

Belgium

Overview of the Vocational Education and Training System

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Title: Belgium: overview of the Vocational Education and Training System in 2006

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Abstract:

This is an overview of the VET system in Belgium. Information is presented according to the following themes:

1. General policy context - framework for the knowledge society;
2. Policy development - objectives, frameworks, mechanisms, priorities;
3. Institutional framework - provision of learning opportunities;
4. Initial education and training - pathways and transition;
5. Continuing vocational education and training for adults;
6. Training VET teachers and trainers;
7. Skills and competence development and innovative pedagogy;
8. Validation of learning - recognition and mobility;
9. Guidance and counselling for learning, career and employment;
10. Financing: investment in human resources;
11. European and international dimensions: towards an open area of lifelong learning.

This overview is part of a series produced for each EU Member State (plus Norway and Iceland). Each report is prepared by Cedefop's national network member (ReferNet) and is updated on an annual basis: this one is valid for 2006. Later editions can be viewed from August 2007 onwards at:

http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Information_resources/NationalVet/ where more detailed thematic information on the VET systems of the EU can be found.

Keywords:

training system; training policy, initial training, continuing vocational training, training of trainers, skill development, vocational guidance, recognition of competences, validation of non formal learning; financing of training

Geographic term:

Belgium



Belgium

01 - GENERAL POLICY CONTEXT - FRAMEWORK FOR THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

0101 - POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL/ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Belgium, which became a unitary State in 1831, is a parliamentary democracy in the form of a constitutional monarchy and, following successive amendments to the Constitution (1970, 1980, 1988, 1994), has become a federal State. At the time of these amendments, the State transferred many powers to the regions and the communities. For instance, the communities became responsible for education, while the regions are responsible for some aspects of vocational training such as social advancement, redeployment and retraining.

The last amendment of the Constitution in 1994 made Belgium into a completely federal State.

There are *five* levels:

- federal,
- community,
- regional,
- provincial
- and municipal.

Federal level:

- Federal institutions,
- Chamber of Representatives,
- Senate,
- King and federal Government

Community level:

- *French* community,
- *Flemish* community,
- *German-speaking* community
- and the Joint Community Commission (French Community Commission and Flemish Community Commission).

The communities are responsible for issues more specifically connected with the person, such as education and culture. The French community is responsible for the French-speaking part of Wallonia and for the French-speaking institutions in Brussels. The Flemish community is responsible for Flanders and for Dutch-speaking institutions in

Brussels. The German-speaking community is responsible for the German-speaking area. The three communities each have their own legislative assembly (Parliament) and their own government. The French Community Commission (COCOF) is responsible for the issues transferred to it by the French community (for instance : vocational training for the middle classes) in respect of French-speaking institutions in Brussels. Concerning education, all educational matters have been transferred to the three communities. They are responsible for education within their linguistic area and, as concerns the French and Flemish communities, with regard to French or Dutch-speaking establishments in bilingual areas (Brussels). The educational responsibilities of the Flemish community are vested in the Flemish Parliament (legislative power) and the Flemish Community Government and Education Minister (executive power). The educational responsibilities of the French and German-speaking communities are vested in the Councils of respectively the French and German-speaking community and respectively the French Community Government and Education Ministers and the German-speaking Community Government and Education Minister.

With regard to distribution of powers over placement and vocational training, it is important to underline that since 01st January 2001, the German-speaking community has had responsibility for employment and vocational training.

Regional level :

- *Walloon region,*
- *Brussels region*
- *and Flemish region.*

The three regions are based on a territorial division. They are responsible for issues connected with training, employment, the economy or the local area, such as aid for enterprises and town planning.

The Wallon region is responsible for Wallonia; the Flemish region is responsible for Flanders and the Brussels region is responsible for the 19 local authorities that make it up.

The three regions have their own legislative assembly and their own government.

Provincial level :

- *5 Walloon provinces and 5 Flemish provinces.*

On 31 January 1994, the province of Brabant was replaced by two provinces : Walloon and Flemish Brabant. Provincial governments continue to be responsible for enforcing laws, decrees, orders and regulatory orders at provincial level.

Municipal level :

- *262 Walloon municipalities,*
- *19 municipalities in Brussels*
- *and 308 Flemish municipalities.*

Municipalities are responsible for those issues which have been assigned to them by law on municipalities.

The financing of education, especially secondary education, may involve all five levels of government, but also enterprises.

The financing of vocational training involves transfers of appropriations between the various public authorities.

0102 - POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Belgium's surface is 30.528 km². It has borders with four countries: the Netherlands to the north, Germany and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to the east and France to the south. To the west it is bordered by the North Sea.

Official population figures, on January 1st, 2006:

- The Kingdom: 10 511 382
- Brussels Capital Region: 1 018 804
- Flemish Region: 6 078 600
- Walloon Region: 3 413 978

Table 1: Age-specific demographic trends (2000-2006)							
POPULATION BY GENDER AND AGE GROUP – BELGIUM 2000-2006							
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total	10 239 085	10 263 414	10 309 725	10 355 844	10 396 421	10 445 852	10 511 382
0-19	2 419 964	2 412 224	2 408 943	2 407 368	2 408 456	2 414 041	2 428 706
20-64	6 104 028	6 121 455	6 154 390	6 186 086	6 207 845	6 232 311	6 273 659
65 +	1 715 093	1 729 735	1 746 392	1 762 390	1 780 120	1 799 500	1 809 017
Male	5 006 014	5 018 019	5 042 288	5 066 885	5 087 176	5 111 325	5 143 821
0-19	1 237 139	1 233 250	1 231 221	1 230 382	1 230 570	1 233 688	1 241 251
20-64	3 069 738	3 077 631	3 094 653	3 110 779	3 120 599	3 131 390	3 150 333
65 +	699 137	707 138	716 414	725 724	736 007	746 247	752 237
Female	5 233 071	5 245 395	5 267 437	5 288 959	5 309 245	5 334 527	5 367 561
0-19	1 182 825	1 178 974	1 177 722	1 176 986	1 177 886	1 180 353	1 187 455
20-64	3 034 290	3 043 824	3 059 737	3 075 307	3 087 246	3 100 921	3 123 326

Source : INS (National Institute of Statistics), demographic statistics, SPF Economie – Direction générale Statistique et Information économique, Service Démographie

As in most other EU member states, the age pyramid shows a demographic imbalance towards older citizens (male and female).

Table 2: Demographic projection for Wallonia (1991-2050)		
YEAR	WALLOON POPULATION	IN % OF THE BELGIAN POPULATION
1991 (a)	3 255 711	32.6
1995	3 310 591	32.7
2000	3 363 992	32.8
2005	3 404 335	32.9
2010	3 434 625	32.9
2015	3 461 561	33.0
2020	3 488 979	33.1
2025	3 514 124	33.3
2030	3 530 682	33.4
2035	3 534 433	33.5
2040	3 525 631	33.5
2045	3 508 431	33.6
2050	3 488 238	33.7

Source : INS, « Perspectives de population 1992 – 2050 »

The population in Wallonia will increase until 2050

Table 3: Demographic projections for Belgium (2005-2015-2025-2050) in MIO			
2005	2015	2025	2050
10.4	10.7	10.9	10.9

Source : EUROSTAT

The population in Belgium will increase until 2025.

Additional relevant data to education and training.

Table 4: Education attainment – in % (2000-2005)						
CERTIFICATION OBTAINED	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0%
Primary education	26.3%	26.1%	25.6%	24.5%	24.1%	22.9%
Lower secondary education	23.2%	22.7%	22.1%	22.5%	21.4%	21.1%
Higher secondary education	29.9%	30.0%	30.7%	30.8%	31.4%	32.4%
Non university education – (short type)	11.4%	11.5%	11.9%	12.3%	12.9%	13.3%
Non university education – (long type)	2.5%	2.5%	2.6%	2.7%	2.6%	2.6%

Source : INS (National Institute of Statistics). Direction générale Statistique et Information économique

The share of graduates from secondary and tertiary education institutions has risen.

Table 5: Population having completed the higher secondary education (in %) Population aged 25-64 years old					
2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
58.3	59.2	60.3	61.4	63.6	65.5

Source : EUROSTAT

The percentage of persons (male and female) who completed the higher secondary education has risen from 2001 to 2005.

Table 6: Early school leavers – annual averages							
BELGIUM	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004 (B)	2005 (B)
Total	15.7%	13.8%	13.8%	14.1%	14.3%	13.1%	12.9%
Male	17.6%	16.5%	16.2%	17.1%	16.9%	15.4%	15.2%
Female	13.8%	11.0%	11.3%	11.0%	11.6%	10.8%	10.5%

Source : INS (National Institute of Statistics), Direction générale Statistique et Information économique

The number of male early school leavers was decreasing between 1999 and 2005. In comparison with male early school leavers, the number of female early school leavers is less important.

0103 - ECONOMY AND LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

The overall strategy of Belgium which was adopted for achieving the Lisbon goals is focused on ushering, in long-term economic growth against the background of a stable macroeconomic context. The strategy involves the consolidation of the economy in general, and more and better jobs, better social cohesion and a healthy environment, in particular. Towards this end the focus of investment in 2005-2006 is primarily on “creating incentives for growth and employment”. As a result of ongoing consultations and cooperation between the federal government, the regions and the communities, the various economic and labour market policy measures have been streamlined within the context of a well-balanced policy for the entire country.

The achievements of this policy are obviously heading in the right direction. The Belgian economy is highly sensitive to economic market trends and export-driven.

All in all, more jobs have been created than anticipated in spite of the measured rate of growth. A further 67 000 jobs were created in 2004, while the figure for 2005 was 86 000. Meanwhile the national Accounts Institute is banking on 41 000 new jobs being created in 2006. The overall rate of employment was up 61.1%, in 2005, 0.8% points higher than in 2004. The female labour market participation rate rose by 1.2% points to reach 53.8%, while the rate for the older working population was up 1.8% points to 31.8%. The employment rate continues to be lower than the European average but there is reported to be a faster percentage of increase. The change in the situation is primarily reflected in a sharp rise in the employment rate in the 55-64 age category. This is chiefly attributed to the requirement for older unemployed people to be available for work longer. The situation, together with an increase in the size of the working population, has nonetheless created several side-effects, such as a mild increase in the rate of unemployment to reach 8,6% in 2006, although this is expected to fall again in 2007.

Training is of crucial importance in job creation, so the focus will be on universal access to a high standard of education. Both employees and employers will be offered financial

support for their training activities. The training opportunities will be coordinated more effectively. The training undertaken will be rounded off a recognition of the prior learning.

STATISTICAL DATA

Real growth of GDP (%)

In the end the Belgian economic growth in 2005 was only 1.5%, compared with 2.4% in 2004.

Source : Belgium *More growth, more jobs...* Progress report 2006

Table 1: Total employment rate (15-64) in percentage (%)			
	2000	2003	2005
EU (25)	62.4	62.9	63.8
BELGIUM	60.5	59.6	61.1

Source : EUROSTAT

In 2005, the overall employment rate was below the European average.

Increasing the employment rate in Belgium should be done by creating a faster operating labour market.

(f=forecast) - * EUROSTAT

Economic composition by sector (% employment in agriculture, % in manufacturing and % in service).

Table 2: Total domestic employment by sector (30 June 1999) - BELGIUM Wage worker + self-employed worker + helpers (men + women) in %			
OCCUPATIONAL SECTORS (NACE OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION)	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
1. PRIMARY SECTOR	2.81	1.43	2.22
A. AGRICULTURE, HUNTING AND FORESTRY	2.73	1.41	2.16
B. FISHING	0.08	0.02	0.06
2. SECONDARY SECTOR	35.59	10.41	24.82
C. MINERAL EXTRACTING INDUSTRIES	0.18	0.02	0.11
D. INDUSTRY	23.53	9.17	17.39
E. PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF ELECTRICITY, GAS AND WATER	1.05	0.24	0.71
F. CONSTRUCTION	10.82	0.97	6.61
3. TERTIARY SECTOR	61.60	88.17	72.96
G. WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE; CAR REPAIR	13.37	15.50	14.28
H. HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS	2.55	3.75	3.06
I. TRANSPORTS, WAREHOUSING AND COMMUNICATIONS	9.13	3.34	6.65
J. FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	3.09	3.66	3.34
K. REAL ESTATE, HIRING AND BUSINESS SERVICES	9.04	8.01	8.60
L. PUBLIC SERVICES	8.61	7.20	8.01
M. EDUCATION	4.84	12.28	8.02
N. HEALTH AND SOCIAL ACTION	5.18	18.16	10.73
O. COLLECTIVE. SOCIAL AND PERSONAL SERVICES	3.56	5.25	4.28
O. COLLECTIVE. SOCIAL AND PERSONAL SERVICES	3.56	5.25	4.28
P. DOMESTIC SERVICES	0.05	5.70	2.47
Z. BADLY DEFINED ACTIVITIES	2.18	5.31	3.52
TOTAL DOMESTIC EMPLOYMENT	100.00	100.00	100.00

The statistical data from the Federal Ministry for Labour show the employment trend for the three main areas of activity (primary, secondary and tertiary). Employment in the agricultural, industrial and services sectors is shown in the table (as a percentage and by gender) according to the NACE occupational classification. The most important sector is the tertiary sector. The number of women is higher than the number of men in the major occupations (hotels and restaurants, education, wholesale and retail trade, health sector, etc).

Table 3: Employment rate by gender (15-64) in percentage (%) - Belgium			
	2000	2003	2005
Male	69.5	67.3	68.3
Female	51.5	51,8	53.8

Source : EUROSTAT

The female employment rate is lower than the male employment rate in Belgium. But it has risen between 2000 and 2005.

Table 4: Total unemployment rate (15-64) in percentage (%)			
	2000	2003	2005
EU (25)	8.6	9.0	8.8
BELGIUM	6.9	8.2	8.4

Source : EUROSTAT

The total unemployment rate in Belgium has risen between 2000 and 2005.

Table 5: Unemployment rate by gender (15-64) in percentage (%) – Belgium			
	2000	2003	2005
Male	5.6	7.6	7.6
Female	8.5	8.9	9.5

Source : EUROSTAT

The female unemployment rate is higher than the male unemployment rate in Belgium. It has risen between 2000 and 2005.

Table 6: Youth unemployment rate (<25) in percentage (%)			
	2000	2003	2005
EU (25)	17.4	18.8	18.7
BELGIUM	16.7	21.8	21.5

Source : EUROSTAT

Youth unemployment rate in Belgium is above the European average. It has risen between 2000 and 2005.

Table 7: Total long term unemployment rate (more than 12 months) in percentage (%)			
	2000	2003	2005
EU (25)	3.9	4.1	3.9
BELGIUM	3.7	3.7	4.4

Source : EUROSTAT

The total long-term unemployment rate in Belgium is above the European average. It has risen between 2000 and 2005.

Table 8: Long term unemployment rate by gender in percentage (%) – Belgium			
	2000	2003	2005
Male	3.0	3.3	3.8
Female	4.6	4.2	5.0

Source : EUROSTAT

The female long-term unemployment rate is higher than the male long-term unemployment rate. It has risen between 2000 and 2005.

Table 9: Gross domestic expenditure on R&D (GERD) - As a percentage of GDP			
	2000	2003	2005
EU (25)	1.86	1.90	N/A
BELGIUM	1.97	1.89	N/A

Source: www.be2010.eu

The gross domestic expenditure on R&D has slightly decreased between 2000 and 2003. Figures for year 2005 are not available.

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP (2003)

In Belgium, it represents 6,06% of GDP.

