

# Promoting language training for Walloon residents

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT****PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE** BELGIUM-FR

## Timeline

2016 <b>Approved/Agreed</b>	2017 <b>Implementation</b>	2018 <b>Implementation</b>
2019 <b>Implementation</b>	2020 <b>Implementation</b>	2021 <b>Implementation</b>
2022 <b>Implementation</b>	2023 <b>Implementation</b>	2024 <b>Implementation</b>

**ID number 39251**

## Background

The Walloon economy is an open economy made up of a large network of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and very small enterprises (VSEs), whose opening to non-local markets would allow them to further develop. However, the language skills of workers and jobseekers are not sufficiently developed. This mismatch between the needs of businesses and the training of (future) workers hinders the creation of economic activity and growth.

Since 2011, the platform Wallangues has offered a unique, dynamic and interactive pedagogical approach, combining essential elements in language learning and allowing effective progression in all the linguistic skills essential for communication: listening comprehension, reading, writing and speaking. Wallangues is free and accessible to any adult (18+) residing in Wallonia and offers the possibility to learn up to four languages or to deepen their knowledge.

## Objectives

Walloon residents have the opportunity to learn languages or to deepen their knowledge. They thus position themselves more optimally on the job market and meet the needs of businesses more adequately. By strengthening the language skills of jobseekers, particularly in a professional context, Wallonia intends to improve its employment rate, especially for low-skilled people.

## Description

Under the Decree of 20/02/2014 and the Decree of the Walloon Government (AGW) of 08/09/2016, the action plan for learning languages (*plan langues*) of Forem, the Walloon office for vocational training and placement, offers financial assistance for learning Dutch, English and German. Learners can complete a year, or a semester, abroad in the academic year immediately following graduation from upper secondary school.

The Forem annually convenes the providers who practically organise the stay of the

candidates according to its standards.

The training offer includes: language training in a company abroad or in Dutch-speaking or German-speaking Belgium to gain more professional experience and increase the level in a foreign language, business training.

#### **2016 Approved/Agreed**

#### **2017 Implementation**

#### **2018 Implementation**

#### **2019 Implementation**

In 2019, language training was offered to jobseekers in schools and companies in Flanders, CG in the German-speaking Community, and in Europe (English / German) and BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa). Language immersion curricula for high school graduates: semester and / or second rhetoric type year, language courses, first year of university.

Applicants abroad at the onset of the COVID crisis were urgently repatriated as the pandemic spread, starting with applicants in China, then in Europe. Most of the applicants in Flanders could either stay or finalise their immersion remotely.

#### **2020 Implementation**

In 2020, new developments in the language plan at Le Forem and new digital developments for Wallangues. The Wallangues platform was offered also as a mobile application from May 2020. The Wallangues app gives users more flexibility to learn languages on their own. Downloadable in iOS and Android versions, the app not only incorporates the functionality of the existing platform, but its content has also been revised and optimised. The pandemic and the more widespread use of distance training has been beneficial for the platform in terms of use (general public / also outside le Forem). This had the impact of reaching a peak in terms of active users, which doubled compared to 2019, and of recording an 80% increase in overall connection time, bringing us back to historical connection levels despite a count. The external service provider developing the Wallangues has been extended until 2023, but no major developments are planned. The platform is used now also in traditional courses given in training centres and advised as part of individualised remedies.

#### **2021 Implementation**

A new phase for the *Plan Langues*

In February 2021, a new committee was created to update and move forward the *Plan Langues*. The main objective is to provide the Walloon in general and the jobseeker in particular with a complete and innovative languages training offer. One main focus will be to strengthen motivation for language learning by expanding the offer of training in languages applied to the profession.

Wallangues platform

Since April 2021, Walloon residents can access the Wallangues platform from age 15 (instead of age 18).

#### **2022 Implementation**

In June 2022, the new *Plan Langues*, a four-year plan, was approved.

To boost the rate of socio-professional integration, Wallonia will be introducing new measures to promote language learning. 9 activities, based on people's professional projects, have been defined:

- (a) Promoting language learning
- (b) Development of new 'job-oriented language' training courses
- (c) Identifying and developing tools for language positioning and certification
- (d) Continuation of language immersion grants for jobseekers, pupils and/or students.
- (e) Continuation of language training as part of the reform of support for continuing training for employees.
- (f) Creation of a reference centre
- (g) Tackling the shortage of trainers and teachers
- (h) Pooling teaching resources between players
- (i) Optimising the use of the Wallangues platform

At the end of 2022, a decree from the Walloon Government modified the modalities of granting scholarships in the framework of the *Plan Langues* (running up to the end of 2024).

For jobseekers, language grants are increased, with a particular focus on people experiencing financial difficulties.

For young people, the *Plan Langues* continues to award immersion grants to young people over the age of 18, with a focus on shorter grants and young people who have had less language learning as part of their curriculum.

### **2023 Implementation**

In July 2023, Forem launched a promotional campaign for shorter grants for pupils and students. The campaign reached a wide audience and was primarily conducted on social media. In October 2023, a second campaign was initiated to raise awareness among jobseekers about the opportunities to acquire language skills through immersion in a company or a language school. Complementing the campaign, Forem's services have initiated other promotional actions such as the *Osez les langues* (Dare to use languages) webinars and a working group involving active providers in Wallonia (Training - Education) to coordinate efforts to raise awareness among target groups.

### **2024 Implementation**

The previous actions of the *Plan Langues* are consolidated in 2024.

## **Bodies responsible**

- Le Forem (The Walloon Office for Vocational Training and Employment)
- Public Service of Wallonia (SPW) for Economy, Employment, Research - Department of Employment and Vocational Training

## **Target group**

### **Learners**

Young people (15-29 years old)

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

Adult learners

Unemployed and jobseekers

Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment

Low-skilled/qualified persons

## **Thematic categories**

### **Modernising VET offer and delivery**

Diversifying modes of learning: face-to-face, digital and/or blended learning; adaptable/flexible training formats

Acquiring key competences

Reinforcing work-based learning, including apprenticeships

### **Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation**

Financial and non-financial incentives to learners, providers and companies

### **European and international dimensions of VET**

Mobility of learners and staff

## **Subsystem**

IVET CVET

## **Further reading**

[Official website of Department of Employment and Vocational education of Wallonia](#)

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[Language immersion higher secondary education](#)

### **Cite as**

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/39251>