



**Flanders**  
State of the Art

# Working together on a caring and flourishing Flanders



30 September 2024

## SUMMARY **FLEMISH** **COALITION AGREEMENT** 2024-2029

**Government  
of Flanders**

**flanders.be**

# COALITION AGREEMENT

## SUMMARY

Making Flanders an even better place to live, work and play: that is the ambition of the new Government of Flanders over the next five years. To achieve that goal, the coalition partners are focusing on three major themes:

1. a **flourishing Flanders** with a strong and resilient economic fabric
2. a **caring Flanders** where everyone has the opportunity to make their dreams come true
3. a **unifying Flanders** with a shared language and culture and a rich club and social life.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>A flourishing Flanders</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>A caring Flanders</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Together for Flanders</b>	<b>12</b>





1

A FLOURISHING  
FLANDERS



Flanders is already one of the most prosperous regions in the world. We owe this to the people of Flanders who work every day for a better future: our entrepreneurs, employees, researchers, carers, innovators, artists, athletes, etc. If we deploy all these talented, smart thinkers and doers for our shared future project, we will succeed in remaining a top region and keeping the level of prosperity high. Because with that prosperity, we simultaneously strengthen people's well-being, including for generations to come. We are also working on administrative simplification and ending overregulation. Flanders stands for economic and societal progress. This is how we reached the world's top together and this is how we will move forward together. In this term of office, therefore, we are fully committed to research and development, entrepreneurship, work, mobility and agriculture.

## **The power of enterprises**

---

In the field of science and innovation, we want to remain among the frontrunners in Europe and advance to the global top. We recognise the importance of basic research as the basis for future technological breakthroughs and focus on strong valorisation. In addition, together with the business community, we are increasing investments in research and development to 5% of the gross domestic product. And we will play to the strengths of our four Flemish strategic research centres and our scientific institutions even more.

The Government of Flanders is strengthening economic policy in four strategic areas: productivity growth, sustainable growth, the digital transition and strategic autonomy. We focus Flemish support on strategic sectors with potential and added value. For instance, Flanders is home to the world's second-largest chemical cluster, has a strong agri-food sector and is among the leaders in the pharmaceutical industry. For the sake of societal challenges, we also focus on innovative sectors, such as renewable energy, biotechnology, digital technologies and space.



## **Aiming for 80% employment**

---

There has never been more employed people in Flanders than now. But the Flemish labour market is under pressure, due to ageing, climate change and the digital transition, among others. Therefore, the Government of Flanders's goal is to achieve an 80% employment rate as soon as possible. We will also strengthen the social economy and create at least 1,000 extra places there through four pillars. First, strengthened activation of jobseekers, people with long-term ill health and economically inactive people. Second, the development of talents through education and training. Third, workable work, with a focus on inclusive workplaces and an achievable work-life balance. And fourth, interregional mobility and labour migration for higher education graduates and shortage occupations.

## **Ambitious mobility investment programme**

---

Today, mobility often slams the brake on our economic progress. Just think of the traffic congestion, the struggle for road safety, the impact on our climate and the environment and the outdated infrastructure. Flanders will be investing in safe and smooth mobility over the next five years. We are pursuing an ambitious investment programme to keep roads, waterways, tunnels, engineering structures, rolling stock and vessels up to standard. We are setting the bar critically high with zero road casualties as our goal. And we will free up extra resources for sustainable and high-performance public transport, including in rural regions. In addition, we will continue to support the Flemish ports and pursue a forward-looking aviation policy, with an important role for the regional airports as a complement to Brussels Airport.

## Climate neutral by 2050

---

The Government of Flanders fully supports the Paris Agreement, to which we have committed internationally to limit temperature rise to well below 2°C, and if possible even below 1.5°C. An important cornerstone of our policy is the renovation of the Flemish building stock. We are also pushing for a Flemish tax shift that will gradually make electricity cheaper at the expense of fossil fuels. To support vulnerable citizens, we are using the Social Climate Fund resources for a Flemish Social Climate Plan. We are leading industry in Flanders towards climate neutrality by 2050 with the Flemish Climate Leap programme.

## Agriculture: strategic sector in Flanders

---

Flanders is committed to a sustainable future for the agriculture and horticulture sector. We strengthen entrepreneurship and the position of farmers and horticulturists through a legally secure business environment, correct prices, reduced administrative burdens and reduced unnecessary regulatory burdens. But those agricultural activities must fit within the ecological boundaries of Flanders. We are therefore creating a long-term vision of what our agriculture and food system should look like by 2050. Agricultural productivity is central to that vision. Flanders also devotes specific attention to young farmers' and horticulturists' access to agricultural land. We are putting together an interdisciplinary scientific team tasked with shaping an emissions policy that is both legally and scientifically robust, based upon which we are working towards the next Programmatic Approach to Nitrogen.

## Focus on Europe

---

Flanders is inextricably linked to the European project. We are putting much more effort into Flanders's advocacy at the European level. The guiding principle here is the productivity, level playing field and competitiveness of Flemish companies. The Travel to Tomorrow vision remains the basis for our tourism policy. In line with this, we are focusing on real experiences. We want visitors not just to see our region, but to really *experience* it. Heritage and Flemish Masters, gastronomy, landscape, sea and water and our cycling region: it's these great storylines that will put Flanders on the international map.

## Making room for prosperity

---

A top region for business, a fine place to live, an opportunity machine for young people: we must try to reconcile all these activities on the limited area available to us. So we will have to organise our space smartly and work together more than ever. We make sure there is clean air, clean water and fertile soil, while breathing new life into our natural areas and focusing on biodiversity. We keep our waterways in tip-top shape and give entrepreneurs space to manoeuvre. Additionally, we are structurally addressing the challenges facing rural municipalities through a rural pact as well as better funding.