Source : EUROSTAT

0104 - EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION

GENERAL COMMENTS

In *Belgium*, in 2003, 81.3% of the 20-24 year olds graduated in higher education, with 83.7% in *Flanders*, 78.7% in *Wallonia* and 75.4% in *Brussels*. The EU-average is 76.8%. Both in the Union as a whole and in Belgium, major efforts must be made to attain the 85% target*.

Looking at the evolution over the years, it is quite clear that the education level has notably increased in Belgium. 1992 still saw 34% of the 25-29 year olds lowly skilled. In 2002, this group was down to only 20%. In the same age category, the percentage of the highly skilled has risen from 29% to 38%. The high number of Belgians that graduated from higher education is probably linked to compulsory education up to the age of 18, which brings a large group of teenagers on the threshold of higher education. Arrears in comparison with the whole EU-15, still shown in the entire population's education degree, have been made good in the last 10 years.

The education attainable of the female population has rapidly increased. Concerning the female population aged between 35-39 years, the percentage of high-skilled women is higher than the percentage of high-skilled men.

REGIONAL COMPARISONS

The Regional differences can be analyzed, as follows: The percentage of people with a certification of higher education is more important in the Brussels Region (36%, in Flanders : 29%, in Wallonia : 27% for the population aged between 25-29 years in 2001). There are two major reasons : on one side, there are universities as well as many High schools ("Hautes Ecoles") in Brussels. On the other side, the Brussels Region is attractive at economic level (a lot of jobs in the tertiary sector are dedicated to people with higher qualifications. In each Region, the percentage of the female population with

higher qualifications is increasing more rapidly than the percentage of the male population with higher qualifications (49% of women aged between 25-29 years have a certification of higher education in Brussels, 45% in Flanders and 43% in Wallonia (in comparison with the male population aged between 25-29 years : 40% in Brussels, 37% in Flanders and 31% in Wallonia).

In Brussels, the percentage of low-skilled people (only with the lower secondary education certification) is rather important. In Flanders, 17% of the population aged between 25-29 years have given up secondary education, 25% in Wallonia and 29% in Brussels.

Things are quite similar as far as early school leaving (the share of 18-20 year old not being educated and not having completed secondary education) is concerned, with a 12.6% share (+0.7) in Flanders, a 16.3% (+0.2) in Wallonia and a 19.2% share (-3.4) in Brussels**.

The nation's percentage is 12.8%*** (+0.4%) against a 15.9% EU-average. The goal is to bring down this percentage to 10%. Flanders aims at a 50% reduction ****by 2010.

The sharp division between the general, technical and professional education also appears to be a rather weak point in the Belgian education policy. In the Flemish and French Community, still quite a lot of students start their education career in general education, "falling back" to technical and professional education (this phenomenon does not occur in the German-speaking Community). It is important though, that a technical or professional training is looked upon as a positive choice.

* The target basically refers to the 22 year olds and not to the complete group 22-24 year olds

** Brussels' figure fluctuates strongly each year, and is therefore to be interpreted with care. Moreover national figures (Statistics Belgium NIS/INS) are not completely comparable with the European (EUROSTAT)

*** Based on EUROSTAT data

[See Table 1 and 2](#)

The percentage of the working-age population having successfully completed tertiary education (ISCED 5-6) is very high in Belgium ([see Table 1](#)). The reason for this lies in the structure of the education system. The high number of Belgians graduated from higher education is probably linked to compulsory education up to the age of 18, which brings a large group of teenagers on the threshold of higher education.

The share of early school leavers has decreased within the last few years. While in 2000 12.5% of the population aged 18 to 24 had attained lower secondary education only, this figure dropped to 11.9% in 2004 ([see Table 2](#)).

02 - POLICY DEVELOPMENT - OBJECTIVES, FRAMEWORKS, MECHANISMS, PRIORITIES

0201 - OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

In the light of the European Youth Pact, the Belgian authorities have implemented measures to promote the integration of young people into the labour market. Initially, the aim was to upgrade technical and vocational education. Heavy investments were made in equipping the schools in question, and via specialised centres, which were set up by the employment services with various partners, high-tech equipment will be made available for education, both for pupils and for teacher training.

In *Flanders*, sandwich courses were bolstered by increasing the number of places available for work experience; this was done in consultation with the sectors and within the government itself. In addition, the 'full-time commitment' was introduced: pupils in part-time education must be able to gain work experience. For those pupils for whom no job can be found, a special course will be set up with additional training, support in applying for jobs and so forth. This commitment must be achieved in the short term for three quarters of these pupils.

The *French Community* and the *Walloon Region* have set themselves the goal of increasing the number of young people in part-time education by improving support and by expanding the system to include the government sector and large companies, thereby simplifying the coordination mechanism. A service has been set up that makes it possible to work with the same vocational standards for 1) the various training systems and 2) the system of recognising acquired skills. This service will also make it possible to strengthen links with the labour market. This will further enhance the readability and consistency of the training pathways.

Sandwich courses have also been bolstered in Brussels, with the *French Community* and the French Community Commission working on reinforcing connections with education and adult education.

The *German-speaking Community*, where sandwich courses are firmly rooted, has made plans to introduce an extra year of basic training before pupils can start alternating training.

The three Communities are also working on a fully fledged diploma for sandwich courses, which will finally be encouraged - starting with the 2006-2007 school year - by a federal bonus for both employers and pupils.

In order to promote the acquisition of work experience in addition to sandwich courses, the options for student work were expanded in 2006 and a website was set up for *Wallonia* and *Flanders* where potential interns and companies offering internships can find each other. Both websites will come on line in the autumn of 2006. A similar initiative will also be launched in *Brussels* and the *French Community Commissions* will fund internships for job-seekers linked to a training initiative or to studies in technical or vocational education.

Projects that meet social needs also contribute to the integration of young people into the labour market. The federal government has created extra starter jobs, including within the social economy. *Brussels* is also using starter jobs in the public sector, but is putting additional emphasis on training in order to achieve long-term integration within the sector or a flow to the private sector. *Wallonia* supports recruitment by SMEs and spin-offs by low-skilled school-leavers, in order to integrate them into the labour market and train them. *Flanders* is bolstering its approach to youth unemployment and job creation for young people in the social economy via a system of covenants with the inner cities, and

the *German-speaking Community* is working in close collaboration with the construction sector.

Within the framework of a more flexible labour market, entrepreneurship is also encouraged. The average Belgian has not yet sufficiently developed the reflex to create his own job by becoming self-employed. Accordingly, this has been given extra attention in education over the last year. For instance, pupils in the last three years of *French-language* secondary education learned about the business world through a visit by an entrepreneur and a government official. In *Flanders*, pupils were given the opportunity to draw up a business plan (there was even a competition) and the course materials for the certificate of business management were updated and made more interactive.

Training in entrepreneurship was also pursued after school. When beginning self-employment, young people can still receive the benefit allocated for job-seeking school-leavers and will be given longer support when they arrange a start-up loan. In addition, *Flanders* began systematically screening job-seekers for their entrepreneurial qualities and *Wallonia* solidified its pilot project, with job-seekers being given the opportunity to test out a project 'in real life conditions' within a protected environment.

In 2006, those young people who nevertheless end up unemployed have been given enhanced support by the employment services, which are able to reach nearly 100% of these young people before they have been out of work for six months.

Cooperation between the employment services of the Regions and Communities was significantly expanded in 2006. The exchange of job-seekers taking training courses in another Region was also enhanced. A special action plan was devised for *Brussels*. In that connection, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Regions, the aim being to ensure that the employment services' activities are much more consistent with each other. Both Communities are also investing in extra (career-oriented) language training and language courses in *Brussels*.

Brussels focused its training offering even more intently on bottleneck jobs; the employers' federations and other organisations were regularly consulted for their input. *Flanders* introduced a bonus to encourage training for bottleneck jobs and *Wallonia* developed a plan to better fill bottleneck jobs, consisting of analysing those jobs for which the supply of workers is inadequate, improving the detection of such jobs, screening job-seekers for their skills and developing a specific offering of training courses, the aim being to achieve the best individual match between supply and demand.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LESS-FAVoured GROUPS

Various groups are lagging way behind on the Belgian labour market. These include, in particular, the disabled, the unskilled, the long-term unemployed and migrants. In addition to guaranteeing equal access to all services, special actions were also undertaken by the employment services.

In *Wallonia*, these target groups have access to an integrated course and individual support for two years, which also continues after their integration into the labour market. In addition and more specifically, the fight against illiteracy was stepped up.

In *Brussels*, the employment service developed a partnership with various organisations in order to provide enhanced support for less-favoured groups. Accordingly, the unit that coordinates awareness-raising actions for businesses was bolstered.

Flanders is striving for the proportional representation of less-favoured groups on the labour market and is taking steps to rectify the exclusion of these groups within the

training provided by the employment service. In 2005, job-seekers who were migrants, work-disabled and unskilled were already positively represented in the courses provided for job-seekers, but the marked under-representation of people aged 50 and over increased.

In order to boost the low employment rate of people of foreign nationality or origin, action was taken through education and within the labour market. *Flanders* is paying extra attention to dealing with diversity within teacher training; an action plan on truancy was developed. In 2006, French-language education focused on bolstering lessons in French in the initial years of secondary education.

Special attention is also being paid to integrating into the labour market those individuals who live on a minimum (subsistence) income. The local social welfare services receive a subsidy when they offer an appropriate course of action to an individual who is entitled to the subsistence income.

MORE JOBS IN NEIGHBOURHOOD AND LOCAL ('PROXIMITY') SERVICES

The 'service cheque' system was further expanded in 2006, meaning that structural efforts to ensure financing are urgently needed. All employment services worked actively to channel job-seekers through this system. For instance, there are the service-voucher professions in *Flanders*. The service-voucher professions were introduced in the Flemish ironing shops for lesser-educated people and the long-term unemployed. The service voucher sector in *Flanders* has already got almost 30,000 people a job. VDAB is working hard to train people.

So, in the first half of 2006, VDAB arranged 700 training courses in the field of cleaning.

In September 2006 a mobile team has even been brought in to train new employees on the spot for the ironing sector.

The service voucher professions are practically bottle-neck professions.

Wallonia is organising special training and information sessions for (potential) service cheque workers. The *Brussels Region* also bolstered information on service cheques for job-seekers and the *German-speaking Community* encouraged enthusiasm for services cheques in the non-profit sector within the framework of streamlining the social economy sector.

MORE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EDUCATION AND RECOGNITION OF SKILLS FOR EVERYONE WHO PURSUES LIFELONG LEARNING

Within the framework of the open method of coordination for 'Education and Training 2010', the Communities pursued their efforts to guarantee equal access to education and to upgrade technical and vocational education. The *French Community* worked on implementing its sizeable reform plan that runs until 2013 by bolstering the Community foundation in secondary education. *Flanders* introduced a bonus system in order to put pressure on the cost of expensive courses of study.

The use of training cheques is enjoying growing success in the three Regions. For instance, *Brussels* expanded the use of training cheques for job-seekers going back to work, from language training to other areas, such as ICT. *Wallonia* increased the options for using training cheques, both for companies and for workers; it boosted its offering by establishing a special 'language cheque' and by increasing the number of cheques that a business can order. *Flanders* is working on adjusting the system in various ways, including on the basis of the conclusion that certain less-favoured groups, such as

unskilled individuals and people aged 50 and over, are significantly under-represented in the group of those people who make use of training cheques. In late 2005, *Flanders* decided to integrate various instruments in order to support businesses in various areas, including the co-financing of training costs. In doing so, support was more strongly geared to SMEs.

Efforts are also being made to streamline the training on offer. To this end, *Brussels* enhanced the synergies between the employment service and the organisations that offer training, especially those concentrating on specialist centres and based on a modular approach. In 2006, the first additional centre was started up in the ICT sector. In *Wallonia*, a few new centres were opened and the surrounding network was strengthened. *Wallonia* also developed a project whereby an introductory course for job-seekers in ICT and the Internet was organised at the skill centres.

To increase the transparency of the training on offer for workers, the social partners agreed to use a new measuring tool starting in 2006. It was also agreed to produce clear, unambiguous reports on sectoral training. This will be analysed in the autumn.

For job-seekers, training combined with work experience leads more easily to a job, which is why *Flanders* and *Wallonia* increased the number of work experience places. *Flanders* is also running experiments in cooperating with private firms (via deployment measures) and temporary work agencies to increase the efficiency and target group reach of work experience programmes. *Brussels* simplified the associated administrative procedure.

Formal recognition of acquired skills must be the final component in a solid policy on lifelong learning. Once the jobs had been defined and the standards established the first vocational skills certificates were issued in the *French Community*. Here, the aim is to give another 1,000 people access to the recognition procedure in 2006. *Flanders* will begin issuing certificates in the autumn.

INVESTING MORE IN KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION

In order to meet the Barcelona objective the Belgian authorities is determined to increase the investment in R&D in order for this to reach 3% of GDP by 2010.

For instance, centres of competitiveness or competency, combining businesses, training centres and public and private research bodies have been developed in the three regions. The *Walloon Region* has made an additional budget allocation for this measure of 280 million euros to be spread over the next four years, of which 120 million euros are for research projects in these centres. *Flanders* has increased the budget for the competence centres and strategic research centres by 13.75 million euros in 2006.

PRIORITY SPHERES OF ACTION

Belgium is guided by the objective of achieving a targeted approach to working life guaranteeing easy transitions to and within the labour market and making it possible to increase the participation of target groups that have been excluded from it.

In this respect the beginning and end of working life are the chief focus of attention; this is where the main challenges are posed for our country. This is why it is necessary to simplify the transition from school to work and to increase the average age of leaving the labour market.

To ensure efficient entry of young people into the labour market, the first necessity is to strengthen secondary education, in particular the subjects which have a direct bearing on

the labour market. With this in view, investments have been allocated for the period 2005-2006 to the basic infrastructures of the technical schools (*Flanders*: 30 million euros - *French-speaking Community* 25.7 million euros). *Brussels* (BCR) has, moreover, devoted a budget of 2 million euros (2005-2008) to support the investments of the two communities. Furthermore, sandwich training programmes have been strengthened; full time employment is carried out through the creation of specialised centres that benefit from a budget of about 40 million euros for the 2005-2008 period. *Brussels* (COCOF) is devoting 264,000 euros to the promotion of sandwich training courses and the German-speaking community is providing 2.68 million euros to fund the creation of sandwich training centres.

In addition, the increased help given to young job seekers through job pathway assistance by the employment services in order to offer them a new start at an early stage aims to simplify access to the job market. Additional efforts are also being made to give a new chance to the long-term unemployed, accompanied by a strengthened follow-up system. The staggered introduction of the system will necessitate the allocation of 375.5 million of additional resources for the 2005-2008 period.

Belgium subscribes to the principle of gender equality and for a better work-life balance. It therefore makes investments to increase childcare facilities; to create 13,000 additional places, 72.9 million euros will be invested (*Flanders*; 18.1 million euros, German-speaking Community 0.4 million euros, *French-speaking Community*: 54.4 million euros).

In order to make up for lost time on the labour market where disadvantaged groups such as the disabled, the unqualified, the long term unemployed, and immigrants lag behind, *Wallonia* favours continuous individualised counselling over a period of two years. 210 million euros have been earmarked for this purpose for the period 2005-2008. Alongside this, 6.2 million euros are allocated for combating illiteracy. The COCOF (*Brussels*) is also investing 1.2 million euros for this purpose. *Flanders* is dealing with a positive over-representation of disadvantaged groups by means of career pathway assistance provided by the employment service. However, no supplementary budget has been provided for this. *Brussels* has set up a unit charged with increased awareness-raising actions among businesses and has earmarked 2.4 million euros for this purpose. To complement these measures, the Regions support the preparation of diversity plans by businesses. The budget allocated is 11.5 million euros.

