail Baltic passenger train line on the basis of the new plan of the 2020+ Transport Development Plan, if necessary as feed lines. The possible acquisition of new rolling stock will include, among other things, the financing options provided for in the Fund Rules introduced in the new EU Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 period. AS Eesti Raudtee is in talks with the newly started operation of the Kiev-Riga passenger train on the technical, time and financial conditions of the extension of the Kiev-Riga passenger railroad, which could already be one of the solutions in the pre-Rail Baltic period.

Mr. Vents Armands Krauklis, mayor of the Municipality of Valka, mentioned that the topic is rather old which has been discussed with both of the railway operators. He also added that on the Tartu-Riga route, no one doubts the existence of a sufficient number of passengers in case of high-quality service. According to both railway company operators each has internal problems that have to be solved and until there is a political guidance provided the Tartu-Riga line is not a priority. Economically, the connection would be beneficial to both sides, which would help to develop Tartu as a tourist destination, improve connectivity with the Riga airport, save the environment, and so on. He also expressed hope that once a political task would be given the technical solution would be also found.

The Co-Chairman, Mr. Kaspars Gerhards, acknowledged that it is necessary both sides to grant the railway line and that the subject could be suggested to the agenda of the Prime Ministers' meeting.

The Chairman, Mr. Janek Mäggi, concluded that issue is important for Estonia and it could be discussed during the Prime Ministers' meeting.

**Parties agreed to include the issue to the 2019 IGC agenda and to proceed working on the issue of cooperation in providing passenger traffic service on Riga-Tartu railway line.**

## **INTRODUCTION AND DISCUSSION OF THE 2018 IDENTIFIED THEMES**

### **1. Development of joint packaging deposit system between Estonia and Latvia**

Mr. Mihkel Krusberg, advisor of the Ministry of the Environment of Estonia, informed the participants that in order to provide free cross border movement of deposit packaging, there is a need to discuss the possibilities of creating a joint packaging deposit system between Estonia and Latvia. Estonia implemented the system successfully in 2005, in Latvia it is still in planning process. The packaging deposit system in Estonia and in other countries has shown its success, for example, the collection rate of relevant packages is close to 90%.

The system plays an important role in returning and reusing the vast majority of the materials used in the packages covered by deposit glass, metals and plastic. With increasingly ambitious waste targets, it is important to collect high-quality packaging waste in all countries. With regard to expanding cross-border trade, the problem of waste collection and handling has rapidly risen since the collection of packaging in containers is not as effective as the packaging deposit system. A significant part of packages without the deposit unfortunately end up in mixed waste and become therefore impossible to reuse or recycle.

As a result of the project, a solution would be developed for setting up an interlinked two-state system. The project could set an example of the possibility of implementing a joint deposit packing system on the supranational level in the European Union. The main activities of the project could be solution oriented workshops, stakeholder engagement, development of harmonised system and regulations, and giving political and technical guidance to improve cooperation. The Co-Chairman, Mr. Kaspars Gerhards, added that the topic is interesting and important. He also pointed out that it might be relevant to discuss the issue also with Lithuania in order to achieve a solution that would include all the Baltic States.

**Parties agreed to include the issue to the 2019 IGC agenda and to initiate expert-level consultations among relevant institutions evaluating the issue of development of the joint packaging deposit system between Estonia and Latvia.**

## **2. Coordination of cross-border rescue operations' procedures and plans**

Mr. Arnis Jurševics, Sectoral Policy Department Director of the Ministry of the Interior of Latvia, informed participants that State Fire and Rescue Service of Latvia has participated in the preparation of an agreement between the governments of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia on co-operation in the field of disaster prevention, preparedness and response. The agreement highlights the theme of this day – on the need for various measures, such as the development of procedures and plans for cross-border rescue operations – in order to facilitate the transit of assistance for the personnel and equipment involved, co-operation during the operation and the provision of support by the host country.

Mr. General Intars Zitāns, Deputy Chief of Service of the State Fire and Rescue Service of Latvia, informed the participants that at the NATO Warsaw Summit, which took place in 2016, seven essential requirements were set for strengthening the resilience of the countries. One of the most important NATO baseline requirements is the ability to cope with the uncontrolled massive movement of people from the state to the state and within the country if necessary, which can exceed the available resources and stop the possibility of securing basic needs of the society. Therefore, there is a need for total regional measures that include planning, preparation and coordination of resources and equipment, if necessary.

