

**Declaration of Intent**  
**by the Minister-president of the Government of Flanders,**  
**Mr. Kris Peeters,**  
**and**  
**the Minister of Economic Affairs, Energy, Building, Housing and**  
**Transport of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia,**  
**Mr. Harry Kurt Voigtsberger**  
**and**  
**the Minister of Climate Protection, Environment, Agriculture,**  
**Conservation and Consumer Protection**  
**of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia,**  
**Mr. Johannes Rimmel**  
**and**  
**the Minister of Innovation, Science and Research**  
**of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia,**  
**Mrs. Svenja Schulze.**

**on the occasion of the**  
**Economic Conference Flanders – North Rhine-Westphalia**  
**in Antwerp on 7 May 2012**

Flanders and North Rhine-Westphalia are important partners in Europe. They hereby announce their intention to strengthen their economic cooperation and develop it further with a view to improving sustainability, climate protection and resource and energy efficiency on the basis of the Agreement of 7 November 1991 on interregional cooperation between the Flemish Community and North Rhine-Westphalia.

Intensified bilateral economic cooperation will be based on the objective of maintaining both parties' status as competitive and innovative regions in Europe and the world, in particular by stepping up cooperation in future oriented technologies (e.g. new materials, the energy and environmental industries, plant construction, mechanical engineering, mobility and logistics, media and the creative industry, information technology and telecommunications, health and life science) in order to enable sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

Given the key market and cluster policy of North Rhine-Westphalia and the Government of Flanders' New Industrial Policy, they intend to pursue the objective of bringing together companies and cluster representatives from both Flanders and North Rhine-Westphalia in order to initiate and develop concrete joint projects.

As part of this, future challenges, such as demographic change, shortage of skilled workers, climate change and mobility and infrastructure questions, are to be taken into account and coordinated solution proposals developed.

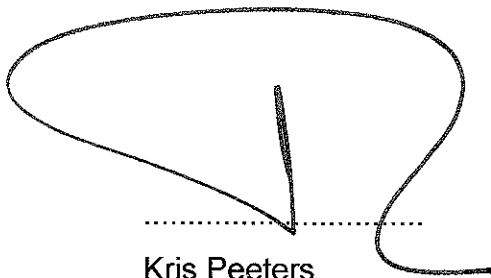
Flanders and North Rhine-Westphalia aim to enhance their economic cooperation. This cooperation process is to be initiated and moderated by a bilateral working party consisting of representatives of the respective ministries from Flanders and North Rhine-Westphalia. Universities and research institutes are to be suitably integrated in this process.

Possible instruments of bilateral cooperation are the formulation of joint programs, the use of joint facilities and establishments and the improvement of the general cross-border conditions.

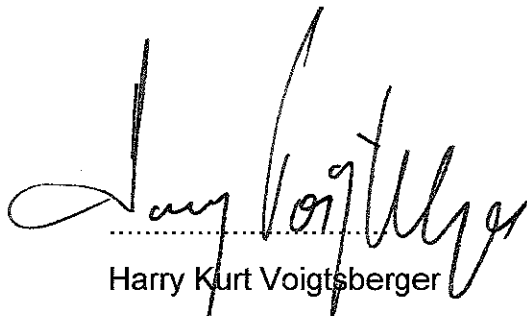
Flanders and North Rhine-Westphalia intend to give their economic cooperation a new impetus and have therefore agreed to:

1. Stimulate, promote and intensify cross-border cooperation between the partners throughout North Rhine-Westphalia and Flanders.
2. Regularly organize an economic conference between Flanders and North Rhine-Westphalia on topical issues and with appropriate representatives in order to enable constant technical and political dialogue and exchange of views.
3. Improve the general conditions for forging contacts between and promoting activities of enterprises, intermediaries and other players.
4. Stimulate and support all administrative authorities in their ambitions and initiatives relating to cross-border innovation.

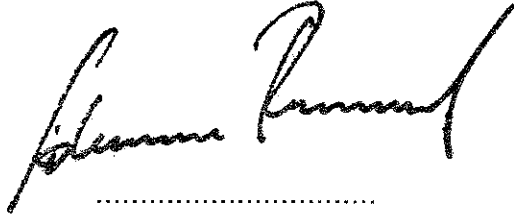
Antwerp, 7 May 2012



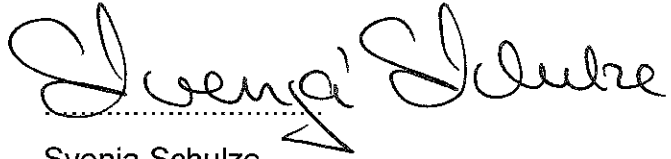
Kris Peeters  
Minister-president of the  
Government of Flanders



Harry Kurt Voigtsberger  
Minister of Economic Affairs, Energy,  
Building, Housing and Transport of the  
State of North Rhine-Westphalia



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Johannes Remmel  
Minister of Climate Protection,  
the Environment, Agriculture,  
Conservation and Consumer  
Protection of the State of North  
Rhine-Westphalia



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Svenja Schulze  
Minister of Innovation, Science and  
Research of the German State of  
North Rhine-Westphalia