



# Leaving education early:

putting vocational education  
and training in centre stage



BELGIUM-French

# Introduction

This is one of the 15 country fiches that have been developed as background material to the Cedefop study:

*Leaving education early: putting vocational education and training centre stage.*

[Volume I: investigating causes and extent](#)

[Volume II: evaluating policy impact](#)

The publication was produced by Cedefop, Department for learning and employability, under the supervision of Antonio Ranieri.

Irene Psifidou, Cedefop expert, was responsible for the publication and research conducted under the 'Early leaving from education and training' project from October 2013 to July 2016.

Country fiches have been developed and drafted on the basis of desk research and interviews conducted between 2014-15 by ICF consulting services with national stakeholders, social partners, companies, VET providers and practitioners as well as learners who provided country-specific information. They have been validated by selected interviewees <sup>(1)</sup>.

Country fiches are available for: Austria, Belgium-Fr, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal and United Kingdom.

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*Please note that this is an unedited version.*

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<sup>(1)</sup> The detailed methodology as well as an anonymous list of all interviewees, including information on country, organisation and job position/role, is available on request. Please contact Cedefop expert in charge Irene Psifidou: [rena.psifidou@cedefop.europa.eu](mailto:rena.psifidou@cedefop.europa.eu)

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## 1. Definitions applying in national and regional context

Questions	Answers
<p>What is the national definition(s) of early leavers from education and training?</p> <p>Who are classified as early leavers from education and training?</p>	<p>In BE-fr early leavers from education and training refers to either:</p> <p>(a) young people who have left the formal French speaking educational system (i.e. young people who are not present anymore in the following year of study);</p> <p>(b) young people who did not obtain the upper-secondary leaving certificate (CESS) among all students in the last year of secondary education;</p> <p>(c) young people under 18 who have more than 20half days (in lower secondary education) or 30 half days (in upper secondary education) of unjustified absences during the academic year (definition used at school-level essentially);</p> <p>(d) the EU definition of early school leaving (ESL) using the labour force survey (LFS).</p>
<p>What is the national definition of early leaving from VET?</p> <p>Does it include those in apprenticeships?</p>	<p>There is no separate specific definition for early leaving from VET.</p> <p>The data refer only to the French-speaking formal educational system. Therefore students enrolled in other forms of training (e.g. regional apprenticeship centres, adult learning, Flemish education system) are not included.</p> <p>At present, the statistical system does not track students after they leave the formal educational system. It is thus not possible to know whether students enrolled in another type of training or employment. A register of people' trajectories is being developed for coping with this problem <sup>(2)</sup>.</p>
<p>What are the data used to inform this definition and who is responsible for it? (i.e. which data set(s) provide information</p>	<p>The definitions presented above are used to inform the data collection.</p> <p>Data on young people who have left the formal education system is used to calculate exit rates <sup>(3)</sup>.</p>

<sup>(2)</sup> To address these limitations a register of people' trajectories<sup>2</sup> is being created with the support from the Metices Research Centre of the 'Université Libre de Bruxelles'. Data from all educational actors of the Walloon Region, the French Community and the French Community Commission, are being cross-referenced with the social security data. Once implemented, it will monitor each individual trajectory from secondary education to employment, unemployment, apprenticeships, public employment services, continuous training and learning, and consequently monitor the impact of the various education and training opportunities.

<sup>(3)</sup> Exit rates refer to the number of young people who have left the formal French educational system among all students registered for the same year of

Questions	Answers
that is used to compute ELET indicators and who sponsors the collection and collects these data).	<p>Data on young people who (did not) obtain the upper-secondary leaving certificate are used to calculate certification rates <sup>(4)</sup>.</p> <p>These data are collected annually and published by the by the Statistical Office of the Ministry of Education <sup>(5)</sup>.</p> <p>Data on absenteeism is collected by schools and by the Ministry of Education <sup>(6)</sup> and refers to the truancy monitoring system (see section on monitoring systems).</p>

## 2. Rates of early leaving from VET during last five years

Early leaving from education and training (ELET)/early leaving from VET (ELVET) rates are presented below according to the varied definitions and datasets. The figures presented below must be interpreted with caution, as it is not possible to track students after they left the formal educational system. A great part of early leavers might have indeed enrolled in other forms of training after dropping out or contract termination.