The State Fire and Rescue Service has a number of good examples of firefighting this year in co-operation with the Estonian Rescue Board, when additional resources were needed. The firefighters' rescuers of both countries meet not only in case of disasters, but also in practical trainings, which prepare for real rescue operations, and educate society on various events. Thanks to cross-border cooperation, several projects have come to the fore, which have achieved concrete results. The organization believes that the INTERREG financing mechanism is a serious support for the implementation of the three Baltic States Agreement on Co-operation in the Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Response.

The practical implementation of this Agreement could contribute to the fulfilment of NATO's 7 baseline requirements for strengthening national resilience. The State Fire and Rescue Service offers the development of specific capacities at the regional level, inter alia the joint capacity (module) for emergency mass sheltering or additional infrastructure and premises adapted to meet the needs of the community in the case of possible temporary accommodation in existing buildings.

**Parties agreed to include the issue to the 2019 IGC agenda and to initiate expert-level consultations among relevant institutions and to start working on the issues of regional capacity development and coordination of cross-border rescue operations' procedures and plans.**

### **3. Elaboration of the unified geodetic justification for the Rail Baltic railway line construction**

Mr. Ivars Liepiņš, Director of Geodesy Department of the Latvian Geospatial Information Agency, informed participants that since Latvia and Estonia are using different geodetic coordinate systems, map projections and possibly also the height models, for the implementation of the Rail Baltic project, the Latvian Geospatial Information Agency and the Estonian Land Board should agree on the elaboration of the unified geodetic justification.

He stressed the importance of the relevant geodetic reference systems, geodetic values and problems which appear when each country has its own system. He also pointed out that between each system there is transformation and transition which unfortunately leaves room for human mistakes and accuracy loss. Problems might also appear with the cross-border cooperation projects such as the Rail Baltic. The presentation aimed to acknowledge the importance of geodetic characteristics on railway construction which would also allow to reduce the amount of errors in planning and construction phases.

Mr. Priit Pihlak, advisor of the Estonian Land Board, expressed his organisation's readiness to start consultations with the relevant Latvian institutions.

**Parties agreed to include the issue to the 2019 IGC agenda and to initiate expert-level consultations among relevant institutions and to start working on the issue of elaboration of the unified geodetic justification for the Rail Baltic railway line construction.**

### **4. Determination, prioritisation and coordination of the list of road sections for reconstruction in the border area**

Mr. Klāvs Grieze, head of the Road Section of the Ministry of Transport of Latvia, informed the participants that the poor state of the roads in the border region of Latvia and Estonia, significantly impedes the development of the territory, and complicates the carriage of passengers and cargo.

The Estonian side proposed to initiate a dialogue between the responsible authorities of both countries on the condition of roads in the border region and the possibilities of their reconstruction. Latvia supports the proposal of the Estonian side to establish a working group composed of experts from the Latvian and Estonian road administration.

The task of the working group will be to determine and prioritise a list of road sections in the border area, whose reconstruction would have the highest added value to the development of the border region of both countries. The working group would be open to consider and examine proposals for road section reconstruction from the planning regions and municipalities of the border region.

Mr. Peeter Rahnel, mayor of the municipality of Mulgi, stressed the importance of such undertaking.

Mr. Vents Armands Krauklis, mayor of the municipality of Valka, said that in case of Valga-Valka there is a need to improve and reconstruct the streets and bridges of the twin-city that support cross-border labour and logistic mobility. He also mentioned that local municipalities do not always have the necessary resources themselves and thus would require further assistance in the coming years.

Mr. Harijs Rokpelnis, mayor of the municipality of Mazsalaca, highlighted the importance of inviting also the representatives of the local municipalities and planning regions to the expert-level working group.