2

A CARING  
FLANDERS



We are investing in people more than ever, and we cannot be ambitious enough in this regard. A strong Government of Flanders is one that takes care of everyone in Flanders. That is why we invest heavily where the needs are highest. We are committed to a social policy and activation, and ensure that everyone in Flanders makes the most of the opportunities Flanders offers them. Flanders is also a place where everyone should be able to be themselves. We take consistent action against racism and discrimination.

### **Prevention and integrated care**

---

We pay special attention to young Flemish people; from babies to students: they are the future of Flanders. We put children and young people at the centre of our policies. We link the Growth Package to the health index and invest more in childcare and out-of-school childcare settings. We also take care of our elderly. We ensure that every person in Flanders can stay at home in their familiar surroundings for as long as possible, and provide adapted, integrated care and support to that end for those who need it, while respecting their autonomy. By reducing the red tape, we ensure that healthcare providers can focus on their core task. Prevention is the cornerstone of our welfare policy. We invest heavily in the psychological well-being of our young people and in targeted youth support because every child has a right to a safe (home) environment.

### **Our schools as opportunity machines**

---

Our education system belongs at the top of Europe. Quality education is therefore the best start we can give to our children to get ahead, which is why we set the bar high and commit to excellence. We help young people who find it harder to connect with our education system to still help them cross that threshold. We also give the education system the confidence it deserves: we provide maximum support to schools, reduce the planning burden, and listen to concerns in the sector. We invest in healthy school meals and improve the affordability of our education. But education is the mission of everyone in a society, and we make a clear appeal to parents to this end. Lastly, we continue to stress the importance of Dutch in our education system.

## **Focus on the most vulnerable**

---

Although the poverty risk in Flanders is very low, we are not content with that. We are focusing our social support on the most vulnerable in society. We take a structural approach to poverty across policy areas and implement anti-poverty policies as close to the people as possible.

Our first working priority in our housing policy: an affordable, housing-secure, and quality roof over the heads of everyone in Flanders. Because everyone deserves a warm and caring home. In order to accommodate demographic trends, 450,000 more homes will need to be built in Flanders by 2050. We support households in their search for a rental or owner-occupied house, and in making feasible and affordable energy renovations. We are investing a historic amount in social housing construction and the Flemish housing loan, which is how we ensure that Flemish people who are less fortunate also find a home in Flanders.









3

TOGETHER FOR  
FLANDERS



Flanders unites, with the Dutch language and shared values and norms as the mediums that bind us. So a good knowledge of our language is the basic prerequisite for the integration of newcomers and the best guarantee of a successful school career and a job.

### **Flemish pride**

---

Culture, heritage, media and youth work shape our Flemish community life and identity. They create jobs, add value to our knowledge economy and inspire millions of Flemish people, which is why we'll be shining an even brighter spotlight on our cultural houses, festivals and art in this term of office. In doing so, we are opting for an integrated heritage policy, without artificial boundaries between immovable, movable and intangible heritage.

### **Connection thanks to clubs and societies**

---

Flanders is synonymous with sports and vice versa. In this term of office, we will ensure that everyone in Flanders can enjoy quality and affordable sports in their neighbourhood. We are strengthening our sports clubs and sports federations. And we are putting Flanders on the map as a true sporting nation by attracting international sports events. We aren't only helping sports associations to flourish, but all other associations as well. Because those one million Flemish people who are already active in clubs and societies today contribute to our prosperity and well-being, and are thus a fundamental link in our society.

### **Language, participation and shared norms**

---

Participating in our society is not optional. If we want to build a close-knit, caring and flourishing Flemish Community, everyone will have to do their part. We expect the same from newcomers. Knowledge of Dutch, shared norms and values, work and participation: for the Government of Flanders, these are the keys to full participation in our Flemish society. The focus on the Dutch language remains the key focal point of the Government of Flanders in Brussels, too. We continue to build the Flemish presence there, investing further in education, youth, sports and culture.

### **Victims centre stage in justice**

---

We are further shaping Flemish justice in this term of office, by putting victims and their loved ones centre stage and taking a firm stance where necessary. We are also building on uniform Flemish enforcement, focusing on the fight against fraud, and strengthening the role of local authorities in the fight against organised crime.

## **Back to the core tasks of government**

---

The government is an integral part of society, but it also looks to the Flemish people and civil society organisations. We are stepping back and giving trust and responsibility to everyone who wants to make Flanders a better place. Policy is about putting goals first, and less about minutely defining the path towards them. Rather than being a controlling government, Flanders will focus more than ever on its core tasks and take on the role of facilitator.

To better align our administrative organisation with the challenges of today and tomorrow, we are moving towards a model on two pillars: stronger local authorities and a supportive Flemish public administration. Through the reference regions, we will reduce the number of municipal intermediate structures without the reference regions evolving into a new level of government. We uphold the tenet of local autonomy and support local authorities. We pay particular attention to the challenges in rural Flanders and areas struggling with metropolitan issues. In addition, we will continue to work on the internal reform of the federated state. In doing so, we strive for an efficient, transparent and frugal administrative culture, while never losing sight of our policy goal: to make Flanders an even better place to live, work and play.





VU: Vlaamse Regering  
Matthias Diependaele  
minister-president van de Vlaamse Regering  
Kabinet Martelaarsplein  
Martelaarsplein 19, 1000 Brussel

Depotnummer: D/2024/3241/404