It frequently happens that the integration of groups that are marginalised from the Belgian labour market is made difficult by the high cost of labour. A new reduction in social security contributions is therefore needed. The total reduction of charges for the period 2005-2008 will amount to 16.5 million euros (or 15.5% of the total amount of contributions). The employment bonus will also be a financial incentive offered to workers in connection with their job search. The federal authorities are devoting 2bn euros for this measure (2005-2008).

In the context of an approach targeting careers, it seems essential to offer training opportunities. Only those who manage to develop their knowledge satisfactorily can keep and improve their chances on the job market. In order to finance this part of the programme, it is necessary not only for workers but also employers and the authorities to contribute. With this in view, the regions and the communities offer training vouchers; the budget for this amounts to 102.9 million euros for the period 2005-2008.

Employers for their part have committed themselves to contributing 1.9% of the total wage bill to the training of their workers. This comes to nearly 10.3 billion euros.

For validation, not only of the training followed but also of the work experience acquired, formal recognition is required. The necessary structures have been developed for this purpose, representing an investment for the period 2005-2008 of 14 million euros.

Table 1: A summarized table					
OBJECTIVE	BELGIUM		EU		CHANGE
	2004	2005	2004	2005	
The employment rate of the total population (aged 15-64) is at least 70%.	60.3	61.1	63.3	63.8	The increase is somewhat faster than EU average.
The employment rate of the female population (aged 15-64) is at least 60%.	52.6	53.8	55.7	56.3	The increase is somewhat faster than EU average.
The employment rate of older workers (aged 55-64) is at least 50%.	30.0	31.8	41.0	42.5	The increase is clearly faster than EU average, but the gap is still big.
The average retirement age, i.e. the time when workers leave the labour market, will be 62 years of age.	59.4		60.7		The Belgian retirement age is rising, unlike the EU average.
25% of the long-term unemployed take part in an active employment measure.	26.8	29.5 (estimate)			The objective is still being met, but the percentage is falling.
All unemployed	not for 10.1%	not for 16.2%		The objective is	

young people are offered an occupational integration contract before they have been out of work for six months.				still being met, with Wallonia and Brussels gradually keeping up with Flanders.	
All unemployed adults are offered an occupational integration contract before they have been out of work for 12 months.	not for 28.6%	not for 24.5%			The increase, owing to the focus on young people, must be reduced in the years ahead.
30.4	30.6 (estimate)			The catching-up movement is continuing, especially in the French Community.	
The level of school drop-outs is under 10%.	13.1	12.9	15.6		After a few years of upturn, the trend is now downwards.
85% of 20-24-year-old have successfully completed their secondary education.	82.1	80.3	76.6	76.9	Belgium is still above the EU average, but is not really approaching the objective.
12.5% of adults (25-64) take part in lifelong learning on a monthly ¹ basis.	8.6	8.4	9.4	10.6	The pace of increase seen in recent years seems to have come to a halt.
Annually, 1 out of 2 workers takes a training	39.5				There is still a long way to go.

course or receives training.					
The unemployment rate of people of non-Belgian nationality or origin will not be higher than that of Belgian workers ² .	difference 22.4%	difference 24.0%	difference 9.6%	difference 9.4%	The very large difference increased last year.

¹i.e. the average of the four reference weeks of the Labour Force Survey.

² In the table, a comparison is made between inhabitants who have eu nationality and those who have non-eu nationality.

Source: Lisbon Strategy – National reform Programme 2005-2008, Belgium : more growth, more jobs – Progress report 2006 – www.be2010.eu

03 - INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK - PROVISION OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

0301 - ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

Education is the responsibility of the linguistic communities (French-speaking, German-speaking and Dutch-speaking communities of Belgium) and is therefore organised in a decentralised way.

Table 1: Full-time and alternance vocational education and training	
AUTHORITIES	INSTITUTIONS
Community	School technical and vocational sections
	CEFA/CDO/TZUC and CAI
Region	IFAPME Centre/Syntra Vlaanderen IAWM
Region and Community	Joint Committee Employee and trade unions

Table 2: The 3 main pillars of continuing vocational training				
	SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT EDUCATION		TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT	ENTERPRISES OR SECTORAL INITIATIVES
OPERATOR	Schools of the 3 networks	Arbeitsamt IAWM	Le FOREM VDAB Bxl formation IFAPME Syntra Non-profit org.	Construction, AGORIA, , textiles, chemicals, graphic arts, CPNAE
AUTHORITIES	French Community Flemish Community	German- speaking Community	Walloon Flemish Brussels Cap. Reg Region Region French Community (non-profit org.)	Federal

CPNAE = Auxiliary national joint committee for white-collar workers)

The Regions are responsible for vocational training if it is closely related to employment (i.e. employment-finding, re-entry in the labour market, in-service training, etc. and is used as an instrument for an employment and economic expansion policy.

In addition to the management and funding of the public employment services, the Regions also have their own training support system. Usually, these measures imply that the Region picks up part of the training cost or pays a premium to companies that use the training programmes.

A number of community actions contribute to the vocational training policy in the form of education channels funded and organised by Communities. More specifically, this concerns:

- Continuing education, that chiefly targets employees, job-seekers and youngsters who have finished their full-time compulsory education; the aim is that they obtain a higher qualification than the one they already have and refresh their general knowledge;
- Second chance education that prepares people for the exams of the Examining boards of the Communities and that targets adults above the age of 18 who want to obtain their general or technical secondary education degree;
- Distance education (written education) that is organised by the Communities and entitles people to sit the exams of the examining boards of the Communities and 4) Initiatives of universities and colleges of higher education regarding life-long learning, particularly the organisation of courses outside normal working hours (evenings and weekends).

In Flanders the organisation of the Flemish administration has changed since the *Decree of 18 July 2003* (“ A BETTER ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY”: a stronger and more coordination) and has its impact on the main Flemish training institutions. The Flemish government determines the homogeneous political sectors or *departments*.

Now there are *13 ministries* with *13 departments* and *70 agencies* privatised either internally or externally and *90 coordinating entities*. The *Flemish Agency for Entrepreneur Education/Vlaams Agentschap voor Ondernemersvorming (SYNTRA Vlaanderen)* has now the official legal form of an *Externally Independent Agency*. Its aim is the development of general and vocational skills necessary to practice an independent profession. SYNTRA Flanders is assisted by the SYNTRA training network for self-employed workers and for small and middle-sized enterprises (SME's).

0302 - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Up until now 6 inter-professional agreements have been concluded in which the social partners play a leading role in employing and training risk groups: the social partners put the emphasis with regard to financing, and with regard to the educational package, etc... There are also regional regulations and measures with involvement of social partners such as an apprenticeship agreement and vocational training at the Flemish Independent Enterprise Institute in Flanders (Syntra Vlaanderen) and the Institute of continuing vocational training for the small and medium-size enterprises in Wallonia (IFAPME) (Modifications on the Decrees of 1991 for Syntra Vlaanderen and IFAPME) For VDAB there is the Flemish Economic and Social Consultative Committee (VESOC) – agreement, for FOREM (Wallonia): in Training plan – involvement Equipment fund for technical and vocational education;; training cheques (Wallonia and Flanders: Decree of the Flemish (14-11-2001) and Walloon Government (23-07-1998) on training cheques); support for the training in business (Wallonia); language cheques for Brussels training – education (Brussels Capital Region - September 1998). The social partners are represented in the management bodies by the above-mentioned training institutes: VDAB- FOREM , Syntra Vlaanderen- IFAPME.

The 6 inter-sectoral agreements (Inter-professional agreement of November 1988, Interprofessional agreement of December 1990, 1992, 1994, 1998 and 2000 and certain Royal Decrees on the national level deal with financing of training measures for risk groups. Federally there is also the Employment Fund that can also give the sector funds some financial support. Further more there is paid educational leave (recovering law of regional level there are leverage credits (Decree of the Flemish Government of 24-03-1998), the training cheques (Flanders and Wallonia).

About 100 (sub) sectors conclude their own sectoral risk group collective labour agreements. Besides that there are the sectoral educational funds which bring financial input. Educational funds can also conclude their own provincial CAO's on the regional level in addition to the national CAO's where additionally a certain percentage will be collected from employers of the province concerned. The regional governments especially the Flemish government are wishing to transfer the competences of paid educational leave, but the decision is up to the federal government and the national social partners. The amending law of 22 January 1985 deals with paid educational leave. It has replaced the former system of credit hours for continuing training of employees. This law has been last modified by the Royal Decree 1998 (access for workers in SME's)and the programme law of December 1999.

0303 - ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

At national level, the National Labour Council (NAR/CNT), and joint educational committees involved, are the negotiating authorities for vocational education and training in Belgium. Under the responsibility of the National Labour Council (NAR/CNT) in which the social partners are represented at the national level, the joint (equal representation from employer and employee organizations) education committees have a large package of tasks including the setting up of models of training programmes per profession.

For vocational training and training in Belgium the negotiating authorities are the NAR/CNT and the commissions involved. The CRB/CCI (Central Council for Industry) is the highest level advisory board of the federal government with regard to economic matters. The frameworks of the collective labour agreements (CAO's) is concluded in the National Labour Council (NAR). Regional Employer organisations in Flanders are:

- *Vlaams Economisch Verbond (VEV) - Flemish Economic Union;*
- *Unie voor Zelfstandige Ondernemers (UNIZO - regional) - Union of self-employed entrepreneurs, in Wallonia;*
- *Conseil Régional Economique Wallon (CREW) - Wallonian Regional Economic Council;*
- *Waalse Unie van Ondernemingen (UWE) - Wallonian Business Union;*

and in the brussels Capital Region:

- *Vereniging van Ondernemingen te Brussel (VOB) - Business Association of Brussels.*

Also advisory bodies in the regional area are a main platforms on regional level for consultation in vocational and educational matters.

Since the economic federalisation of 1970 regional advisory and consultative bodies were also set up: the Social Economic Council for Flanders (SERV) the Wallonian Regional Economic Council (CREW), the Regional Economic Council for Wallonia (CESRW), the Brussels Regional Economic and Social Council (CESRBC) and the Economic and Social Council of the German-speaking Community (WSR) which set up the occupation structures and occupation profiles. These councils advise on all important social and economic matters for which the Communities or Regions are qualified and gives each year - obligatory - its opinion on the budgetary policy. They are also a platform for consultation for the social partners also what concerns vocational educational training. UNIZO works actively in Flanders and participates in the occupational and information bank of the SERV.

There are also three large employees unions in Belgium: ACV/CSC (Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond - Confédération du Syndicat Chrétien) - the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions, ABVV/FGTB (Algemeen Belgische Vakvereniging - Fédération Générale du Travail de Belgique) - the Belgian Federation of Trade Unions and the ACVLB/CGSLB (Algemene Centrale voor Liberale Vakverenigingen in België - Centrale Générale du Syndicat Libérale en Belgique) - the Federation of Liberal Trade Unions in Belgium. They defend the rights of their members on the national, regional and interprofessional level and are categorized according to the regions, sectors, workers or employees that they represent.

For the employers this is at national level the VBO/FEB (Verbond van Belgische Ondernemingen/Fédération des Entreprises de Belgique) - the Federation of Belgian Businesses which acts as an umbrella organisation for numerous federations which group employers from a certain sector. The gap between the educational level on the one side and finding suitably qualified personnel on the other has obliged the federal government to involve even more social partners in this. The national consultative process between employers and employees in Belgium as well as the 174 joint committees and sub-committees, forms one of the most important characteristics of the Belgian social consultative process. The basis for the sectoral training policy for risk groups was established in the interprofessional or intersectoral agreements at the end of the eighties. The basis for the sectoral training funds consists of the intersectoral and sectoral collective labour agreements (CAO's). Up until now 6 interprofessional agreements have been concluded in which the social partners play a leading role in employing and training risk groups: the social partners put the emphasis with regard to financing, and with regard to the educational package, etc.

Regional regulations and measures with involvement of social partners such as an apprenticeship agreement and vocational training at the Flemish Independent Enterprise Institute in Flanders (VIZO) and the Institute of continuing vocational training for the small and medium-size enterprises in Wallonia (IFPME).

For VDAB training there is the Flemish Economic and Social Consultative Committee (VESOC) – agreement; for FOREM (Wallonia): Training plan – involvement Equipment fund for technical and vocational education; furthermore there are the training cheques (Wallonia and Flanders); support for the training in business (Wallonia); for Brussels training : the language cheques (Brussels Capital Region). The social partners are represented in the management bodies by the above-mentioned training institutes.

The social partners are also responsible for equipment funds for technical and vocational education (Wallonia); - final qualifications (training and educational programmes in Flanders); action plan 'reappraisal of Technical and Secondary Education (Flanders) and the enhance the curriculum content of the education (Flanders).

The sectoral social partners and the Social Economic Council of Flanders (SERV) and the Wallonian Regional Economic Council (CERW) are taking the initiative in setting up new vocational structures and vocational profiles and qualifications.

Finally the social partners are involved in the preparation of new qualifications through advising on the training package.

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

In the context of the Belgian annual employment action plans that are drawn up in pursuance of the European guidelines, the social partners determine what contributions the companies need to pay for training. A general agreement is a global commitment that will not be uniformly realised sector per sector in terms of amount, nor stipulations. As a result, the rules and the performance of the training contribution suppose that on sector level (or in case of the lack there of on company level) agreements are reached that meet the specific nature of the companies of every sector with respect of the general orientation laid down centrally.

Collective bargaining agreements determine the contribution of the companies as well as the broad outlines of the sector, both for the aspect of life-long learning and for the aspect of the risk groups. This system allows companies to join the training programmes that were put together in light of the needs and specific nature of the sector.

Generally speaking, the co-operation between the social partners and the government is an essential element of the employment policy of the regions, particularly concerning the evaluation of the training needs of companies and drawing up training programmes in order to meet these needs better.

Apart from the funding of sectoral training, companies are taking an increasingly active part in the vocational training policy:

- Making sure the courses are in keeping with the specific needs of companies is an essential modern-day challenge and formulas that need to make the training offer more flexible are encouraged.;
- Collective bargaining agreements reached on company level may result in the implementation of a sectoral agreement and in case of no collective bargaining agreement on sector level, they may result in the direct implementation of provisions laid down centrally (particularly concerning the undertaking regarding risk groups).

Many sectors let support depend on the realisation of a training plan by the companies with a view to optimising the training contribution. The cooperation between the federal government and the social partners takes place in different ways. The government can ask for advice directly from the social partners; they can also set up advisory bodies in which the social partners are represented. The initiative can also be given to the social partners themselves when they, for example, are entrusted with the implementation of a training system.

Finally the social partners can also be involved in the preparation of Bills which deal with technical and vocational training. The social partners are involved in the following way in education (in training institutions, sectoral training funds,...) :

- via the vocational structures and profiles on which the training and the content are based;
- via giving advice on the package
- via recognition of training (for example by sectoral training funds)- by giving tailor-made training (through sectoral training funds).

There is tripartite consultation between the social partners, the community authorities and the educational field/educational institutions. The Educational Authority is the competent body to set up training and educational programmes. The social partners are involved in the following way in training and education via their representation in the management of training institutions (VDAB / FOREM and Syntra Vlaanderen / IFAPME) via sectoral training funds. The social partners are involved in the preparation of new qualifications through advising on the training package. Besides national action plans, intersectoral agreements have been concluded in which the social partners play a leading role in employing and training risk groups: the social partners put the emphasis with regard to financing, and with regard to the educational package, etc... Until now 6 interprofessional agreements have been concluded. The regional governments wished the transferation of paid educational leave.