### 2.1. ELET/ELVET exit rates

- (a) In 2011, in Wallonia and Brussels (the Belgian French-speaking education system), out of a cohort of students that started the third year of secondary education in 2004-05, 23% were dropouts. Among which <sup>(7)</sup>:
- (i) 9% were drop-outs from general education;

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study(i.e.young people who are not present anymore in the following year of study in the dataset).

- <sup>(4)</sup> Certification rates refer to the number of young people who have not obtained the upper-secondary leaving certificate (CESS) among all students in the last year of secondary education.
- <sup>(5)</sup> In French: Service général du pilotage du système éducatif (AGERS) – Service des Indicateurs de l’enseignement.
- <sup>(6)</sup> Directorate-general for compulsory education (DGEO).
- <sup>(7)</sup> Indicateurs de l’Enseignement 2011 – Indicateur 20 (Parcours sur 6 ans d’élèves entrés en 3e secondaire en 2004-05).  
<http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=26464&navi=3253> [accessed 7.4.2017].

- (ii) 29% were drop-outs from technical education ('enseignement technique de qualification');
- (iii) 57% were drop-outs from VET ('enseignement professionnel').

## 2.2. ELET/ELVET certification rates <sup>(8)</sup>

- (a) In 2013 in all types of education 85.8 % of students obtained their upper secondary leaving certificate.
- (b) In 2013 in VET 73.4% of students obtained the leaving certificate.
- (c) In the formal dual system organised by the Ministry of Education (CEFAs) <sup>(9)</sup>:
  - (i) 2 937 certifications were granted during the 2011-12 academic year of out of 8 492 young people registered. The certification rate was thus of 35%.

## 2.3. Qualification rates after six years in VET and general education

An analysis of young persons' trajectories was made during six years after entering upper-secondary education (table below). The number of young people who six years after entering upper-secondary education are still not qualified is higher among those who started a VET programme, compared to those who followed general, technical or artistic programmes. Less than a quarter of students qualified from VET in the standard study period of four years compared with more than half (including those who changed programme but still graduate within four years) in general education. More than half of those who started a VET programme were still not qualified six years later whilst less than 10% in general education were not qualified after this period.

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<sup>(8)</sup> Indicateur 27 (Taux de certification en 6e année de l'Enseignement secondaire de plein exercice) de l'Enseignement, Service général du pilotage du système éducatif, Agers. <http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=26981&navi=3569> [accessed 7.4.2017].

<sup>(9)</sup> Enseignement secondaire en Alternance dans la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles. Enquête Statistique 2013. Centre de coordination et de gestion des programmes européens, Ministère de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, Service général de l'enseignement secondaire et des centres PMS.

**Rates of completing different types of education in BE-fr after four, five, and six years for cohort beginning programme in 2003-04)**

Initially enrolled in	Qualified in the same programme after:			Qualified in a different programme after:			Not qualified (after 6 years or still in ET)		
	4 years	5 years	6 years	4 years	5 years	6 years	6 years	still to qualify after 6 years spent in education	Apprenticeship*
GE	49	12.5	2.8	7.2	10.7	5.4	8.9	3.1	0.4
TE	19.5	7.7	2.5	18.1	19.1	8.7	18.3	4.9	1.3
AE	26.9	13.5	5.8	6.3	7.6	3.3	29.2	5.5	1.9
VET	23.5	9.1	3.6	0.0	0.5	0.3	57	3.5	2.5
Total	38.1	11.5	3.4	6.3	8.6	4.2	23.1	3.7	1.1

Legend: GE – general education, TE – technical, AE – artistic, \*apprenticeship or other.

Source: Indicateurs de l'Enseignement 2011 – Indicateur 20.

## 2.4. ELET/ELVET absenteeism rates

Data on absenteeism are collected by the Ministry of Education (DGEO) <sup>(10)</sup> via the truancy monitoring system (see section on Monitoring systems). It is based on school declarations. There are no specific statistics on truancy rates drawn from it. Nevertheless, DGEO keeps track of how many absent students it provides support to. The majority of absent students to whom it provides support are from VET and the dual system.