**Parties agreed to include the issue to the 2019 IGC agenda, to initiate the working group and to start working on the issue of determination, prioritisation and coordination of the list of road sections for reconstruction in the border area.**

#### **5. Lack of ferry transport connections between Saaremaa and Kurzeme**

Mr. Igors Udodovs, the Deputy CEO of the Ventspils Free Port Authority, informed the participants in regard of the topic about the history, lessons learned, status quo and next steps that should be considered in order to re-establish the ferry transport connections between Saaremaa and Kurzeme. The presentation pointed out the reasons why the service was discontinued in 2008 (economic crises), an unsuccessful attempt to restore the line with the INTERREG project «Linking Gotland – Ventspils – Saaremaa for sustainable development» in 2011 (failed due to lack of private companies who would be interested to test the ferry service within the project framework) and consultations over the perspectives of re-establishing the ferry line between municipality of Saaremaa and Ventspils Free Port Authority.

Ms. Evita Dreijere, Head of Kurzeme Planning Region Administration, expressed gratitude that the topic has been brought to the discussion at the intergovernmental level and stressed the relevance of topic at the region's point of view. She also pointed out that the benefits of the connectivity should also be seen not only on the local Ventspils and Kuressaare level but also on a broader regional and national level in regard to possible new tourist flows.

Ms. Marili Niits, deputy mayor of the municipality of Saaremaa, mentioned that in 2017 the municipality of Saaremaa carried out a survey to map the connectivity restoration options. Both parties were interested, but support coming from elsewhere was considered indispensable. As the topic has a significant regional connectivity importance a suitable model of cooperation should be developed between stakeholders and a suitable vessel should be found. The municipality of Saaremaa is ready to contribute in it. She further stressed the importance of such undertaking and expressed hope that the topic would be included into the IGC agenda.

The Chairman, Mr. Janek Mäggi, concluded that this issue could also be raised at the Prime Ministers' meeting.

**Parties agreed to include the issue to the 2019 IGC agenda and initiate expert-level consultations among relevant institutions and to start working on the issue of ferry transport connections between Saaremaa and Kurzeme.**

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## **CONCLUSIONS AND DECISIONS TO THE 2019 JOINT SESSION**

Chairman Mr. Janek Mägi and the Co-Chairman Mr. Kaspars Gerhards, made summaries over the presented new topics, formulated decision proposals and concluded the following:

### **1. Taxation issues in border regions**

- Not to include the issue to the 2019 IGC agenda.
- Both sides came into conclusion that in the new situation amending the Convention is not an appropriate solution, as both sides must seek the possibilities for taking unilateral steps by considering amendments to domestic legislation, if appropriate. To continue the cooperation on the issue at the level of respective responsible institutions.

### **2. Cross-border use of Valga hospital services**

- To include the issue under the IGC topic “*healthcare and healthcare related public services in the cross-border regions*” to the 2019 IGC agenda as subtopic.
- To proceed working on the issue on provision of health care and health care related public services in cross-border regions.
- To proceed working on the issue of bilateral cooperation in health emergencies.

### **3. Cooperation in providing passenger traffic service on Riga-Tartu railway line**

- To include the issue to the 2019 IGC agenda.
- To proceed working on the issue of cooperation in providing passenger traffic service on Riga-Tartu railway line.

### **4. Development of joint packaging deposit system between Estonia and Latvia**

- To include the issue to the 2019 IGC agenda.
- To initiate expert-level consultations among relevant institutions and to start evaluating the development of the joint packaging deposit system between Estonia and Latvia.

### **5. Coordination of cross-border rescue operations’ procedures and plans**

- To include the issue to the 2019 IGC agenda.
- To initiate expert-level consultations among relevant institutions and to start working on the issue of coordination of cross-border rescue operations’ procedures and plans.

### **6. Elaboration of the unified geodetic justification for the Rail Baltic railway line construction**

- To include the issue to the 2019 IGC agenda.
- To initiate expert-level consultations among relevant institutions and to start working on the issue of elaboration of the unified geodetic justification for the Rail Baltic railway line construction.

### **7. Determination, prioritisation and coordination of the list of road sections for reconstruction in the border area**

- To include the issue to the 2019 IGC agenda.
- To initiate the working group and to start working on the issue of determination, prioritisation and coordination of the list of road sections for reconstruction in the border area.

### **8. Lack of ferry transport connections between Saaremaa and Kurzeme**

- To include the issue to the 2019 IGC agenda.

- To initiate expert-level consultations among relevant institutions and to start working on the issue of ferry transport connections between Saaremaa and Kurzeme.

