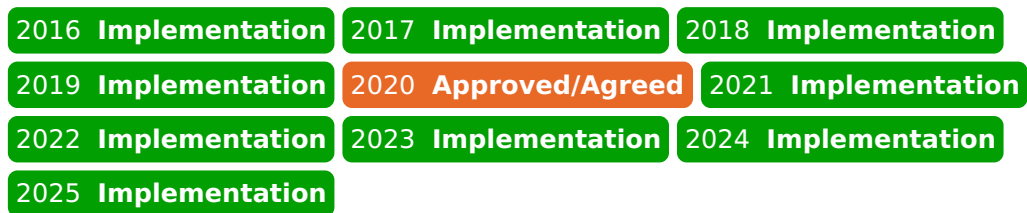


Strengthening of orientation and guidance measures

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

Timeline



ID number 28032

Background

As an essential aspect of initial learning and lifelong learning, orientation and guidance contribute to social and economic objectives, further improving the efficiency and effectiveness of education, training and the labour market. It contributes to reducing school drop-out, preventing skills mismatches and boosting productivity, while addressing the needs of social equity and social inclusion.

Objectives

Orientation and guidance measures aim at supporting the public in defining their professional career and the related requirements by emphasising the discovery of trades and establishing contact with professionals from several sectors.

Amongst the implemented measures available to the public, *Cités des métiers* aim to be centres of excellence in guidance, entrepreneurship, working and training. They also contribute to the promotion of technical professions, to the organisation of events linked to the development of these professions and, in general, to the implementation of any animation and / or promotion aimed at achievement of these goals.

Description

Several centres of excellence in guidance, entrepreneurship, working and training were set up, namely one *Cité des métiers* centre in Namur in June 2016 and another one in Brussels in 2018. Founded in May 2019 by the Government of the Walloon Region, the University of Liège and Le Forem, the non-profit organisation named *Centrale des Métiers de Liège* is responsible for the *Cité des Métiers* project in the city of Liège.

2016 Implementation

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

In 2019, orientation and guidance measures were in place and ran on a regular basis.

2020 Approved/Agreed

In December 2020, Wallonia, the French Community and the French Community Commission adopted a memorandum setting out the terms and conditions for implementation of the lifelong guidance system.

The objectives pursued by the four governments (Walloon Region, the French Community, Brussels Region and the French Community Commission) in terms of the system of lifelong guidance are as follows, to:

- (a) ensure better visibility of guidance to citizens;
- (b) ensure a service offer in guidance, based on a common base, on the entire French-speaking Belgian territory, which is based on a common governance, and the design and deployment of a *Cités des métiers/CEFO* concerted action plan;
- (c) formalise the lifelong guidance system in Belgium in legal and regulatory texts;
- (d) ensure a quantitative and qualitative increase in the supply in orientation through the submission of a project portfolio 'lifelong orientation' within the framework of the ESF+ programming 2021-27.

The memorandum sets up a strategic steering committee for lifelong guidance. This is jointly chaired by representatives of the Walloon Minister of Employment and Training; the Brussels Minister of Employment and Vocational Training; and a Minister of the French Community. The shared chairing is endorsed by the Minister of Higher Education and adult education; representatives of the Minister of Education also sit on the committee, as does a representative of the Walloon Minister in charge of IFAPME and the competence centres.

2021 Implementation

In 2021, 12 priority actions have been defined, to meet the objectives set up by the memorandum:

- (a) implementation of a communication plan;
- (b) creation of a register of the service offer;
- (c) development of a guidance web portal;
- (d) establishment of the *Cités des Métiers* network, in a concerted manner between the four *Cités des Métiers*, and Forem, which is in charge of the coordination of the *Carrefours des métiers* guidance centres;
- (e) definition of a common minimum offer in guidance on the whole French-speaking part of Belgium territory through a common action plan 2021 for all the CdM/*Carrefours des métiers*;
- (f) proposition of a common guidance charter for all guidance stakeholders throughout life;
- (g) creation of a training, resource, research and development centre;
- (h) articulation of the actions in relation to STEM professions;
- (i) focus on the professions of the future;
- (j) development of a political governance of the system;
- (k) translation of the general objectives into legal and regulatory texts;
- (l) submission of one or more project portfolios in partnership with all partners.

Since January 2021, several working groups have started to implement the defined actions.