- (a) In 2012, DGEO provided support to various absent students under 18 (at ISCED 3 – age 14 to 16) in particular <sup>(11)</sup>:
- (i) 0.3% of learners under 18 in GE (i.e. 115 students received support);
  - (ii) 0.3% of learners under 18 in TE (i.e. 115 students received support);
  - (iii) 3.8% of learners under 18 in VET (i.e. 1 006 students received support);
  - (iv) 4.4% of learners under 18 in CEFA (formal education dual system organised by the Ministry of Education).

<sup>(10)</sup> Directorate-General for Compulsory Education (DGEO).

<sup>(11)</sup> The data was provided by DGEO to ICF. There is no specific publication of the data.

### 3. National and regional strategy to tackle ELET

There is no single overarching strategy in BE-fr to tackle ELET. Various strategies, decrees and initiatives have been launched. Those have different aims among which is the tackling of ELET and ELVET. They are described in the boxes below.

Scope	Description
National and/or regional strategy/action plan to reduce ELET	Decree on 'measures to fight against early leaving, exclusion and violence at school' <sup>(12)</sup> (2005 and 2013 <sup>(13)</sup> ). It aims at reinforcing the actions against early leaving and violence at school in all type of systems (general, technical and VET).
Elements of the strategy that are explicitly linked to VET	No specific mention of VET. It applies to all types of education/schools.

Scope	Description
National and/or regional strategy/action plan to reduce ELET	The school strategy <sup>(14)</sup> of 2005 – outlined the government intentions for effective schooling in BE-fr.
Elements of the strategy are explicitly linked to VET	The government acknowledged that young people who accumulated school failure ending up in VET is counter-productive and contributes to a negative image of VET tracks.

Scope	Description
National and/or regional strategy/action plan to reduce ELET	The community policy statement 2014-19 <sup>(15)</sup> outlines the government intentions for effective schooling in BE-fr, among other regional issues.

<sup>(12)</sup> Decree of 12 May 2004. [http://www.galilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/28782\\_000.pdf](http://www.galilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/28782_000.pdf) [accessed 7.4.2017].

<sup>(13)</sup> Decree of 21 November 2013. [http://www.galilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/39909\\_001.pdf](http://www.galilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/39909_001.pdf) [accessed 7.4.2017].

<sup>(14)</sup> School strategy of 2005: Contrat Pour l'Ecole 2005. <http://www.contrateeducation.be/documents/contratecole.pdf>

<sup>(15)</sup> Déclaration de Politique Communautaire 2014-19. <http://gouvernement.cfwb.be/declaration-de-politique-communautaire-2014-2019-f-d-rer-pour-r-ussir> [accessed 7.4.2017].



Elements of the strategy are explicitly linked to VET	It stresses the importance of providing better guidance to students and affirms its commitment to improving the orientation process. It also affirms its determination to improve the (negative) image of VET and to develop excellence in VET providing schools with updated technical materials. In addition, it reiterates its intention to create a common pathway ("tronc commun") in lower secondary education (between 12 and 14 years old) in order to avoid early orientation towards VET and to provide all students with job discovery workshops.
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Scope	Description
National and/or regional strategy/action plan to reduce ELET	Reform of VET (Refondation de l'Enseignement Qualifiant) – 2010 – ongoing. It was undertaken after acknowledgement of the various drawbacks of the BEfr VET system and high rates of early leaving from VET.
Elements of the strategy explicitly linked to VET	It aims at, among others <sup>(16)</sup> : (a) to make VET become as often as possible a positive choice; (b) upgrading of technical professions and education pathways leading to it; (c) fighting early school leaving; (d) updating qualification profiles <sup>(17)</sup> and VET learning outcomes in order to make them common to all education and training providers – enabling a learner to easily transit from one education system to another. Qualification profiles are defined by the French speaking Service for Employment and Qualifications for all training providers <sup>(18)</sup> .

## 4. Recent policy initiatives

Scope and questions	
New policy initiatives being undertaken that	Various types of policy initiatives (preventive, intervention or

<sup>(16)</sup> <http://www.enseignement.be/index.php/index.php?page=26558&navi=3310>  
<http://www.cpu.cfwb.be/index.php?id=1336> [accessed 7.4.2017].

<sup>(17)</sup> <http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=25255> [accessed 7.4.2017].