04 - INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

0401 - BACKGROUND TO THE IVET SYSTEM AND DIAGRAM

[Diagram on the Belgian VET system](#)

ORGANISATION OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM: THREE MAIN LEVELS BASIC EDUCATION

- Pre-school or nursery: three years from the age of 2 ½ to 5 (NB – almost all children attend school from the first year of nursery education)
- Primary: 6 years from the age of 6 to 12.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

Secondary education, from the age of 12 to 18, includes three two-year cycles:

- an initial common (*gemeenschappelijke*) (Flemish Community) or foundation (*observation*) (French Community) cycle;
- a second cycle where education is organised in four streams: general, technical, art and vocational;
- a third two-year cycle (sometimes three years – a seventh class of secondary education is added – especially in the Flemish Community).

In theory there are bridges between streams; in practice, transition generally takes place in one direction: downwards as a result of failure. From the age of 15/16, students can attend alternance education (see Section 2.2). *Special education*, taking the form of eight types of education, is available for children and adolescents with physical, mental or instrumental disabilities. It is organised at primary and secondary levels. At the secondary level, students are prepared for social-occupational integration. *Pupil assessment* takes place within the class. Primary teachers are educators, assessors and judges. At secondary level, assessment and guidance are the task of the *Conseil de classe* (Class council) made up of the school's principals and class teachers.

Pupils obtaining the Certificate of Upper Secondary Education (*Certificat d'enseignement secondaire supérieur* - CESS) may enter higher education (university and non-university). In the Flemish Community, this certificate is called a "*diploma*".

HIGHER AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Higher non-university education is of the short type when it includes one three-year cycle (*graduat*) and, of the long type, when it has two cycles over four or five years. High Schools are organised in eight streams (in the French Community) and 11 disciplines (in the Flemish Community). High Schools of the long type award *candidatures* and *licences* in the same way as universities. Higher education of the short type is geared towards the practical and prepares students directly for working life. The long type leads to advanced scientific and/or technological qualifications. Graduates holding the various types of higher education qualification are in competition and it would seem that those with qualifications from short higher education are better placed to find jobs.

Universities: University education has three cycles:

- Cycle 1: *candidature* (two or three years), a qualification which opens the door to university cycle 2 or non-university higher education of the long type.
- Cycle 2: *licence* (two or three years with submission of a dissertation), a qualification which opens the door to working life.
- Cycle 3: *doctorate* (several years with the submission of a thesis which is defended in public).

It is possible to move between the various types of higher education (short, long, university) subject to specific conditions. Universities have an information and guidance service, but High Schools do not.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SECONDARY EDUCATION

While most young people attend technical and vocational streams, these streams have less standing than general education. 15.2% of young people aged between 18 and 24 have left the education system after the initial cycle of secondary education.

ALTERNANCE EDUCATION

Alternance education accounts for a minority of young people: from the age of 15/16 after attending two years of secondary education.

It is organised in three ways:

- the alternance education and training centres (*Centre d'éducation et de formation en alternance – CEFA*) in the French Community, *Teilzeitunterrichtszenter* in the German-speaking Community and *Centrum voor Deeltijds Onderwijs - CDO* in the Flemish Community. Students attend two days of classes at the centre per week and spend three days in an enterprise. In the 2000/01 academic year, 5 734 young people were attending this kind of education in the Flemish Community and 6 046 in the French Community, i.e. 4 to 5% of pupils in technical and vocational secondary education;
- the industrial apprenticeship contract (*contrat d'apprentissage industriel – CAI*) or *contrat d'apprentissage* (apprenticeship contract) for workers in employment;
- apprenticeship organised for the 'middle classes', i.e. self-employed occupations (with practical training, in trade skills, commercial training and training for service occupations). CEFA and CAI populations are levelling off after a period of growth; the numbers of young people under "middle classes" contracts vary in different regions. Various conventions (employment-training and socio-occupational integration) have enlarged the alternance training population (up to the age of 25) and led to

- comparable or similar pay for young people with contracts under the three formulae (CEFA, CAI, 'middle classes') in the three Communities.

0402 - IVET AT LOWER SECONDARY LEVEL

Secondary education, like primary education forms part of compulsory education. Full-time education may last until the age of 18 or combine full-time education until 15/16 with part-time education from 15/16 to the age of 18. Secondary education consists of three stages lasting two years each.

In general, children are aged 12 when they enter secondary education. They can begin their first year of secondary education if they have obtained their certificate of primary education.

Parents can freely choose their child's school. Access to compulsory education is free of charge and the costs of some school materials are borne by the educational providers. Nevertheless some items of expenditure are borne by parents, including swimming pool admission costs, purchase of the class tasklist, and expenditure linked to cultural and sports activities.

Secondary education institutions offer 28 to 32/34 lesson periods, each lasting 50 minutes, per week and in some cases up to 36 periods where practical worked linked to vocational training is involved. Classes are theoretically organized by age group and subject. However, due to pupils repeating a failed year, classes often include pupils of different ages.

Each organizing body is free to select the teaching methods of its choice within the limits of the key stages and core skills to be achieved by the end of cycle 1 of secondary education and the final skills required at the end of secondary education.

In lower secondary education, a compulsory common curriculum for the first two years (observation cycle) is primarily intended to provide individual pupils with a broad basic education, enabling them to acquire all the skills they require at their own rhythm. This common curriculum includes the following subjects: religion or ethics, mother tongue, mathematics, history and geography, a foreign language, sciences, physical education, technology, artistic education.

In cycle 1 an additional year is organized for pupils who are seriously lagging behind. This additional year can not under any circumstances be regarded as the equivalent of repeating the previous year.

For pupils who have experienced difficulties in primary school, a first B year with a specially adapted curriculum is organized. This special year concerns around 7,5% of pupils in the first year of secondary education. The objective is to restore pupils' self-confidence and, if necessary, to enable them to come to terms with school and to consolidate their basic knowledge. After the first B year, pupils can either enter first A or second year of vocational education, enabling them to become acquainted with at least two vocational sectors.

0403 - IVET AT UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (SCHOOL-BASED AND ALTERNANCE)

Pupils who leave full-time education at the age of 15/16 have to remain in block release training (based on sandwich course arrangements), or undergo apprenticeship or training until they reach the age of 18.

Pupils aged 16 (or those aged 15 who have completed two years of secondary school) may embark on technical education or block release training (sandwich courses), or training covered by the period of compulsory schooling. At this level, education is free (subject to the above-mentioned conditions relating to full-time education) and parents may choose the school or other institution their child attends.

The management of institutions involved in block release training are responsible for their curricula. Courses for pupils receiving this kind of provision combine general education with preparation for employment. Apprentices receive practical three or four times a week, and on other days attend practical or vocational theoretical classes.

Block release training is recognized and may result in the award of a certificate equivalent to the one obtained at the end of full-time schooling. Apprenticeship leads to a "vocational aptitude" certificate and/or a certificate of apprenticeship awarded on the basis of continuous assessment and a final examination. The teaching staff decide which students can receive these qualifications.

In *cycle 2* of the *transitional stream* (general education), in addition to the core education, a certain number of compulsory options may be selected from the following : a second modern language, Latin, Greek, economics, social science, technical and technological education, physical education or art.

In *cycle 3* of the *transitional stream* (general education), an education system incorporating integrated themes (sciences, modern languages, physical education, classics, economics, human sciences, art) or combining options was introduced at the start of the 1993/1994 school year.

In *cycles 2 and 3* of the qualification stream (technical or vocational education), in addition to general education, groups of options representing 17 to 25 periods a week in cycle 2 and 23 to 25 periods a week in cycle 3 are organized.

The group options organized within the framework of technique de transition courses, technique de qualification courses and vocational courses cover the following ten areas : agronomy, industry, construction, hotel and catering, clothing, applied arts, fine arts, economics, social services and applied sciences.

CERTIFICATION

The certificates are awarded by the individual schools.

Since the start of the 1997/1998 school year, a certificate of secondary education - cycle 2 - is awarded to pupils who have successfully completed cycles 1 and 2.

In the technical and vocational categories of type I education, a certificate of qualification is awarded at the end of the sixth and seventh years (CQ6 or CQ7).

A certificate of upper secondary education is awarded to all pupils who successfully complete the sixth year of secondary education in the general and technical categories.

In the vocational category, pupils who opt for a seventh year (type B or C) may apply for a certificate of secondary education.

The certificate of secondary education is ratified by the Homologation Committee, which ensures that schools respect the regulations on the organization of education.

These certificates are not obtained on the basis of examinations separate from the overall assessment procedures as defined within the education institution. They are

awarded to pupils who have regularly attended and successfully completed the course they chose to follow.

STUDENTS IN UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION BY PROGRAMME ORIENTATION

Comments for Table

If all forms of VET are considered together, approximately 56% of all young people in upper secondary education are in post-compulsory VET (see Table 1). There are regional differences between the Flemish Community (61%) and the French-speaking and German-speaking Community (50%).

Table 1: Full time students in upper secondary education by programme orientation, 2003 ¹					
	TOTAL	VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES		GENERAL AND PRE-VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES	
		total	%	total	%
European Union 25	18 700 379	8 689 700	46	10 010 679	54
Belgium	514 370	287 454	56	226 916	44

¹ ISCED 97, level 3

Source: Eurostat, UOE; NewCronos, release date 29/06/2005

0404 - APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

A) PART-TIME EDUCATION

Under the Law of 29 June 1983 on compulsory education, part-time compulsory education was introduced in 1984 for young people who have either reached the age of 15 and have already had two years of secondary education or who have already reached the age of 16. Pupils who no longer wish to follow full-time education can study on a part-time basis in a centre for part-time education. Part-time education is a form of lower- or upper-level vocational secondary education. It consists of both general education (including social and personal development) and preparation for employment. Part-time education leads to an attendance certificate, and may also lead to a qualification certificate equivalent to the certificate awarded for full-time study.

B) APPRENTICESHIP

Apprenticeship is a recognized form of part-time compulsory education. It is available to 15-year-olds who have successfully completed two years of general secondary education or vocational secondary education, or have passed an entrance examination, or to 16-year-olds. The institutions which are responsible for the organization of apprenticeship for the middle classes are : Syntra Vlaanderen in the Flemish Community, IFAPME in the French Community and IAWM in the German-speaking Community.

Apprenticeship lasts for one to three years. There are theoretical and vocational training courses. Apprenticeship contracts may be concluded for occupations related to commerce, trade, small industries, craftsmanship and non-manual occupations in the

services sector. According to the apprenticeship contract, a monthly minimum salary is paid to the apprentice by the head of the firm on a progressive basis.

A new project of *SYNTRA FLANDERS/VLAANDEREN* started in 2006 and is called: Making Young People More Entrepreneurial Through Attractive Training Materials with SABIEN (Successful Apprenticeship Building on ICT and Entrepreneurial Needs).

Those working with young people (aged 15 – 19 years old), in particular young people who have experienced disadvantage and have had negative educational experiences, will be aware of the need to employ alternative approaches to the delivery of education and training. Furthermore, there is a need to recognise the strengths of young people and to build on such strengths.

The SABIEN Project [1] is a transnational partnership with representation from education and training organisations from seven European countries. SABIEN supports the development of new training modules that link social and life skills to personal and entrepreneurial competencies for young people in apprentice training, on alternative education programmes or on vocational training courses. In order to motivate young people and to develop their social and (soft) entrepreneurial skills (further), the focus of SABIEN has been to consider the quality and relevance of course materials and training methodologies for socially oriented educational courses.

C) INDUSTRIAL APPRENTICESHIP

In 1983, apprenticeship in occupations exercised by salaried workers were recognized under the "industrial apprenticeship". This type of apprenticeship is intended for young people, aged between 16 and 21, with a poor school record, who have lost interest in attending school. Practical training may take place in several firms successively and theoretical training is provided in school. The apprentice receives an allowance, a percentage of the minimum wage in the chosen sector, from the head of the firm. The apprenticeship leads to a vocational aptitude certificate.

D) EMPLOYMENT-TRAINING AGREEMENT

Set up in 1986, this type of training is available to all young people between the ages of 18 and 25 who are seeking employment, and do not already possess a diploma of long or short higher education or university education, or of technical upper secondary education. The agreement is signed by the young person and the employer and lasts for a minimum of one year or a maximum of three years. This agreement includes a contract for part-time work of indeterminate duration and training.

E) SOCIO-OCCUPATIONAL INTEGRATION AGREEMENT

Under this agreement there is alternance between training in enterprise and theoretical training given by a CEFA/CDO. It is targeted at students in part-time compulsory education and students regularly registered in a CEFA/CDO prior to 31 December of the year in which they reach the age of 18. The agreement lasts 12 months but may be renewed in order to enable students to complete their training cycle (2 or 3 years). Theoretical training and practical training may not exceed 38 hours per week. Students receive pay from the enterprise equivalent to 40% of the guaranteed minimum wage in year 1, 50% in year 2 and 58% in year 3, unless the joint commission decides to align pay with the minimum wage in the industry.

F) EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT

Students enrolled in Dual Vocational Education and Training Centres and apprenticeship contracts for Independent professions to fulfil their part-time scholastic obligation may also enrol in education for social advancement.

[1] Funded by the EU Leonardo da Vinci Programme

0405 - OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

Successive governments have launched many measures to help low-skilled young people and the long-term unemployed. Many of these initiatives involve a training element.

At federal level, the first-job agreement ("Convention de Premier Emploi - CPE") took effect on 1st April 2000.

The objective of this measure is to offer young people, at the earliest possible stage, a job and vocational training in conformity with European employment guidelines designed to prevent them from sinking into unemployment and to round off their educational training with vocational skills essential for their lasting integration in the labour market.

Characteristics : the employers targeted are public-sector employers (obliged to employ young people to comprise at least 1,5% of their workforce) and private-sector employers (obliged to employ enough young people to make up 3% of their workforce, in the case of businesses with at least 50 employees). The target groups are firstly, young people aged from 18 to under 25 who ceased attending courses or participating in employment integration measures within the preceding six-month period; secondly, job-seekers aged under 25; thirdly, job-seekers aged under 30.

In the Walloon Region, the Institute of Part-Time Training, the Self-Employed and Small and Medium-Sized-Enterprises (IFAPME) was set up by the Decree of the Walloon Government of 17 July 2003.

The training courses organized by the IFAPME provide for the acquisition of the general and vocational knowledge required to practise a self-employed occupation.

Since the Royal Decree of 1984, apprenticeships have been recognized as meeting the needs of compulsory part-time education up to the age of 18, as specified in the Law of 29 June 1983 on compulsory education.

Plan Jeunes + (Youth programme) is part of a Cooperation Agreement between the State, the Communities and the Regions concerning the integration of young job-seekers via a first job contract. The general aim of this programme is to prevent long-term unemployment and to enable job-seekers under the age of 25 to join the job market within 3 months of leaving school. From the first meeting, an adviser from Le FOREM's careers assistance service helps the young person to identify his or her needs and choose a career direction. They make a mutual commitment by signing an employment integration agreement. A careers assistance adviser supports the young person throughout his or her time on the programme.

Programme de transition professionnelle (Professional Transition Programme). This programme is part of a Cooperation Agreement between the Federal State and the Regions. It has three objectives. It aims to meet collective needs that have not, or only marginally, been dealt with within the regular labour market system in the non-market sector, to give people who are poorly qualified or have only average skills the opportunity to get a job and finally, to encourage the reintegration of these people into the labour market through the professional experience gained throughout this scheme,

supplemented by vocational training linked to the PTP employment contract and individual support from the Le FOREM adviser. It is a full-time commitment for the adviser and for those benefiting from the PTP programme to develop skills and qualifications that can be applied to an ordinary job.