Of the 12 actions defined, some of them are financed by the Recovery Plan in Wallonia. Actions 2 to 7 and 12, are carried out by multi-operator working groups associating

actors from Wallonia, the French Community and the French Community Commission COCOF.

The actions are steered by a lifelong guidance (OTLAV, *orientation tout au long de la vie*) strategic steering committee, which meets quarterly, co-chaired by the cabinets of the Minister for Employment and Vocational Training in Wallonia, the Minister for Employment and Vocational Training in Brussels and the Minister for Higher Education and Adult Education in the French Community.

This committee brings together representatives from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry responsible for IFAPME and competence centres in Wallonia, as well as actors from public employment services, vocational training providers, etc.

On the budgetary level, the actions are financed by the structural credits of the different entities, and reinforced on the one hand by the credits of the Walloon Recovery Plan for specific actions in Wallonia, and on the other hand by European funds to reinforce quantitatively and qualitatively the guidance offer on the territory of the French-speaking part of Belgium.

The French Community is a key partner in the project and works in close partnership with the *Carrefours des Métiers* and the *Cités des Métiers* to offer appropriate guidance from the beginning of schooling. Guidance counsellors from compulsory education and higher education will soon join the teams in the three Walloon *Cités des Métiers* and the nine *Carrefours des Métiers* in Wallonia.

The deployment of the lifelong guidance system is also included in the Axis 1 of the Walloon Recovery Plan (plan 15).

2022 Implementation

A step towards this common vision was taken on 5 May 2022, a Charter for lifelong guidance was signed by all the partners: the Walloon Region, the French Community, the Brussels Region, COCOF, *Cités des Métiers*, Actiris, Bruxelles Formation, Forem, IFAPME, etc.

The objectives of the charter are multiple: to ensure coherence and quality in the service offer, to make users' journeys more fluid and to move in a common direction. This Charter sets out and details the main principles that must be applied by all the players in the lifelong guidance system:

- (a) cooperation,
- (b) open-mindedness, respect, honesty, equality,
- (c) efficiency,
- (d) neutrality,
- (e) transparency,
- (f) solidarity and commitment.

2023 Implementation

In 2023, guidance counsellors from both compulsory education and higher education joined the teams at the three Walloon *Cités des Métiers* and the nine *Carrefours des Métiers* in Wallonia. In September 2023, the *Carrefours des Métiers* were officially designated as associated centres of the *Cités des Métiers* in Wallonia. This integration included the commitment of 15 counsellors from compulsory education, the involvement of four counsellors from university academic hubs within the *Cités des Métiers*, and the incorporation of three counsellors from the skills validation consortium into the system. In terms of communication, a showcase website for the three Walloon *Cités des Métiers* was also created.

2024 Implementation

In 2024, the implementation of the guidance pathway for young people and students (ESF project) involved the commitment of nine counsellors, reflecting the intention to

broaden the target audience. Development efforts for the guidance web portal have intensified, and working groups for co-construction are being organised to provide Walloon citizens with an accessible guidance web portal.

2025 Implementation

In 2025, Cités des Métiers across the French-speaking part of Belgium continued to operate, offering a wide range of free and anonymous services to the public: guidance on career development, education and training pathways, and entrepreneurship. Collective activities such as workshops, information sessions, job fairs, and company visits were also organised. The resource centres, both physical and digital, continued to offer extensive information on employment, learning opportunities, and professional development.

Bodies responsible

- Public Service of Wallonia (SPW) for Economy, Employment, Research – Department of Employment and Vocational Training
- French Community (FWB)
- Walloon Government
- French Community Commission (COCOF)
- Brussels' Government

Target group

Learners

Young people (15-29 years old)
Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)
Learners with migrant background, including refugees
Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers
Learners with disabilities
Adult learners
Older workers and employees (55 - 64 years old)
Unemployed and jobseekers
Persons in employment, including those at risk of unemployment
Low-skilled/qualified persons

Education professionals

Teachers

Thematic categories

Governance of VET and lifelong learning

Engaging VET stakeholders and strengthening partnerships in VET

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Promotion strategies and campaigns for VET and lifelong learning
Lifelong guidance

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET as an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training and skills

Osnabrück Declaration

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Cite des metiers - Bruxelles](#)

[Cite des metiers - Liege](#)

[Cite des metiers - Charleroi](#)

[Cite des metiers - Namur](#)

“ ... ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Strengthening of orientation and guidance measures: Belgium-FR. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe* (2025 update) [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28032>