<sup>(18)</sup> [http://www.sfmq.cfwb.be/index.php?id=1435&no\\_cache=1](http://www.sfmq.cfwb.be/index.php?id=1435&no_cache=1) [accessed 7.4.2017].

## Scope and questions

include a role for VET to reduce ELET: either

- (a) reduce ELET from VET;
- (b) reduce ELET (in general) through VET.

compensation) are being developed in BE-fr.

The most recent preventive initiative is the certification per unit (CPU) <sup>(19)</sup>. It was introduced in 2011 as a pilot in three VET sectors (i.e. auto mechanic, auto technician, beauty practitioner). It has been generalised to all VET schools and adult education in September 2014 in these sectors. It provides flexibility to learners to complete their VET by gradually certifying their skills (see section on Policies/initiatives/measures that are to be considered in detail in country/region).

Other preventive measures focus on improving the transition of young people to VET, enabling them to undertake short-time discovery internships. It is the case of the Testing craft occupations (Essais metiers) an initiative which provides the opportunity for early leavers to test three jobs in two weeks within sectors with skills demand in order for them to gain some initial job experience before choosing a definite pathway.

An important initiative launched by the Ministry with the aim to reduce ELVET was the 'Expairs' project <sup>(20)</sup> 2012-14.

Compensatory measures include reintegration via VET initiatives such as the Work placement traineeships (Stages de transition en entreprise) <sup>(21)</sup> and training modules for young people <sup>(22)</sup> which offer the opportunity to all unemployed young people under 30 (with an upper-secondary leaving certificate or less) to enrol in a three to six months paid traineeship via the local/regional public employment service. However, this measure includes a major drawback as it does not provide a formal certificate or validation of skills <sup>(23)</sup>.

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<sup>(19)</sup> <http://www.enseignement.be/index.php/index.php?page=26558&navi=3310> [accessed 7.4.2017].

<sup>(20)</sup> The Expairs' project is driven by the Minister for Compulsory Education since 2012 [https://portail.umons.ac.be/FR/universite/facultes/fpse/servicesetr/methodo/recherches/recherches\\_en\\_cours/Pages/Accompagnementdeprojetsdinnovationp%C3%A9dagogiqueetorganisationnelle.aspx](https://portail.umons.ac.be/FR/universite/facultes/fpse/servicesetr/methodo/recherches/recherches_en_cours/Pages/Accompagnementdeprojetsdinnovationp%C3%A9dagogiqueetorganisationnelle.aspx) [accessed 7.4.2017].

<sup>(21)</sup> <http://www.actiris.be/tabid/174/language/fr-BE/News.aspx?idNews=204> [accessed 7.4.2017].

<sup>(22)</sup> <http://www.inforjeunesbruxelles.be/etude-formation/la-formation-professionnelle/bruxelles-formation/bruxelles-formation-tremplin-et-tremplin-jeunes> [accessed 7.4.2017].

<sup>(23)</sup> CCFEE, Avis 115. <http://ccfee.be/fr/nos-avis/enseignement/systeme-scolaire/avis-115-strategie-integree-de-prevention-du-decrochage-et-de-lutte-contre-abandon-scolaire-precoce-asp-bruxelles> [accessed 7.4.2017].

Scope and questions	
	Finally, school reintegration initiatives – Services d'accrochage scolaire (SAS) <sup>(24)</sup> – are in place and aim at offering temporary social, education and learning support to students who are in crisis towards the institution or who were expelled <sup>(25)</sup> . They target students from all types of education.
Is the role of VET in reducing ELET assuming greater or lesser importance? Why?	<p>The policy focus in BE-fr is on reducing early leaving from VET; improving the attractiveness of VET and its teaching quality. The focus on the role of VET and mostly the attractiveness of VET is consequently assuming greater importance.</p> <p>Reducing ELVET is in particular the main focus of current policies. The problem of ELVET and of the relegation system (whereby students with low achievement are orientated to VET) has been acknowledged by the government during this past decade. Specific policy initiatives have been developed in the recent years in view of reducing ELVET and restructuring VET (e.g. Certification per Units, Expairs' project, Reform of VET). Although the initiatives are recent, they demonstrate that ELVET and the role that VET can play in retaining learners has been assuming greater importance.</p>