Pathways to integration. These pathways are part of a scheme fulfilling an ESF requirement aimed at a global concept of the processes of hosting, guidance, advice, monitoring, training, job-seeking and employment. The integration pathways are arranged in stages, which are not necessarily successive, since some training strategies combine several approaches. these pathways comprise different components in Wallonia and Brussels.

Characteristics : a number of actors are involved in creating and sustaining these pathways.

The aim of this approach is to offer support to all young people aged under 25 within three months of their leaving school without upper secondary qualifications. They will also benefit from specific measures designed to improve their chances of labour market integration, particularly in the context of a first-job agreement. Specifically, young job-seekers in the target group are invited to visit the relevant regional employment service before the end of the third month of registration as a job-seeker. An integration agreement is concluded with the young persons concerned, taking account of what they specifically need in order to obtain a first-job agreement.

PROVIDERS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR PEOPLE WITH A LOW-LEVEL OF QUALIFICATIONS (NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS)

A distinction must be made between actors in the field of socio-occupational integration in the Brussels region and those in the Walloon Region.

Actors providing education/training intended for poorly qualified people have multiplied in a difficult economic environment in which youth unemployment rates are particularly high. The various bodies have their own specific features. Increasing efforts have been made to coordinate the various initiatives.

In addition to and supplementing "traditional" institutional training providers, the association sector has developed a number of training centres primarily aiming at socio-occupational integration measures and providing training experience through work. These measures aim to give access to a vocational qualification and gainful employment, covered by social security.

Socio-occupational integration mechanisms are designed for all poorly qualified people (those not holding a certificate of upper secondary education) who have no job, are available for work and are actively seeking employment.

0406 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT POST-SECONDARY (NON TERTIARY) LEVEL

For upper secondary school and college graduates there are a number of post-secondary, non-university education pathways in Belgium.

0407 - VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT TERTIARY LEVEL

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

Professional Bachelor's programmes are, in the first place, professionally oriented and their objective is a general and specific knowledge level for the student as well as competences which are necessary for the independent practice of a profession or group of professions. As such a professionally oriented Bachelor's programme provides direct entrance onto the job market.

The main objective of *Academic Bachelor's programmes* is the transition to a master's programme. Their objective is a general knowledge level as well as the acquisition of competences specific to scientific or artistic functioning in general and competences for a specific scientific or artistic domain especially. For these programmes entrance onto the job market is a secondary objective.

Master's programmes aim for an advanced knowledge level as well as for competences specific to scientific or artistic functioning in general and competences for a specific scientific or artistic domain especially, which is a prerequisite for the autonomous practice of sciences or the arts or for the use of this scientific or artistic knowledge for the independent practice of a profession or group of professions.

Some Bachelor's programmes follow another (professionally oriented) bachelor's programme. This advanced programme aims at the deepening or specialization of the competences acquired during the initial Bachelor's programme.

Some Master's programmes follow another master's programme.

Bachelor's programmes link up with secondary education. As a rule, master's programmes link up with (academic) Bachelor's programmes. Master's programmes can also be accessible for professionally oriented bachelors after successful completion of a bridging programme.

A *bridging programme* is organized for graduates wishing to enrol in a master's programme on the basis of a Bachelor's degree issued through professional higher education.

In case a student does not hold a degree which allows for direct access to the programme he/she wishes to enrol, a *preparatory programme* can be imposed.

University colleges can offer professional Bachelor's programmes or in association with a university academic Bachelor's and Master's programmes in following areas of study:

- Architecture
- Audiovisual and Plastic Arts
- Biotechnology
- Health Care
- Commercial Sciences and Management
- Industrial Sciences, Technology, and Nautical Sciences
- Music and Dramatic Arts

University colleges can offer professional Bachelor's programmes in following areas of study:

- Education
- Social-Agogic work

University colleges can offer only in association with a university academic Bachelor's and Master's programmes in following areas of study:

- Applied Linguistics
- Product Development

The general objective of long-type tertiary education: to provide scientific and technological training geared more directly for practical applications.

The general objective of short-type tertiary education consists of a programme that provides technical training designed to acquire an occupational skill in a specific field.

Short-type tertiary education courses (agriculture, economics, paramedical, and educational, social and technical sciences) are provided as part of education for social advancement. Long-type education in industrial chemistry, electricity, electro-mechanics, and electronics are also offered.

05 - CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ADULTS

0501 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The main differences between initial vocational education and training (IVET) and continuing vocational education and training (CVET) lie in the ages of the learners and their previous educational attainments.

CVET has a long history in Belgium, dating back to the 19th century.

In the past 50 years, the development of CVET has been characterised by the involvement of the national (and then later in 1980's) federal and regional governments as well as by employer and union associations.

There are various types of CVET in Belgium

- Publicly promoted CVET for all (cf. 0502):
- CVET as an instrument of active labour market policies (cf. 0503)
- CVET at the initiative of enterprises and social partners (cf. 0504)
- CVET at the initiative of the individuals (cf. 0505)

CVET PROVIDERS

A training provider is any agency offering courses or work experience periods for an adult public. Associations take the form of a whole range of non-profit-making institutions, whose common feature is that they work in direct contact with an adult population with

few qualifications who are experiencing problems, including their occupational integration. Continuing vocational training includes initiatives by:

- enterprise (employers' training see scheme), authorities (training for civil servants),
- social advancement education, individuals such as workers in employment, jobseekers or people on the minimum income (Minimex)].

SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT EDUCATION

With its more than 600 or so different training schemes, its flexible organisation and its moderate enrolment fees, social advancement education (enseignement de promotion sociale - EPS / onderwijs voor sociale promotie - OSP) is the largest operator: 251.000 adults in the Flemish Community and 150.000 adults in the French Community (2001/2002). Together with secondary and higher education, social advancement education is the only agency able to award recognised qualifications. It is organised at the same levels as secondary and higher education and offered on a part-time basis. Social advancement education involves a whole range of partnerships with the public and private sectors. Since 1991, training has been organised on a modular basis.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Training and employment services as VDAB - Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding (Flemish Office for Placement and Vocational Training) in the Flemish Community and for Dutch-speakers in the Brussels Region and FOREM - Office wallon de la formation professionnelle et de l'emploi (Walloon office for vocational training and employment) in the Walloon Region and Bruxelles-Formation (Bxl-F) - (Brussels-Training) for French-speakers in the Brussels Region are responsible public institutions for training of employees and jobseekers. The Arbeitsamt der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft (Employment Office of the German-speaking Community) has been responsible since January 2000 for placement in the German-speaking Community.

The middle classes institutions (IFAPME – Syntra Vlaandereren – IAWM) also organise two-year training schemes for people who want to set up their own businesses and become the head of an SME, as well as modular continuing and further training schemes for heads of enterprise.

These public institutions are managed on a joint basis by the social partners (employers' and trade union organisations) under the supervision of the Region concerned.

In Flanders the organisation of the Flemish administration has changed since the *Decree of 18 July 2003* (" A BETTER ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY": a stronger and more coordination) and has its impact on the main Flemish training institutions. The Flemish government determines the homogeneous political sectors or departments.

The *Flemish Agency for Entrepreneur Education/Vlaams Agentschap voor Ondernemersvorming (SYNTRA Vlaandereren)* has now the official legal form of an *Externally Independent Agency*. Its aim is the development of general and vocational skills necessary to practice an independent profession. SYNTRA Flanders is assisted by the SYNTRA training network for self-employed workers and for small and middle-sized enterprises (SME's).

SECTORAL INITIATIVES

At the outset, three sectors played a significant role: construction, Agoria (formerly Fabrimetal) and textiles. Growing numbers of initiatives have been launched in recent years in chemicals, printing industries, temporary work agencies, insurance, gas, electricity, wood industries and by the Commission paritaire nationale auxiliaire pour employés - CPNAE / Aanvullend Nationaal Paritair Comité voor Bedienden - ANPCB (Auxiliary national joint commission for white-collar workers).

CPNAE/ANPCB's members include more than 5 000 enterprises in several areas of activity. Under sectoral agreements, it has launched the ambitious formula of a personal right to vocational training: two days per year, per employee, the content being decided by the employer. This has paved the way for training in very dynamic and booming small enterprises (54% of member enterprises).

Other training schemes:

- for disabled people - Cooperation between VDAB and the Flemish Fund for Social Integration of disabled people.
- for jobseekers - The CA/COISP - Centres d'accueil, d'orientation et d'initiation socio-professionnelle (Reception, Guidance and Socio-Occupational Integration Centres) for jobseekers are an integral part of FOREM and Bruxelles-Formation.
- Distance learning (Begeleid individueel studeren, BIS) - a growing scheme in the Flemish Community.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Lifelong learning - Access to learning

More equal opportunities in education and recognition of skills for everyone who pursues lifelong learning

Equal opportunities in education

Within the framework of the open method of coordination for 'Education and Training 2010', the Communities pursued their efforts to guarantee equal access to education and to upgrade technical and vocational education. The French Community worked on implementing its sizeable reform plan [1] that runs until 2013 by bolstering the Community foundation in secondary education. Flanders introduced a bonus system in order to put pressure on the cost of expensive courses of study.

TRAINING AND RECOGNITION OF ACQUIRED SKILLS

The use of training cheques is enjoying growing success in the three Regions. For instance, Brussels expanded the use of training cheques for job-seekers going back to work, from language training to other areas, such as ICT. Wallonia increased the options for using training cheques, both for companies and for workers; it boosted its offering by establishing a special 'language cheque' and by increasing the number of cheques that a business can order. Flanders is working on adjusting the system in various ways, including on the basis of the conclusion that certain less-favoured groups, such as unskilled individuals and people aged 50 and over, are significantly under-represented in the group of those people who make use of training cheques. In late 2005, Flanders

decided to integrate various instruments in order to support businesses in various areas, including the co-financing of training costs. In doing so, support was more strongly geared to SMEs.

Efforts are also being made to streamline the training on offer. To this end, Brussels enhanced the synergies between the employment service and the organisations that offer training [2], especially those concentrating on specialist centres [3] and based on a modular approach. In 2006, the first additional centre was started up in the ICT sector. In Wallonia, a few new centres [4] were opened and the surrounding network was strengthened. Wallonia also developed a project whereby an introductory course for job-seekers in ICT and the Internet was organised at the skill centres.

To increase the transparency of the training on offer for workers, the social partners agreed to use a new measuring tool starting in 2006. It was also agreed to produce clear, unambiguous reports on sectoral training. This will be analysed in the autumn.

For job-seekers, training combined with work experience leads more easily to a job, which is why Flanders and Wallonia increased the number of work experience places. Flanders is also running experiments in cooperating with private firms (via deployment measures) and temporary work agencies to increase the efficiency and target group reach of work experience programmes. Brussels simplified the associated administrative procedure.

Formal recognition of acquired skills must be the final component in a solid policy on lifelong learning. Once the jobs had been defined and the standards established, the first vocational skills certificates were issued in the French Community [5]. Here, the aim is to give another 1,000 people access to the recognition procedure in 2006. Flanders will begin issuing certificates in the autumn.

[1] - The "Schools Contract".

[2] - Including the services of both Communities which manage public vocational training services.

[3] - Called the "reference centres" in Brussels.

[4] - Called the "skills centres" in Wallonia.

[5] - Implementing a cooperation agreement between the French Community, the Walloon Community and the French Community Commission in Brussels.

0502 - PUBLICLY PROMOTED CVET FOR ALL

The responsibilities for publicly promoted CVET are divided among the federal government, the communities and the regions.

Continuing vocational training includes initiatives by:

- enterprises (employers' training schemes),
- authorities (training for civil servants),
- social advancement education,

individuals [workers in employment, jobseekers or people on the minimum income (Minimex)]

SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT

The social advancement education (*enseignement de promotion sociale - EPS /onderwijs voor sociale promotie - OSP*) is the largest operator.

Together with secondary and higher education, social advancement education is the only agency able to award recognised qualifications. It is organised at the same levels as secondary and higher education and offered on a part-time basis. Social advancement education involves a whole range of partnerships with the public and private sectors.

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- FOREM - *Office wallon de la formation professionnelle et de l'emploi* (Walloon office for vocational training and employment) in the Walloon Region.
- VDAB - *Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding* (Flemish Office for Placement and Vocational Training) in the Flemish Community and for Dutch-speakers in the Brussels Region.
- Bxl-F - *Bruxelles-Formation* (Brussels-Training) for French-speakers in the Brussels Region.
- the *Arbeitsamt der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft* (Employment Office of the German-speaking Community) has been responsible since January 2000 for placement in the German-speaking Community.

These public institutions are managed on a joint basis by the social partners (employers' and trade union organisations) under the supervision of the Region concerned.

MIDDLE CLASSES (IFAPME - SYNTRA VLAANDEREN – IAWM)

The Middle Classes also organise two-year training schemes for people who want to set up their own businesses and become the head of an SME, as well as modular continuing and further training schemes for heads of enterprise. Increasing numbers of people are attending

these training schemes, especially in the Brussels Region.

SECTORAL INITIATIVES

At the outset, three sectors played a significant role: construction, Agoria (formerly Fabrimétal) and textiles. Growing numbers of initiatives have been launched in recent years in chemicals, printing industries, temporary work agencies, insurance, gas, electricity, wood

industries and by the *Commission paritaire nationale auxiliaire pour employés - CPNAE / Aanvullend Nationaal Paritair Comité voor Bedienden - ANPCB* (Auxiliary national joint commission for white-collar workers). CPNAE/ANPCB's members include 5 000 enterprises in several areas of activity. Under sectoral agreements, it has launched the ambitious formula of a personal right to vocational

training: two days per year, per employee, the content being decided by the employer. This has paved the way for training in very dynamic and booming small enterprises (52% of member enterprises).

OTHER TRAINING INITIATIVES

- Training schemes for disabled people.
- Training schemes in agriculture.
- Distance learning is declining in the French Community

0503 - TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHERS VULNERABLE TO EXCLUSION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

The main actors involved in the training for unemployed people are training centres, i.e. VDAB in the Flemish Region, FOREM in the Walloon Region, and the "Bruxelles-Formation in the Brussels Capital Region (see 0502).

STEP-IN TRAINING FOR RAPID EMPLOYMENT AFTER TRAINING IN FLANDERS

As of 1 September, 2005, job seekers and *low skilled school leavers* can go straight into a step-in training. They must have followed a training or have been in compulsory education in the previous four months. The Flemish Government decided this in accordance with the proposal made by the Minister of Employment and Education. Step-in trainings are *attractive* for the *employer* (the RVA (Rijksdienst voor Arbeidsvoorziening – National Service for Work Provision) pays most of the wages for the first two months) and for the job seeker (after the step-in training he or she must be given an employment contract).

TARGET GROUPS

Step-in trainings are possible for:

- *job seekers* after having taken a professional training lasting a minimum of 400 hours (regardless of age);
- *low skilled school leavers* with a maximum diploma of first degree ASO (Algemeen secundair onderwijs – General Secondary Education), second degree technical, professional or art secondary education, the training of the self-employed, part-time professional secondary education, alternating professional education or extraordinary secondary education, and for
- *youths who have attained a diploma of technical or professional education.*

The longer that job seekers and school leavers remain unemployed, the further away they get from what they have learned. Employers are therefore less interested in them, even for job vacancies with too few candidates. The Flemish government and the social

partners want to *approach this problem via step-in trainings*. This was already agreed at the start 2005 in the Flemish Employment Opportunity agreement. This has been made possible via the Youth Unemployment plan (2004) set up by the federal Minister of Employment.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LESS-FAVOURED GROUPS

Various groups are lagging way behind on the Belgian labour market. These include, in particular, the disabled, the unskilled, the long-term unemployed and migrants. In addition to guaranteeing equal access to all services, special actions were also undertaken by the employment services.