The Chairman highlighted the Estonian interest and readiness to arrange a Prime Minister level meeting once the new Government and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia have taken office.

The Chairman also informed that the Estonian side would like to discuss the following four topic at the proposed Estonian and Latvian Prime Minister level meeting:

- 1) Cross-border use of Valga hospital services,
- 2) Cooperation in providing passenger traffic service on Riga-Tartu railway line and,
- 3) Elaboration of the unified geodetic justification for Rail Baltic railway line construction,
- 4) Lack of ferry transport connections between Saaremaa and Kurzeme.

The Chairman, Mr. Janek Mäggi, was pleased that, as a result of the Joint Session, delegations made important agreements and succeeded in the first half of the year with mapping new cross-border region legal and administrative obstacles with the joint methodology and procedure. The Chairman also mentioned that participants have created the necessary contacts and informal working groups to solve the problems. This is a good example of how cooperation between our countries progresses.

It was agreed that within the framework of the new IGC agenda topics, work will begin and/or continue to be carried out at expert level in order to arrive at real results in the near future. The Chairman, formulated the decisions and also proposed the respective Estonian and Latvian ministries responsible for the Estonia-Latvia cross-border cooperation programme to consider initiating preliminary consultations over the new Interreg Estonia-Latvia programme 2021-2027 within current year.

The Co-Chairman thanked everyone for their contributions and called the Latvian and Estonian colleagues to continue to work closely together in a joint debate on the future of Cohesion Policy and the next programming period of the European Union funds.

Mr. Gerhards also pointed out that cross-border cooperation indicates a common desire not only to cooperate, but also to build friendly neighbourhood and achieve tangible results in the border regions.

### **Signing of the Rules of Procedure**

The Chairman Mr. Janek Mäggi and the Co-Chairman Mr. Kaspar Gerhards, signed the updated Rules of Procedure of the Joint Session of the IGC – Annex 3.

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## **INFORMATIVE PART OF THE 2018 IGC SESSION**

### **1. Overview on the Estonia-Latvia Programme in 2018**

Ms. Helena Järviste, head of the Joint Secretariat of the Estonia-Latvia Programme, informed participants on cooperation results from the 2018 perspective within the Estonia-Latvia Programme 2014-2020 including general information on supported projects and priorities, beneficiaries and financing of the Programme. She also gave a short overview about the upcoming new calls for proposals and the possibility that another small harbours project might be co-financed by the Programme in 2019.

### **2. Estonian and Latvian INTERREG positions on 2021-2027 period**

Mrs. Margarita Golovko, head of the European Territorial Cooperation Unit of the Regional Development Department of the Estonian Ministry of Finance, presented information on Estonian position on INTERREG 2021-2027 period. She highlighted the exchange of ideas on INTERREG including post 2020 between Member States, European Commission and INTERREG programmes since May 2016 and the current ongoing negotiations in the European Council Working Groups and cooperation with the representatives of European Parliament over the 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2018 draft CPR, ERDF, ETC, ESF+ etc. regulations. The national position paper is currently in the pipeline for governmental approval.

Ms. Iruma Kravale, Director of Development Instruments Department of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of Latvia, presented information on Latvian position on INTERREG 2021-2027 period and the position towards the European Cross Border Mechanism that is by its essence similar to the Estonian. Estonia and Latvia are in position that the mechanism to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context proposed by the European Commission must be voluntary.

### **3. Overview on the Estonian Administrative-Territorial Reform**

Ms. Ave Viks, advisor of the Department of Regional Administration Policy of the Estonian Ministry of Finance, presented the outcomes of the Estonian Administrative-Territorial Reform to the participants. The discussion that followed the presentation mainly focused around the reasons, characteristics and criteria of the reform. The importance of the reform and its completion was pointed out by several participants.

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## **CLOSING THE IGC SESSION 2018**

The Chairman, Mr. Janek Mäggi and the Co-Chairman Mr. Kaspars Gerhards, thanked all of the 9<sup>th</sup> Joint Session IGC participants for their input and exchanged views on the conclusions and outcomes of the Joint Session.

The Co-Chairman Mr. Kaspars Gerhards announced out that the 10<sup>th</sup> Joint Session of the IGC shall be held in Latvia. Chairman Mr. Janek Mäggi closed the IGC session.