## 5. Stakeholder cooperation

Questions	Answer
<p>What are and have been the main influences of stakeholders in the development and implementation of VET related policies specifically to reduce ELET;</p> <p>(a) employers; (b) trade unions social</p>	<p>Stakeholder cooperation in the field of VET is new in BE-fr. Specific structures (the 'Bassins de vie Enseignement-Formation-Emploi' <sup>(26)</sup>) were created in 2014-15 (i.e. one per geographical zone) with the aim of promoting collaboration between all players in the world of education (at secondary, tertiary and adult education), VET and employment.</p> <p>The mission of the 'Bassins' is to ensure a permanent dialogue between local educational stakeholders and employers/sectoral organisations in order to rationalise and improve the quality of the local VET offer in accordance to</p>

<sup>(24)</sup> Created in 2000 as pilot, the SAS became an official part of the strategy of fighting against early leaving in 2010. <http://www.enseignement.be/index.php?page=23721> [accessed 7.4.2017].

<sup>(25)</sup> There are 12 SAS in the Wallonia-Brussels region. The SAS aims at re-motivating students and reintegrating them in school after a three to six months period within an informal environment where young people can increase their self-esteem and develop a new life project via alternative pedagogical methods (e.g. cultural activities, volunteering, theatre workshops, short internships in a company, etc.).

<sup>(26)</sup> <http://gouvernement.wallonie.be/bassins-de-vie-enseignement-formation-emploi-un-accord-de-coop-ration-sur-les-rails> [accessed 7.4.2017].

Questions	Answer
partners; (c) VET institutions; (d) other learning providers (please specify)?	<p>the socioeconomic needs identified in each area. Cooperation between schools for mutualising resources (e.g. machines, etc.) is also encouraged in order to contribute to improving the quality of VET overall.</p> <p>The 'Bassins' aim to gather all stakeholders in order to improve the VET offer on a territory. Interviewees mentioned that VET schools often open training programmes because it is 'fashionable' and will attract students rather than because it corresponds to labour market needs (and thus jobs). As a consequence, a large proportion of students leave VET without good employment perspectives.</p> <p>Also, many similar VET certifications exist for a same job (e.g. carpentry) hinders the readability and trust of employers. Employers are unable to know if a learner is sufficiently qualified when he/she applies for a job. The idea of the Bassins is thus to improve the dialogue between VET institutions and enterprises in the view of creating common qualification references.</p>

## 6. Monitoring systems

Question	Answers
What specific early leavers monitoring systems exist?	<p>There are two monitoring tools used in BE-fr: the TABOR dashboards and the truancy monitoring system.</p> <p>(a) Name/descriptor: the TABOR dashboards <sup>(27)</sup>.            Aims: the TABOR is a school-level dashboard which contains among other things data linked to early leaving <sup>(28)</sup>.            Year introduced/planned: in 2011 (primary level) and 2013 (secondary level).            Coverage: TABOR dashboards are provided to all schools from primary to upper-secondary (apprentices centres however are not included).</p> <p>(b) Name/descriptor: data on absenteeism used by the directorate-general for compulsory education (DGEO) <sup>(29)</sup>.</p>

<sup>(27)</sup> Mille milliards de mille TABOR in PROF, Vol. 2011 (December).  
[http://www.google.be/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=5&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CDUQFjAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.enseignement.be%2Fdownload.php%3Fdo\\_id%3D8793%26do\\_check%3D&ei=ub5VVdXbPO6U7QafslCIAg&usg=AFQjCNGVZKevxKycK7ewc38PJOfYG0E5uw&bvm=bv.93564037,d.ZGU](http://www.google.be/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=5&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CDUQFjAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.enseignement.be%2Fdownload.php%3Fdo_id%3D8793%26do_check%3D&ei=ub5VVdXbPO6U7QafslCIAg&usg=AFQjCNGVZKevxKycK7ewc38PJOfYG0E5uw&bvm=bv.93564037,d.ZGU) [accessed 7.4.2017].

<sup>(28)</sup> TABOR stands for 'tableau de bord' meaning dashboard.

<sup>(29)</sup> Direction du Contrôle de l'Obligation scolaire et de l'Assistance aux Etablissements.