In Wallonia, these target groups have access to an integrated course and individual support for two years, which also continues after their integration into the labour market. In addition and more specifically, the fight against illiteracy was stepped up.

In Brussels, the employment service developed a partnership with various organisations in order to provide enhanced support for less-favoured groups. Accordingly, the unit that coordinates awareness-raising actions for businesses was bolstered.

Flanders is striving for the proportional representation of less-favoured groups on the labour market and is taking steps to rectify the exclusion of these groups within the training provided by the employment service. In 2005, job-seekers who were migrants, work-disabled and unskilled were already positively represented in the courses provided for job-seekers, but the marked under-representation of people aged 50 and over increased.

In order to boost the low employment rate of people of foreign nationality or origin, action was taken through education and within the labour market. Flanders is paying extra attention to dealing with diversity within teacher training; an action plan on truancy was developed. In 2006, French-language education focused on bolstering lessons in French in the initial years of secondary education.

0504 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF ENTERPRISES OR SOCIAL PARTNERS

FLEMISH COMMUNITY: SPECIFIC POLICY IN SUPPORT OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

1. Exemption of training cost for some employees

To encourage companies to improve the qualifications of certain groups of employees, the VDAB sometimes pays the training of these employees. However, during the training period, the company may not dismiss the employee and must continue to pay him. This measure is aimed at employees belonging to risk groups as well as employees whose employment is directly threatened by an individual resignation, a collective dismissal or a company reorganisation.

2. Exemption of training cost in favour of small and medium-sized enterprises

For small and medium-sized enterprises, the VDAB applies a degressive exemption of the training cost in light of the number of employees. In some cases (companies with less than 10 employees) the training cost is paid in full by the VDAB.

3. Investment support: Training vouchers and the former Vlamivorm

Vlamivorm's goal was to encourage investments in vocational training and comprises a reduction of the advance levy on property for companies who are able to prove they have

gone to great lengths to train their staff. The benefit needs to be used for vocational training programmes of employees (internal or external training). In 2000, more than 24,000 employees in Flanders came into consideration for the measure in the context of the vocational training programmes.

4. Training and advice vouchers incorporated into the Budget for Economic Advice (BEA)

As from 22 May 2006, in Flanders, advice and training vouchers have been incorporated into the Budget for Economic Advice (BEA) and two new subsidy options added, namely mentorship and knowledge acquisition in Flemish knowledge centres. Support of up to 5,000 euros per business can be applied for, for a period of three years. The business pays for 65% of the service itself and the Flemish government makes up the remaining 35%. In February 2006, Brussels launched a study to chart the support structures available for businesses.

FRENCH – SPEAKING COMMUNITY SPECIFIC POLICY IN SUPPORT OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Training-integration programme (PFI).

The PFI remains one of FOREM Conseil's most successful initiatives. The principle is simple: with this service, a company can provide an unemployed person with on-the-job training, and in exchange, take advantage of reduced labour costs for the duration of the training period. The implementation of the PFI is geared towards a practice that is really in tune with the needs of Le FOREM's clients, and is meant as a truly "tailor-made" service, conditioned by the specific relationship between a company, a job-seeker and Le FOREM.

Training Vouchers for small and medium-sized enterprises

Training vouchers should be viewed in a system of vocational training funding by the Region in favour of small and medium-sized enterprises with less than 50 employees. These vouchers can be used as an instrument of payment at the recognised training centres and are offered to the companies in question at a lower price than the nominal value of the voucher.

Encouraging the collective reduction of working hours in the company

For a number of companies, a reduction of working hours implies an in-depth reorganisation of the work which may warrant the use of vocational training programmes.

Support in the establishment, expansion and the reconversion of a company

The decree of the Walloon government dated 3 June 1993 specifies a support system to companies who want to give a training to their staff following the establishment, expansion or reconversion of a company.

Regional level: Brussels, Occupational transition grant

This grant is given to small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) who hire long-term unemployed people with a contract for an indefinite period. At all times, an in-house vocational training needs to be provided which must be approved by the Brussels Regional Service for employment (ORBEM/BGDA) and an in-house vocational training agreement needs to be reached (Royal Decree no. 495).

Voogdijsteun (Guardianship support)

This concerns a guardianship agreement between the company, the employee in training and the ORBEM/BGDA. In pursuance of this agreement the guardian supervises the integration and training of the employee in the company.

Individual training in a company

This measure implies a training agreement between a company and the ORBEM/BGDA regarding the training of a job-seeker for the specific needs of a company provided that a shortage exists of qualified personnel for these jobs (offered by the company) and the ORBEM/BGDA does not provide a suitable training. The agreement stipulates a certain training programme that is monitored by the ORBEM/BGDA

COMMENTS ON THE TABLE

According to the second CVT Survey, around 70% of all Belgian enterprises provided any type of continuing vocational training to their employees in 1999 (see Table 1).

Table 1. Training enterprises as % of all enterprises, by size class (1999)				
	Total (%)	SIZE CLASS (NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES)		
		10 to 49 (%)	50 to 249 (%)	250 or more (%)
EU-25	61	56	80	95
Belgium	70	66	93	100

Note: 'Training enterprises' are enterprises that did provide any type of continuing vocational training to their employees

Source: Eurostat, NewCronos, 2nd Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS2)

0505 - CVET AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Individual adults have different motivations to engage in CVET activities. Both job-related and non-job-related motives are of relevance and often hard to distinguish.

According to the report "Lifelong learning, citizens' views in close-up" (CEDEFOP - 2005), motivations to take part in education and training tend to be of a mixed nature. The source of decision to participate in education and training is extrinsic for a majority of respondents. Personal benefits outweigh work-related benefits. Compared to initial motives, the benefits that people draw from their training are more likely to be personal.

06 - TRAINING VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

0601 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN VET

In Belgium education and training is provided in various types of schools and education centres.

Workplaces in IVET and CVET include:

- School for secondary education including technical/vocational education (FL: School voor secundair onderwijs; W: Ecole secondaire)
- Centre for part-time education (FL: Centrum voor deeltijds onderwijs, CDO; W: Centre d'Education et de Formation en Alternance,
- School for special education (FL: School voor buitengewoon onderwijs; W: Ecole d'enseignement special)
- Centre for adult education (FL: Centrum voor volwassenenonderwijs, CVO; W: Centre d'éducation des adultes)
- College of higher education (FL: Hogeschool; W: Haute école)
- Training center (FL: Opleidingscentrum 'Syntra'; W: Centre de formation PME)
- In-company training (FL: Bedrijfsopleiding; W: Formation en entreprise)
- Jointly managed training centre (D: Opleidingscentrum in gemeenschappelijk beheer; F: Centre de formation en gestion commune)
- Profit organization (FL: Profit organisatie; W: Organisation à but lucratif)
- Non-profit organization (FL: Non-profit organisatie ; W: Organisation à but non lucratif)
- Centre for Vocational training (FL: Centrum voor beroepsopleiding ; W: Centre de Formation Professionnelle)
- Within these schools and education centres the types and level of education provided include:
- Lower technical secondary education (FL: Lager technisch secundair onderwijs; W: Enseignement secondaire technique inférieur)
- Upper secondary technical education (FL: Hoger technisch secundair onderwijs; W: Enseignement secondaire technique supérieur)

- Lower vocational secondary education (FL: Lager beroepssecundair onderwijs; W: Enseignement secondaire professionnel inférieur)
- Upper vocational secondary education (FL: Hoger beroepssecundair onderwijs; W: Enseignement secondaire professionnel supérieur)
- Complementary vocational education (FL: Aanvullend beroepssecundair onderwijs; W: Enseignement professionnel secondaire complémentaire)
- Special secondary education (FL: Buitengewoon secundair onderwijs; W: Enseignement spécial)
- Part-time education (FL: Deeltijds onderwijs; W: Enseignement secondaire en alternance)
- Social advancement education (FL: Onderwijs voor sociale promotie; W: Enseignement de promotion sociale)
- Block release education for apprenticeship or entrepreneurship (FL: Alternerend leren via leertijd of in ondernemersopleiding; W: Formation en alternance des indépendants et des petites et moyennes entreprise - IFARME)
- Adult vocational training and guidance (FL: Bedrijfsopleidingen voor volwassenen; W: Formation et orientation professionnelles pour adultes)
- Training for independent entrepreneurs and for small & middle class enterprises (FL: Opleiding voor zelfstandige ondernemers; W: Formation des indépendants et pour les petites et moyennes entreprises)
- Training in agriculture (FL: Permanente vorming in de landbouwsector; W: Formation professionnelle en agriculture)
- Sectoral training initiatives (N: Sectorale vormingsinitiatieven; F: Initiatives de formation sectorielles)
- Training in the profit and non-profit sector (D: Vorming in de profit en non-profit sector; F: Formation dans des associations à but lucratif ou sans but lucratif)
- Training for disabled people (FL: Beroepsopleidingen voor personen met een handicap; W: Formation professionnelle pour personnes handicapées)

The table below offers an general overview of the various categories of teachers and trainers in IVET and CVET according to the type and level of education as well as their place of work.

Table 1: various categories of teachers and trainers in IVET and CVET according to the type and level of education as well as their place of work		
TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET	TYPES AND LEVELS OF EDUCATION	WORKPLACE
REGULAR EDUCATION		
General subject teacher (FL: Leraar algemene vakken; W: Professeur de matières générales) Technical subject teacher (FL: Leraar technische vakken; W: Professeur de matières techniques) Practical teacher (FL: Praktijkleraar; W: Professeur de cours pratiques/ d'atelier)	lower sec. technical education	School for secondary education
	lower sec. vocational education	
	upper sec. technical education	
	upper sec. vocational education	
	complementary vocational education	School for special education
	special sec. education	
	part time education	Centre for part time education
Teacher (FL: lector; W: chargé de cours) Practical teacher (FL: praktijk- lector; W: maître de formation pratique)	one cycle higher education	College of higher education
NON-REGULAR EDUCATION		
Teacher (FL: lesgever; W: formateur)	block release education for entrepreneurship or apprenticeship	Training centre
Entrepreneur-trainer (FL: ondernemer-opleider ; W: patron-formateur)		In-company

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

The main difference between Belgian VET teachers and VET trainers is their workplace. Generally spoken, teachers are employed in IVET and trainers are employed in CVET. This distinction is linked to the distinction between regular and non-regular education. In Belgium, most teachers are employed in regular education while trainers are employed in the non-regular system.

Differences between VET teachers and VET trainers in terms of entry requirements, professional experiences and background and qualifications can be reduced to the difference between regular and non-regular education. In regular education entry requirements and qualifications are defined by the Ministries of Education.

In non-regular education, entry requirements and qualifications are not defined by the Ministries of Education. Every type of education belonging to the non-regular education system has its own regulations. An overall discussion is not possible because of the lack of uniformity.

DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES FOR VET TEACHERS, VET TRAINERS AND OTHER LEARNING FACILITATORS REGULAR EDUCATION

1. Foundation of colleges of higher education

The pre-service training of secondary education teachers is provided at three types of institutions: colleges of higher education, centres for adult education (social advancement education) and universities.

Scaling-up by mergers has been in recent years one of the main developments affecting institutions offering teacher education programmes, especially colleges of higher education. As a matter of fact a few years ago all formal higher teaching education institutions have been integrated in the newly formed colleges of higher education.

Recently the debate on setting up a unified structure for teacher education provisions, integrating all types of teacher training was re-opened.

2. Increase in funds allocated to teachers' in-service training

As to the in-service training in recent years, there has been a marked increase of funds allocated.

In order to give more responsibility to the schools and enable them to work out a continuing teacher education policy that fits their needs, in Flanders 60% of funds have been redirected, from the different umbrella organisations in regular education, to the schools.

In Wallonia participation in continuing teacher education has even become an obligation.

NON-REGULAR EDUCATION

Re-structuring of apprenticeship and entrepreneurship training

Recently, both in Flanders and Wallonia, the organisation of the training provisions for apprenticeship and entrepreneurship has been restructured.

The two main tracks in non-regular education are the in-service training provisions offered in the para-regional bodies in the field of adult vocational training and guidance

(VDAB [1] and LE FOREM [2]) and the in-service training offered by regional or local training centres co-ordinated by the institutions (Syntra Vlaanderen [3] and IFAPME [4]) working in the field of apprenticeship and the training for independent entrepreneurs and for small & middle class enterprises. In Flanders the management of the provisions have been relocated at provincial level, where a Syntra-network organisation supervises and streamlines the provisions at local and regional level.

In French speaking Belgium, the para-regional body IFAPME has recently been split up in a Walloon body and one for the Brussels region.

Innovations in curricula and learning

Modularisation is an important topic in current innovation debate in the non-regular education system.

Besides, developing e-learning strategies is becoming a key issue for programme designers. E-learning is being implemented in many new programmes according to a blended learning format.

The role of teachers and trainers has changed and become more complex in many regards: professional skills and pedagogy, guidance of young people, cooperation with colleagues, cooperation with local industry, international cooperation, communication with parents and society as a whole.

The teaching profession has undergone dramatic changes in recent years and the role of education has become wider, more complex and more difficult. Belgium is turning more and more to education for help in solving its major social problems. Together with this evolution teachers feel themselves as not appreciated. A major campaign "Re-appreciation of teachers" was launched by the Ministry of Education to promote the teachers and the teaching job.

Different roles apply according to the place of employment, in the regular or the non-regular education system.

In IVET (regular education), the role of teachers in the educational system is closely linked to the increasing autonomy of schools. In Flanders for example, the Ministry of Education only formulates 'developmental objectives and final goals (this means the core curricula for primary, secondary and adult education and for initial teacher training). Schools have a great autonomy in the organisation of their education, on the condition of reaching the developmental objectives and final goals, which is subject of evaluation by the Inspectorate. The curricula are mostly developed by the different umbrella organisations. Teachers are responsible for the chosen pedagogy and they draw up the examinations. Deliberation of the students is under the authority of the class council.

In Wallonia, the organisation of a campaign aimed at the re-appreciation of teachers was decided in June 2002 (see Action Plan against the shortage of teachers by Rudy Demotte, former Minister of Secondary and Special Education and Pierre Hazette, former Minister of Culture, Budget, Civil Service, Youth and Sports).

The role of trainers in the CVET system (non-regular education) is difficult to describe. Due to the lack of uniformity in CVET, every organisation has other roles for their trainers. The influence of trainers on curriculum, pedagogy and quality assessment varies from organisation to organisation. Nevertheless, there are some global tendencies in CVET, concerning the role of trainers. Firstly, every CVET-organisation emphasises the professional development of trainers. Secondly, every CVET-organisation promotes the participation of trainers in policy development (through representation in sectoral

commissions). And finally, the different curricula and the examinations for the students are mostly developed in close co-operation with the relevant sectors.

[1] VDAB - *Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding* (Flemish Office for Placement and Vocational Training)

[2] FOREM - *Office wallon de la formation professionnelle et de l'emploi* (Walloon office for vocational training and employment)

[3] Syntra Vlaanderen - Flemish Agency for Entrepreneurial Training

[4] IFAPME - *Institut wallon de formation en alternance et des indépendants et petites et moyennes entreprises* (Institute for Vocational Training of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises)

0602 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET

In Belgium IVET is provided in various types of schools and training centres. Most of these schools and training centres belong to the educational provisions for children and young people in the age from 12 till 18 years. Only the "block release training for self-employed operators and small and medium-sized enterprises" and the "industrial apprenticeship" do not resort under the "regular" educational system.

In the table below a distinction is made between regular and non-regular education. The "industrial apprenticeship" however is not listed in this table because it is categorized as CVET under the stream "sectoral training initiatives".