The minutes have been prepared in two copies.

Janek Mäggi  
Minister of Public Administration  
of the Republic of Estonia

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

Hannes Nagel  
Minutes-secretary

## ANNEX 1

### 2018 Joint Session of the Estonian-Latvian and Latvian-Estonian Governmental Commissions for Cross-Border Cooperation (IGC)

Wednesday 10 October 2018, 11.30 – 17.00

Ühishoone, Suur-Ameerika 1, Tallinn, Estonia

Room: Tamm

#### AGENDA

11.30–12.00 Welcome coffee and registration

12.00–13.00 Joint Lunch

13.00–13.10 Opening of the 2018 Joint Session

- Opening speeches by the Chairman and Co-Chairman of the Joint Session

*Mr. Janek Mäggi, Estonian Minister of Public Administration*

*Mr. Kaspars Gerhards, Latvian Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development*

- Approval of agenda

13.10–14.10 Overview on the work in 2017 and 2018

- Summary of 2017 Joint Session follow-up activities

- Amendments of the Rules of Procedure

*Mr. Hannes Nagel, Estonian Ministry of Finance*

- Report on progress on the joint activities agreed by the Joint Session in 2017

1) Taxation in border regions

*Ms. Tiina Hansson, Estonian Ministry of Finance*

2) Healthcare and health care related public services in cross-border regions

A) Emergency medical assistance

*Ms. Līga Šerna, Latvian Ministry of Health*

*Mr. Jürgen Ojalo, Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs*

C) Cross-border use of Valga hospital services

*Mr. Margus Lepik, Major of the Municipality of Valga*

B) Cooperation in health emergencies and disasters

*Ms. Kristel Siiman, Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs*

3) Cooperation in providing passenger traffic service on Riga-Tartu railway line

*Mr. Ain Tatter, Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications*

14.10–15.15 Introduction and discussion of the 2018 identified themes

- Estonian-Latvian Governmental Commission identified themes

1) Development of joint packaging deposit system between Estonia and Latvia

*Mr. Mihkel Krusberg, Estonian Ministry of Environment*

- Latvian-Estonian Governmental Commission identified themes
  - 2) Coordination of cross-border rescue operations' procedures and plans  
*Mr. Arnis Jurševics, Latvian Ministry of the Interior*  
*Mr. Intars Zitāns, Fire and Rescue Service of the Republic of Latvia*
  - 3) Elaboration of the unified geodetic justification for the Rail Baltic railway line construction  
*Mr. Ivars Liepiņš, Latvian Geospatial Information Agency*
  - 4) Determination, prioritization and coordination of the list of road sections for reconstruction in the border area  
*Mr. Klāvs Grieze, Latvian Ministry of Transport*
  - 5) Lack of ferry transport connections between Saaremaa and Kurzeme  
*Mr. Igors Udodovs, Ventspils Freeport Authority*
  
- 15.15–15.25 Conclusions and decisions to the 2019 Joint Session
  - Conclusions and decisions on cooperation themes proposed for 2019  
*Mr. Janek Mäggi, Estonian Minister of Public Administration*  
*Mr. Kaspars Gerhards, Latvian Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development*
  
- 15.25–15.45 *Coffee break*
  
- 15.45–16.00 Overview on the Estonia-Latvia Programme in 2018  
*Ms. Helena Järviste, Estonia-Latvia Programme Joint Secretariat*
  
- 16.00–16.20 Estonian and Latvian INTERREG positions on 2021-2027 period  
*Mrs. Margarita Golovko, Estonian Ministry of Finance*  
*Ms. Iruma Kravale, Latvian Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development*
  
- 16.20–16.35 Overview on the Estonian Administrative-Territorial Reform  
*Ms. Ave Viks, Estonian Ministry of Finance*
  
- 16.35–16.50 Closure of the 2018 Joint Session
  - Signing of the Rules of Procedure
  - Farewell speeches  
*Mr. Janek Mäggi, Estonian Minister of Public Administration*  
*Mr. Kaspars Gerhards, Latvian Minister of Environmental Protection and Regional Development*
  
- 16.50 – 16.55 Activities before farewell
  - Joint picture session