Question	Answers
	<p>Aims: monitor truancy and at-risk of dropping out students</p> <p>Year introduced: 2004</p> <p>Coverage: all schools of the formal education system.</p> <p>The information on the Tabor dashboards will be presented first, followed by the information on the truancy monitoring system.</p>
<p>What information is monitored/collected? (regarding the Tabor dashboards)</p>	<p>Numbers of drop outs: yes</p> <p>Reasons for dropping out: no</p> <p>Background characteristics of drop outs/those at risk (i.e. gender, age, language, migrant status etc.): Yes</p> <p>Tabor dashboards are compiled centrally by the statistical office of the Ministry and provided to each head of school and the authorities governing the school. It is a tool that is meant to support quality improvement and decision making at school level but not a control tool (thus not linked to any sanctions or funding measures). The dashboard contains various indicators at school level among which data on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) proportion of students who repeat a grade;</li> <li>(b) proportion of those who are delayed in their education progression;</li> <li>(c) proportion of those who exit the school differentiating between those who are no longer enrolled in the education system of the French speaking community, those who changed type of programme or those who changed school.</li> </ul> <p>The Tabor dashboards also include information on the characteristics of learners: i.e. age, sex, date of birth, neighbourhood of residence (from which an index for economic background is developed), type of education (general, technical, VET and apprenticeships), sectorial orientation of programmes <sup>(30)</sup>, year of study and geographical zone <sup>(31)</sup>.</p>
<p>What are the data used for? How it is used by VET institutions/providers? (regarding the Tabor dashboards)</p>	<p>From the interviews carried out it is not clear whether the schools interviewed use the Tabor dashboard data and whether it is useful. However, the number of VET schools interviewed in BE-fr was small and the system only started to be used in secondary education in 2013. There is consequently very little evidence so far of the use and usefulness of the data. Nevertheless the</p>

<sup>(30)</sup> Aggregation is done by broad sectorial orientation, for instance, ‘services to people’ which includes various type of sectors such as hairdresser to aesthetician. Nevertheless, it is possible to disaggregate even further if needed but it might end up with a very low number of students in the sample.

<sup>(31)</sup> The French community of Belgium is divided in 10 geographical zones.

Question	Answers
	<p>following evidence was identified through desk-research:</p> <p>(a) a report of parents' federation <sup>(32)</sup> stated that one limitation of TABOR is that the reports are based on data from two years ago. The central administration produces the 2013 TABOR report based on data available in 2012 which is in fact data covering the academic year 2010-11.</p> <p>(b) an annual report of one of the schools' networks noted that in the 1st year of application in primary education (2011-12) the use of TABOR was scarce but interesting examples have been identified <sup>(33)</sup>.</p> <p>At the same time evidence of training for heads of schools on this tool has been found. In addition, there are plans to make TABOR one of the tools for compulsory school-level strategic multiannual objectives in the years to come <sup>(34)</sup>.</p>
<p>How is the monitoring system linked with offering support measures? (i.e. is it being used to contact those who have dropped out to provide support to find employment, education or further training?) (regarding the Tabor dashboards)</p>	<p>The idea behind Tabor dashboards is that each school would get a clear picture of its situation and then decide to take internal actions against class repetition or early leaving. There is no clear evidence on whether it is used for offering support measures.</p>
<p>What information is monitored/collected? (regarding the truancy monitoring system)</p>	<p>Numbers of drop outs: yes Reasons for dropping out: no Background characteristics of drop outs/those at risk (i.e. gender, age, language, migrant status etc.): no DGEO centralises, since 2004 <sup>(35)</sup>, data on all students under age 18 who have more than 20 half days (for lower-secondary education) or 30 half days (for upper-secondary education) of unjustified absences. These students are considered as being at risk of early leaving (note that in Belgium compulsory education goes until the age of 18).</p>
<p>What are the data used for? How it is used by VET</p>	<p>Data on absenteeism is used to identify early leavers and at-risk of dropping out students who are not complying</p>

<sup>(32)</sup> Mathy (2013). *Comment évalue-t-on notre système éducatif?*

<sup>(33)</sup> Enseignement catholique; Cellule de Conseil et de Soutien pédagogiques (2012). *Rapport d'activités année scolaire 2011-12.*

<sup>(34)</sup> Federation Wallonie Bruxelles (2014). *Federer pour reussir 2014-19.*

<sup>(35)</sup> The obligation for schools to report absences was introduced by the Decree of 12 May 2004. [http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/28782\\_000.pdf](http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/28782_000.pdf) [accessed 7.4.2017].