Table 1: General overview of the types of teachers and trainers in IVET according to the type and level of education, as well as their place of work		
TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN IVET	TYPES AND LEVELS OF EDUCATION	WORKPLACE
REGULAR EDUCATION		
General subject teacher Technical subject teacher Practical teacher	lower sec. technical ed.	School for secondary education
	lower sec. vocational ed.	
	upper sec. technical ed.	
	upper sec. vocational ed.	
	complementary vocational ed.	
	special sec. education	School for special education
	part time education	Centre for part time education
Teacher - Practical teacher	one cycle higher education	College of higher education

NON-REGULAR EDUCATION		
Teacher	block release education for apprenticeship and entrepreneurship	Training centre In-company
Entrepreneur-trainer		

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING FOR IVET TEACHERS

A distinction must be made between the training of teachers for the regular education system and for teachers in the other systems of vocational education.

In the non-regular educational systems, there is no particular structure for IVET teacher training; in the regular educational system, an elaborated structure for the training of teachers is in place. However, depending on the type of qualification pursued, one can follow different training formats in order to become a teacher within the regular educational system.

IN-SERVICE, CONTINUING TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR IVET TEACHERS

Again one must distinguish provisions for teachers working in the regular education system from provisions in the non-regular educational system.

Again one must distinguish provisions for teachers working in the regular education system from provisions in the non-regular educational system.

REGULAR EDUCATION SYSTEM

There are no particular regulations for in-service training of IVET teachers: the same regulations apply for the whole regular education system.

In Flanders in-service teacher training is ruled by the Decree on teacher education and continuing education (16-04-1996). The Decree states that the organising authority (network) of the school in which the teacher works, is also responsible for supporting all the teachers in their quest for further professionalism. It breaks with the traditional supply-driven in-service training.

The general principles are:

- increase responsibility of schools;
- decrease of centralised, supply-driven training;
- more demand driven;
- promoting active participation and reflective behaviour.

Four categories of in-service training are identified:

- required by schools;
- on the initiative of the umbrella organisations from the education networks;
- commissioned by the Flemish government;
- free market.

Although in-service training can be considered as voluntary based, school principals can put some pressure on their teachers to attend in-service training programmes, but there is no legal obligation for teachers to participate. Attending in-service does not lead to any advantages with regard to salary, but may have some influence on appointment for some particular jobs within the school (special educational tasks; FI: bijzondere pedagogische taken f.e. remedial teaching, mentorship, counselling, drug prevention).

The contents of in-service training can be anything in the domain of a specific subject knowledge, educational theory, classroom management, school management and administration.

Recently, new ideas have been developed with regard to subjects, based on the teacher's needs of professional development. Schools today have local autonomy in choosing in-service training. Each school gets a budget allocated for in-service training and need to identify its own needs. They can deal directly with all in-service training providers including the network specific in-service training centres.

As for the in-service training commissioned by the Flemish government, this enables the authorities to promote and straighten their policy making with regard to some educational innovations. Each year a tender with some particular in-service training subjects is launched to all institutions willing to provide in-service training financed by the government.

After a selection procedure a number of in-service training programmes are made available to the target groups free of charge. Last years the Flemish government promoted subjects in the field of caring for well being at school.

During the period 1997 to 2003 financial resources for in-service teacher training were gradually increased until the starting budget was doubled.

Besides the in-service training regulated by the Decree mentioned above, the Flemish government also finances a project concerning the use of ICT in education.

IVET teachers can participate in multinational exchange programmes under the same conditions as under teachers can do (LINGUA, ARION, ERASMUS, LEONARDO)

The following interesting study tackles a wide range of issues on continuing teacher education in Flanders:

Vandenberghe, R. (2002). Nascholing in Vlaanderen: beleidsinstrument voor professionele ontwikkeling van leerkrachten Secundair Onderwijs. [Continuing education in Flanders: policy instrument for the professional development of secondary education teachers?]. Tijdschrift voor Onderwijsrecht en Onderwijsbeleid, 4, 299-319.

In Wallonia in-service teacher training is regulated by:

- the Decree on in-service teacher training in regular and special secondary education adopted on 11-07-2002 and modified on 17-12-2003.
- the Decree of 16-07-1993 (published in the "Moniteur Belge" 19-10-1993) regarding continuing training of staff of regular secondary education.

- the Decree of 11-07-2002 (published in the "Moniteur Belge" 31-08-2002) regarding continuing training in special education, in regular secondary education and in psycho-medical centres.

The following main general principles are stipulated:

- in-service training is organised at supra education network level, at education network level and at institutional level;
- participation is partly compulsory (6 half days each 3 consecutive years of service) and partly voluntary (unlimited);
- each school year (September) all teachers draw up their own in-service training planning taking into account the programmes offered;
- an evaluation system is put in place with regard to the in-service courses offered.

The same Decree launches the Institute for in-service training (W: Institut de la Formation en cours de carrière, *IFC*) with following duties:

- organising in-service training courses at supra education network level;
- evaluation of the in-service training courses;
- look after the coherence of the in-service training courses offered by the providers;
- promoting an lifelong learning culture among school principals.

A similar yearly tender system as in Flanders has been put in place enabling providers to offer particular in-service courses according to the specifications stipulated in the tender. The whole procedure is managed by the IFC.

Also the network specific in-service training centres are providing courses.

Subjects tackled can be anything in the domain of a specific subject knowledge, educational theory, classroom management, school management and administration. However, recent new subjects include competency based learning, new assessment methods and use of portfolio.

Special attention should be paid to the CAPAES (the Certificate of teaching qualification at higher education level).

The training leading to the CAPAES is provided at universities (for the candidates holding a university degree), colleges of higher education offering 2 cycle economy degrees (for candidates graduated in this type of college) and institutes offering social advancement education at higher education level (for all other types of candidates).

This in-service training includes three elements:

- Theoretical courses (120h): socio-political (30h), psycho-social (30h) and educational subjects (60h)
- Practical training (90h): analysis of practice, professional development, guided and supervised teaching practice
- Professional portfolio.

Obtaining the CAPAES is compulsory for new teachers and practical teachers in colleges of higher education. Teachers and practical teachers (not holder of any teaching qualification certificate) appointed before February 1999 or before September 2002 (holder of another type of teaching qualification certificate) are free to enrol in the programme.

A salary bonus is offered to those holding the CAPAES.

For further information, see "Activity Report - September 2004" (downloadable : <http://www.ifc.cfwb.be>)

The training leading to the *certificate of teaching competence at higher education level (CAPAES)* - "certificat d'aptitude pédagogique approprié à l'Enseignement Supérieur " includes theoretical courses (120 hours) : socio-political courses (30 hours), psycho-social courses (30 hours) and educational courses (60 hours).

See the *Decree of 17 July 2002* describing the CAPAES and its requirements to obtain it in French (downloadable : <http://www.enseignement.be/prof/espaces/sup/capaes.asp>)

As their Flemish counterparts, Walloon IVET teachers can participate in multinational exchange programmes under the same conditions as under teachers can do (LINGUA, ARION, ERASMUS, LEONARDO).

NON-REGULAR EDUCATION SYSTEM FLANDERS

In the regional or local training centres providing block release education, periodic continuing training courses are organised for teachers, according to the following:

- Teachers with an annual teaching load of at least 480 hours are required to undergo at least 24 hours of continuing training every three years;
- Teachers with an annual teaching load of at least 240 hours are required to undergo at least 12 hours of continuing training every three years;
- Other teachers can undergo this continuing training on a voluntary basis, provided that their numerical presence does not necessitate additional training courses.

The training is organised by *Syntra Vlaanderen* [1] and *IFAPME* [2] in co-operation with one or more training centres and is delivered in three hours modules. Its coverage is integrated, extending to both pedagogic and subject-specific matters. The training staff members are required to have the necessary educational or professional qualifications.

Participants are awarded a certificate of attendance at the end of the course.

In addition to this, entrepreneur-trainers are also urged to participate in training sessions organised by the respective responsible vocational committee of Syntra Vlaanderen and IFAPME in order to update their vocational knowledge and technical background.

WALLONIA

Teachers are obliged by law to attend the meetings for teachers, as well as courses organised in order to update their pedagogical skills necessary for the educational practice. These meetings and educational and vocational skills update programmes are organised on a regular basis. However the number and duration of these update programmes are variable.

Teachers and trainers are also obliged to update themselves on the techniques and the vocational knowledge necessary to get access to the vocation. The same requirements also hold when teachers or trainers want to maintain their teacher's or trainer's job.

[1] Syntra Vlaanderen - Flemish Agency for Entrepreneurial Training

[2] IFAPME - *Institut wallon de formation en alternance et des indépendants et petites et moyennes entreprises* (Institute for Vocational Training of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises)

0603 - TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET

In Belgium there is no general framework for continuing vocational training. The drop-out rate from secondary education and the employment crisis have urged the authorities to set up new training provisions besides the traditional main stream opportunities available in the regular education system.

To make clear how CVET has been structured, one needs to make a distinction between different types of education and training schemes:

- Social advancement education (FL: Onderwijs voor sociale promotie; W: Enseignement de promotion sociale) ;
- Adult vocational training and guidance (FI: Bedrijfsopleidingen voor volwassenen, VDAB; W: Formation professionnelle pour adultes, LE FOREM)
- Training for independent entrepreneurs and for small & middleclass enterprises (FL: Middenstandsopleidingen; W: Formation Permanente pour les classes moyennes et les petites et moyennes entreprises) ;
- Training in agriculture (FL: Permanente vorming in de landbouwsector; W : Formation professionnelle en agriculture et secteur connexe) ;
- Sectoral initiatives (FL: Sectorale initiatieven; W: Initiatives de formation sectorielles);
- Training in the profit and non-profit sector

Training for disabled people (FL: Training ter bevordering van de sociale integratie van personen met een handicap; W: Formation à l'avancement de l' integration des personnes handicapées).

- Distance education (FL: Afstandsonderwijs; W: Enseignement à distance, EAD)

The table below offers an general overview of the types of teachers (regular education) and trainers (non-regular education) in CVET according to the type and level of education, as well as their place of work.

Table 1: A general overview of the types of teachers (regular education) and trainers (non-regular education) in CVET according to the type and level of education, as well as their place of work		
TYPES OF TEACHERS AND TRAINERS IN CVET	TYPES AND LEVELS OF EDUCATION	WORKPLACE
TEACHERS (REGULAR EDUCATION)		
General subject teacher Technical subject teacher Practical teacher	1. social advancement ed. (upper sec.) 1. social advancement ed. (higher ed.)	Center for adult education
Practical subject teacher General subject teacher	3. training for independent entrepreneurs and for small & middleclass enterprises	Training center
TRAINERS (NON-REGULAR EDUCATION)		
Instructor	2. adult vocational training and guidance	Training center
Workplace trainer	3. training for independent entrepreneurs and for small & middleclass enterprises	In-company
Trainer	4. training in agriculture	Jointly managed training center
Trainer Training staff	5. sectoral initiatives	Jointly managed training center
Trainer or instructor Training staff	6. training in the profit and non-profit sector	Profit organization Non-profit organization
Trainer or instructor	7. training for disabled people	Center for vocational training

1. SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT EDUCATION

Social advancement education (FL: Onderwijs voor sociale promotie; W: Enseignement de promotion sociale) employs general subject teachers, technical subject teachers as well as practical teacher. They work at Centres for adult education (in Flanders 124 such centres are operating, in Wallonia 165).

2. ADULT VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND GUIDANCE

In Belgium there are two main institutions (two para-regional bodies) providing adult vocational training and guidance: the '*Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling*' (VDAB) in Flanders and the '*Office Wallon de formation professionnelle et de l'emploi*' (LE FOREM) in Wallonia. Trainers employed by these institutions are practical subject trainers, technical subject trainers or workplace trainers. They are all called instructor (VL: instructeur; W: instructeur). They are active in the regional training centres (14 centres in Flanders and 10 centres in Walloon).

At the end of 2003, VDAB has 968 instructors in service, 57,4 % of them are male and 42,6% are female. LE FOREM has at the end of 2003, 538 instructors in service. (Figures about the age distribution aren't available).

The activities of VDAB and LE FOREM are regulated by decree and management agreements with the government.

VDAB-instructors are recruited through a 'comparative recruitment examination'. This examination includes:

- assessment of the theoretical and general knowledge
- test lesson (optional)
- psychological test

A selection commission is appointed to conduct these examinations. Experts from the concerned field are invited as commission members.

3. TRAINING FOR INDEPENDENT ENTREPRENEURS AND FOR SMALL & MIDDLE-SIZED ENTERPRISES

The training for independent entrepreneurs and for entrepreneurs of small & middle-sized enterprises takes place in regional or local training centres, called "Syntra" in Flanders and "Centre de Formation PME" in Wallonia. All together there are 22 Syntra and 14 Centres de Formation PME.

The global outlining of all vocational training packages and the quality control of the services offered at the regional or local centres belongs to the duties of two para-regional bodies, namely: Syntra Vlaanderen in Flanders and IFAPME -in the Walloon region.

The training for independent entrepreneurs and for entrepreneurs of small & middleclass enterprises can be divided into two separate streams:

- The education and training to become an independent entrepreneur (usually 2 years). With respect to content this educational and training provision runs parallel with the "block release education for apprenticeship" also organised by these centres. Minimum age required for involvement into this programme is 18 year.

- Short in-service training modules for independent entrepreneurs and their collaborators.

In the first stream, the regional or local centres employ teachers for the coaching in general education and technical knowledge courses (organised in the centres) as well as workplace trainers who work on an in-company training basis (workplace practice).

In the second stream the coaching mainly is in hands of independent entrepreneurs working in the vocational field, or - when it is necessary to outline innovative aspects of a vocation - the best known experts in the sector are hired to introduce the innovation to the independent entrepreneurs in the sector.

4. TRAINING IN AGRICULTURE

In Flanders, the training for people working in agriculture is co-ordinated by the Flemish Agricultural Centre (FL: VAC - Vlaams Agrarisch Centrum). This centre organises courses within the Flemish area in order to reach as many persons as possible working as independent farmer. All the training programmes organised by the centre are approved by the Ministry of Flanders - section: Administration Agriculture and Horticulture (FL: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap - Administratie Land- en Tuinbouw - ALT).

In Wallonia, the situation differs from Flanders. Because of the lack of a co-ordinating centre in the field of agriculture, trainers and/or training centres must candidate for approval from the Walloon Ministry for Employment (F: Ministère de l'Emploi de la Région Wallonne) in order to get financial support for organising the training in agriculture.

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING FOR CVET TEACHERS

Contrary to what applies for teachers in social advancement education, there is no particular educational structure for training CVET teachers or entrepreneur-trainers employed in block release education.

However, the admission requirements offer some indications about training possibilities for CVET teachers leading to a job appointment in a regional or local training centre.

In Flanders the teachers pursuing employment in this type of education, have to fulfill the following requirements:

- Being holder of an appropriate educational qualification (e.g. a certificate of lower secondary education, a certificate of teaching competence, a higher education degree);
- Demonstrate the necessary work experience.

Walloon teachers who seek employment in the training centres, co-ordinated by IFAPME must demonstrate the necessary work experience. Furthermore a distinction is made between general subjects and vocational subjects teachers.

Flemish teachers who intend to be employed at the training centres, co-ordinated by VIZO, have to fulfil the following requirements:

- Be in the possession of an appropriate educational qualification (e.g. a certificate of lower secondary education, a certificate of teaching competence, a higher education degree);
- Demonstrate the necessary work experience.

IN-SERVICE, CONTINUING TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR CVET TRAINERS AND LEARNING FACILITATORS ADULT VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND GUIDANCE

1a. The Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Service - VDAB

The training for new VDAB instructors is organised in a modular approach including 6 training modules (2 intro modules and 4 specific modules). The two intro modules are compulsory; the 4 specific modules are optional for experienced instructors but compulsory for beginning instructors. However, a beginning instructor with a pedagogical certificate and/or pedagogical experience can be exempt from the specific modules.