Question	Answers
<p>institutions/providers? (regarding the truancy monitoring system)</p>	<p>with school obligation requirement.</p> <p>As the data on truancy only concerns those below the age of 18 it raised concern among some interviewees as a large number of students leave the education system without a qualification at a later stage and most of early leavers are in VET and are aged 18+. For these support services are not organised.</p> <p>Another issue noted by the interviewees from schools and apprenticeship centres was that they report information to the central services but do not receive feedback on what happens to these young people. At the same time, most schools do not wait for the DGEO to take an action. They are active in monitoring absences and reaching out to those at risk of early leaving. Most schools and apprenticeship centres interviewed noted that they reach out to students and families before the maximum quota of absences is reached.</p>
<p>How is the monitoring system linked with offering support measures? (i.e. is it being used to contact those who have dropped out to provide support to find employment, education or further training?) (regarding the truancy monitoring system)</p>	<p>DGEO receives nominal information from schools on students who have reached their quota of unjustified absences. DGEO is in obligation to send an official letter to families informing them that they must comply with school obligation and offering them support services, such as mediation or School Reintegration Services (see section on Recent policy initiatives). These are voluntary measures. In case no action is taken by the family, the DGEO transmits the information to the Juvenile Court that can convoke the family/young people and enforce an action to be taken.</p> <p>Before DGEO took on this role, schools used to be obliged to contact families and engage in discussion with them. The process was centralised because it was found that the reactions of schools were very diverse and many schools did not comply with this requirement.</p>
<p>What role is/has the monitoring system played in the design, development or implementation of the policies, strategies and initiatives?</p>	<p>It is the development of policies for tackling ELET and ELVET that created the need for developing monitoring tools that could help monitoring ELET at regional and school-level as well as identifying young people at risk of dropping out.</p> <p>The Tabor dashboards enable schools to map their internal situation. It is for the moment too early to evaluate whether it helped implementing specific support services at school-level.</p> <p>The truancy monitoring system is used for implementing support services to students at risk by central-level services or at school-level.</p>



## 8. Effect of the economic crisis

Question	Answers
<p>In what ways has the role of VET in reducing ELET been influenced by the economic crisis: (please consider):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) supply of VET places;</li><li>(b) demand for VET places;</li><li>(c) qualifications of VET students (increasing decreasing);</li><li>(d) popularity and perception of VET;</li><li>(e) increase/decrease in public resources for VET;</li><li>(f) access to 'second chance' VET opportunities.</li></ul>	<p>Stakeholders interviewed reported many drawbacks of the VET system overall (see the section Factors constraining the effectiveness of VET to reduce ELET). These downsides are not perceived as being a consequence of the economic crisis but rather of the lack of political interest and investment in VET education.</p>

## 9. Factors positively contributing to the effectiveness of VET in reducing ELET

Stakeholders interviewed mentioned several factors positively contributing to the effectiveness of VET which in turn can reduce ELET/ELVET. The factors reported are:

### 9.1. National/regional policy factors

- (a) The political attention given to ELVET encourages school actors to act and prevent/combat ELVET.
- (b) The presence of policy initiatives to tackle ELVET is seen as positive.
- (c) The creation of the 'Bassins' is seen as enabling to improve the dialogue between VET institutions and enterprises in the view of creating common references and VET offer of quality (see section on Stakeholder cooperation).
- (d) The economic employment stakeholders, via the 'Bassins de vie Enseignement-Formation-Emploi' <sup>(36)</sup> wanting to take up the matter of VET education and cooperation with VET education stakeholders is encouraging improvements in the quality of VET and its attractiveness.

<sup>(36)</sup> <http://gouvernement.wallonie.be/bassins-de-vie-enseignement-formation-emploi-un-accord-de-coop-ration-sur-les-rails> [accessed 7.4.2017].



- (e) The increased collaboration between different education actors (e.g. guidance centres, apprenticeship centres, adult learning centres, etc.) for developing projects tackling ELET/ELVET.

## 9.2. Systemic features of the (VET) education system

- (a) The increased will to develop innovative pedagogies. Various projects (e.g. use of ICT in the classroom, Expairs' projects) are being implemented in order to change pedagogies and making education – and VET – more attractive to learners.
- (b) The reform of the whole VET system <sup>(37)</sup> is seen as a factor which will improve the quality of VET.
- (c) The CPU enables permeability between education systems – i.e. it will enable learners to transit easily from one system to another (e.g. from a VET school to an adult education).

## 10. Factors constraining the effectiveness of VET to reduce ELET

Stakeholders interviewed highlighted various factors which constrain the effectiveness of VET to reduce ELET/ELVET.

### 10.1. National/regional policy factors

- (a) The lack of flexibility of pathways – e.g. a learner from an (non-formal provider) apprenticeship centre cannot return to the formal education system or to higher VET whereas the qualification profiles applied are the same.
- (b) The latest initiatives to tackle ELVET are seen as positive. However, stakeholders noted that these initiatives only have a remedial focus – they do not ask 'why there is early leaving' and therefore are seen as ineffective as they won't solve the problem.
- (c) The lack of a tracking system <sup>(38)</sup> hinders the effectiveness of measures – i.e. it is impossible to know whether early leavers enrolled in another type of

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<sup>(37)</sup> See section 'National and regional strategy to tackle ELET'.

<sup>(38)</sup> To cope with this problem a register of people' trajectories is being created with the support from the Metices Research Centre of the 'Université Libre de Bruxelles'. Data from all educational actors of the Walloon Region, the French Community and

- training (e.g. non formal apprenticeships, adult learning) public employment services or employment.
- (d) No teacher training is providing on how to provide guidance to learners on job/VET tracks opportunities. There are no specific tools to support teachers in that mission. This is seen by stakeholders as the main cause of ELVET.
  - (e) As schools are organised in 'networks' (i.e. different organising bodies) in Belgium, there is a strong competition between school networks to not lose students (nb: schools receive subsidies according to the number of students). Therefore, the guidance provided to a student with low grades or at risk of dropping out often reflects the interest of the network – the school will tend to advise the learner to enrol in a VET track organised by the network without advising him/her of the other VET opportunities organised by other schools. The interest of the learner is therefore not at the centre of the guidance process.

## 10.2. Systemic features of the VET education system

- (a) Stakeholders observed a resistance to change by teachers/trainers in the context of the CPU measure which hinders its implementation.
- (b) The lack of central coordination of internships/apprenticeships placements. Recently, the number of internships/apprenticeships opportunities increased considerably without any coherence (e.g. the target groups and modalities (e.g. grant allowance) of such internships/apprenticeships vary greatly between operators). Stakeholders observe an increased competition of learners to access these opportunities and a 'shopping' of enterprises for selecting the best-fit apprentices. There is also increased competition for VET schools and apprenticeships centres for securing placements for their students.
- (c) The formal education VET system is said to be granted more subsidies than the non-formal apprenticeship tracks. There is a strong concurrence between VET operators for keeping the learners within their own education system rather than orienting them to the most suitable track according to their profile.

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the French Community Commission is being cross-referenced with the social security data. Once implemented, it will enable to monitor each individual trajectory from the secondary education to employment, unemployment, apprenticeships, public employment services, continuous training and learning, and consequently monitor the impact of the various education and training opportunities.

- (d) The negative image of VET as a last-resource pathway for students who accumulated low achievement. It does not contribute to fight against ELET/ELVET.
- (e) The lack of investment in technical equipment of VET schools which hinders the development of excellence in VET and its attractiveness.
- (f) The lack of coherence of school programmes at the moment (note: each school network in BE-fr defines its own programmes according to the learning outcomes defined at central-level). When a learners transits – because of low achievement – from general education, to technical education and then to VET, he might have encountered three times the same themes in a course whereas he is moving upwards (i.e. from the 2nd year of general education, to the third year in Technical education to the fourth year in VET). This strongly impacts on the motivation of learners, especially those at-risk of dropping out.

### 10.3. Features of the labour market

- (a) The large number of VET certifications that exist for the same job (e.g. carpentry) hinders the readability and trust of employers. Employers are unable to know if a learner is qualified enough when he/she applies for a job. The 'Bassins' were specifically created with the aim to cope with this issue (see section on Stakeholder cooperation).