The technical in-service training courses are organised in close collaboration with the different labour sectors.

1B. The Walloon vocational training and employment office - LE FOREM

LE FOREM's trainer training unit, 'Formation des formateurs' provides continuing vocational training for beginning and experienced instructors, at both the didactical and technical level.

The continuing vocational training for LE FOREM instructors includes five parts:

1. Pedagogical in-service training for new instructors (for practical subject trainers as well as for workplace trainers)
2. Technical in-service training for instructors
3. Pedagogical in-service training for instructors ('la gestion-évaluation')
4. Training concerning administrative and computer skills
5. In-service training for the executive staff

Parts 4 and 5 are of less importance for this report and are therefore not discussed here.

PEDAGOGICAL IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR NEW FOREM INSTRUCTORS

This training programme is compulsory for every new FOREM instructor. Objectives of the programme are twofold:

1. To inform the instructor about his/her new working environment; and
2. To train the instructor with regard to the basis of the pedagogy of adults.

Objectives are translated into an modular based in-service training course including:

1. Working environment and the mission of FOREM FORMATION;
2. Adult education;
3. Human resources.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR EXPERIENCED FOREM INSTRUCTORS (TECHNICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL)

FOREM-instructors have 15 credit days per year to be used as educational leave. Yearly, every trainer has the opportunity to participate 15 days in continuing (technical, pedagogical or didactical) training courses. This measure is in line with the lifelong learning policy of the organisation.

Instructors have to fill in a special application form for this kind of training where they motivate why to take a training course. After a favourable decision of FOREM FORMATION instructors can take the training at the expenses of LE FOREM.

A recent study points out that on the average instructors only take up 5 of the 15 credit days (2043 days in 2002 and 5505 days in 2003).

Finally, FOREM FORMATION organises every year a number of four workshops. These workshops are free for every instructor and deal with technical evolutions or pedagogical evolutions (f.e. open and distance learning, modularisation, information and communication technology, etc.).

Yearly, approximately 50 instructors participate at these workshops.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

LE FOREM handles in accordance with the quality assurance system of ISO. At the first of March 2004, FOREM FORMATION received the ISO 9001 certificate (version 2000). Next to this external quality assurance system, LE FOREM has also its own quality manual.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS / INITIATIVES

As from 2006 there is an updated Flemish training of adult trainers tested in six trial projects.

People who teach adults can follow a specific training course.

In 2006 and 2007, the Flemish Minister of Education will put this training course to the test in six trial projects. For teachers in the Centres for Adult Education, the requirement remains unchanged – they must earn a certificate of pedagogical competence through teacher training. Teaching adults differs greatly to other forms of education, which means there is a great demand for separate training.

Many bodies in Flanders offer education and training for adults. As well as in educational institutions, adults are also taught by the VDAB, Syntra Flanders, on an inter-sectoral level, in the social sector, in driving schools, etc. In total, it amounts to many thousands of trainers.

Teachers in Centres for Adult Education must have a certificate of pedagogical competence (bewijs van pedagogische bekwaamheid – BPB). *The training leading up to*

this certificate is being integrated in the updated specific teacher training due to start at the start of the next school year. This remodelling will make the training considerably more extensive, with plenty of emphasis on practical experience. The workload in the updated training amounts to 60 study points, 30 of which are for practical training.

At the request of the Flemish minister, a *training course* has now been developed that can fulfil this need for *pedagogical education for the professionalisation of teachers and the quality assurance of training courses*. It concerns a training course of 280 lessons, 120 of which are practical lessons. The minister wants to put these trainings to the test in no more than six trial projects, and launched a project call for this in mid-October 2006.

07 - SKILLS AND COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE PEDAGOGY

0701 - MECHANISMS FOR THE ANTICIPATION OF SKILL NEEDS

In Belgium, the anticipation of skill needs a responsibility of employers, public employment services, education, research and training institutions.

As far as anticipation is concerned, the approach developed by Belgium is based on a contractual policy with the social partners, giving preference to an intersectoral and regional approach. Anticipation is given a high priority. Actions include forecasting studies of the employment market, of qualifications and of needs with regard to vocational training. These studies are repeated on a regular basis to monitor any change or evolution. Support is also provided to the functioning of anticipatory structures. The results of the studies will help to define the content of training measures aimed at the adaptation of workers. Training measures have to be accompanied by prospective and strategic thinking, in terms of development of skills and qualifications. In the same way, measures relating to the development of training systems have to demonstrate how they meet the anticipated needs.

ACTIONS TAKEN AT SECTORAL LEVEL

Some sectors develop initiatives directly geared towards identification and anticipation of competence and qualification needs:

- In 2003, the social partners in the banking sector launched the Compas initiative (skills in the area of insurance). This is a guidance instrument that workers in the sector can use to determine what skills can be developed with priority; - In the textiles sector, CEFRET, the sector's bilateral centre, is carrying out telephone and paper surveys and visiting companies in the sector in order to find the right orientation for the content of the training courses on offer in the sector.
- In 2003, Cefora (training centre of the national auxiliary bilateral committee for employees) examined the structure of professions in the wholesale sector. For companies, this is a practical instrument for describing vacancies in more specific terms and for refining their internal training policy.

It should also be recalled that the social partners are associated with the skills centres which can direct jobseekers towards the skills in demand in the sectors.

RECENT REFORMS AND CURRENT POLICIES

The Flemish Community encourages the inclusion of "core skills" in educational curricula at all levels, the development of differentiated and flexible learning pathways, the division into modules, the skills recognition, the development of basic, social and civic skills, through study of multidisciplinary topics, the spread of new ICTs in schools (new basic competencies), the development of flexibility and distance education through new skills.

New in the Flemish Community as from September 2006 is 'launch of the Experience Certificate' for 6 professions.

For the first time, the Flemish government is going to award 'Experience Certificates' to people who have professional experience, but do not have a diploma. *"Via the Experience Certificate, people can literally cash in on their competencies, no matter where they gained them. For the employer who is looking to recruit someone, the Experience Certificate provides the same guarantees as a diploma,"* states the Flemish Minister of Education.

Many people have learned a trade 'on the job' and so have clear professional competence. But they cannot prove that in black and white because they have never had the chance to get a diploma. That is why the Flemish government had launched the Experience Diploma. In the Flemish community employees or job-seekers can acquire an 'experience diploma' if they demonstrate that they have acquired certain skills needed to exercise an occupation (*Decree of the Flemish Government on experience diplomas of 30-04-2004 and published in the Belgian Official Gazette of 26-11-2004*). *Until then it did not exist in Belgium*, it already existed in France. In the first phase, the Experience Certificate applies to six different professions. A number of other professions will be added in the course of 2007.

TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK MADE SMOOTHER

In Flanders, sandwich courses were bolstered by increasing the number of places available for work experience; this was done in consultation with the sectors and within the government itself. In addition, the 'full-time commitment' was introduced: pupils in part-time education must be able to gain work experience. For those pupils for whom no job can be found, a special course will be set up with additional training, support in applying for jobs and so forth. This commitment must be achieved in the short term for three quarters of these pupils.

The French Community and the Walloon Region have set themselves the goal of increasing the number of young people in part-time education by improving support and by expanding the system to include the government sector and large companies, thereby simplifying the coordination mechanism. A service has been set up that makes it possible to work with the same vocational standards for 1) the various training systems and 2) the system of recognising acquired skills. This service will also make it possible to strengthen links with the labour market. This will further enhance the readability and consistency of the training pathways.

Sandwich courses have also been bolstered in Brussels, with the French Community and the French Community Commission working on reinforcing connections with education and adult education.

The German-speaking Community, where sandwich courses are firmly rooted, has made plans to introduce an extra year of basic training before pupils can start alternating training.

The three Communities are also working on a fully fledged diploma for 23 sandwich courses, which will finally be encouraged - starting with the 2006-2007 school year - by a federal bonus for both employers and pupils.

0702 - BRIDGING PATHWAYS AND NEW EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK MADE SMOOTHER

In the light of the European Youth Pact, the Belgian authorities have implemented measures to promote the integration of young people into the labour market. Initially, the aim was to upgrade technical and vocational education. Heavy investments were made in equipping the schools in question, and via specialised centres, which were set up by the employment services with various partners, high-tech equipment will be made available for education, both for pupils and for teacher training.

In order to promote the acquisition of work experience in addition to sandwich courses (see section 0701), the options for student work were expanded in 2006 and a website was set up for Wallonia and Flanders where potential interns and companies offering internships can find each other. Both websites will come on line in the autumn of 2006. A similar initiative will also be launched in Brussels and the French Community Commissions will fund internships for job-seekers linked to a training initiative or to studies in technical or vocational education.

In Flanders, about 10 years ago the minister of education was very instrumental in forging agreements ("covenants") between industry and education. They have been tools to enhance cooperation between these two partners : VET schools and industry. The focus has been on implementing new fields of study. Since 2002 agreements were also concluded between the minister of employment and the social partners of different sectors of economic activity. Arrangements are made concerning the improvement of the connection between education and labour market and the LLL strategy in different sectors of economic activity.

The development of a national qualification framework is also a priority.

0703 - RENEWAL OF CURRICULA

In Belgium, educational and public authorities as well as researchers, teachers, trainers, social partners are very widely involved in profiling occupations and drawing up the qualification profiles on which training profiles are based. It is relevant to underline the role of the advisory and supervisory bodies. For instance, the Education and Training Council (Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation) includes representatives from education and training. Its main task is to promote the training and education organized or subsidized by the Community. It gives opinions on various issues. An other major task of this Council is to issue opinions on the relations between education, training and employment and on the theme of training for employment. An other example is the role of the Community Commission for Occupations and Qualifications. The main task of this body is to draw up education profiles, i.e. the set of competencies to be acquired for the award of the qualification certificate at the end of secondary education. The aim was to correct the evident mismatch between the level of training given in technical and vocational education and employers' increasingly demanding requirements. This Commission comprises various partners (education, enterprise, trade union organizations sitting on the National Labour Council and professional bodies) and may call upon experts.

It set up 9 advisory committees chaired by representatives from the world of enterprise. Each committee corresponds to one of the nine current sectors of secondary qualification education. The task of each advisory committee is to draw up profiles for the jobs in its sector.

In order to work more efficiently, the advisory committees have set up working parties whose role is to draw up and propose particular profiles. The working parties draw up qualification profiles describing the tasks of and skills mobilized by workers in enterprises. Interviews with representatives from enterprises are very important. The working parties draw up education profiles describing the set of competencies to be acquired for the award of the qualification certificate in technical and vocational education (training providers and practitioners play an equal role in exchanging proposals) and structures and reference frameworks for training describing the ways in which the various training objectives are linked, formulating training contents and learning strategies and specifying the organization of certification and the competence credits that higher education or other training providers can use (training providers play a very important role during this stage).

As regards the curricula development, it is interesting to describe initiatives, programmes or projects developed in the three Communities of Belgium.

The Flemish Community strengthens the ability to learn to learn from primary education onwards. It plans to encourage the inclusion of "core skills" in education curricula at all levels. They include attitudinal, cognitive and psychomotor skills which, besides being relevant to following an occupation at a later stage, also contribute to the general personal development of pupils or students and, in some cases, may be facilitate progress towards a succession of different kinds of occupational activity. The new policies to be implemented will encourage the development of differentiated and flexible learning pathways adapted to the different starting points and rates of learning of schoolchildren and students. The learning pathways for vocational secondary education, special education and education for social advancement are gradually becoming distinct from each other as a result of the project for modularized courses.

Modularization is an important tool in reducing the number of people leaving compulsory education with no qualifications. When learners obtain certificates, even if partial, they gain a recognition of their knowledge that increases their chances of finding a job or attending further training. Modularization is therefore intended to provide a bridge between initial education and continuing training in order to encourage lifelong education. A further aim of these experiments is to adapt training to the qualifications being demanded in the labour market with a view to improved transparency. Modules are designed on the basis of the occupational profiles drawn up by the social partners under the coordination of the Economic and Social Council of Flanders (Sociaal-Economische Raad van Vlaanderen). In order to optimize the training opportunities provided by this system, bridges have been created between study areas and the various training schemes offered, for instance, by VIZO and VDAB. It will not be possible to measure the impact and efficiency of modularization until 2007, when the trial period will have been long enough for two age cohorts to have completed full cycles in normal full-time secondary education and for students to have completed at least a full cycle in the other training schemes. Modularization is part and parcel of new approaches to education, which include integrated work, differentiated work and team teaching.

The Flemish Community has also drawn up aims for teaching and development of basic, social and civic skills through study of multidisciplinary topics.

On the other hand, from the standpoint of lifelong learning, educational authorities also offer grant support to innovation projects in high education via the STIHO (Programme for the Encouragement of Innovation in Higher Education). These projects provide for cooperation agreements between two or several universities, two or several higher schools, or between at least one university and one higher school for the following activities : creation and development of efficient flexible quality learning environments, creation and development of new teaching methods and techniques, etc.

In the German-speaking Community, the aim of continuing education and training is to develop vocational, social and socio-cultural integration, and in particular : the development or acquisition of basic knowledge, ranging from acquisition of the language to courses in computer sciences, the preparation of students for second chance education examinations, the acquisition of knowledge and skills, which have been somewhat overlooked (up to the "university for senior citizens' stage), the updating of knowledge and acquisition of further qualifications with a view to full personal development, or to take advantage of greater equality of opportunity on the job market, diversifying the provision of education and training and adapting it to demand, the cooperation with FOREM as regards measures for the unemployed.

As far as the pilot projects, these are based on core skills (learn to learn), new information and communication technology (teacher training, school equipment and materials and future projects), new methods of organization and learning in full-time compulsory education.

In the French Community, an interesting action programme is the development of Technological Innovation Centers (Pôles d'innovation technologique – PITech). They are special centers for training, information and documentation for pupils, students and teachers. Their purpose is to intensify cooperation between the different levels of education (as regards the education and training of students and teachers, but also the use of highly effective teaching tools and equipment), to strengthen the various stages of partnership between the worlds of education and business, and to adapt educational provision to the course of economic development. There are also skill centers (cf. supra). Following an original teaching approach, focused on the constant inter-activity of each participant, the skills centers offer a wide choice of courses adapted to the job market.

CONCRETE EXAMPLES

As far as the ICT's training courses, it must be underlined that these courses (target groups : unemployed workers and job-seekers) are organized in the three Communities by the Public Employment and Training Services (FOREM, VDAB, Arbeitsamt) themselves or in partnerships.

For instance, the Flemish Community has adopted a policy of promoting the new information and communication technologies (ICT's), so that they are used on a daily practical basis in schools. Campaigns to boost information and awareness, courses to upgrade knowledge and subsidies for the infrastructure and funding of projects have been introduced.

It is also useful to mention the ICT basic competencies Programme (Plan basisvaardigheden ICT) launched in 2001. The target groups are Flemish job-seekers. Training courses (use of new communication media) were organized in different regions. VDAB has also developed a mobile training infrastructure called "leermobiel". In Autumn 2001, job-seekers and workers could improve their basic competencies in the field of ICT's. In December 2001, 47 additional projects were developed.

The ECDL (European Computer Driving License) is also an important programme developed in Flanders and Wallonia. Job-seekers, students, workers, employers will be able to acquire the basic competencies for the use of computer tools. Training courses and assessments will be free of charge for job-seekers.

In Wallonia, a wide action plan called Plan Mobilisateur TIC has been developed in order to train job-seekers by the end of 2004.

As far as language teaching, many agreements have been concluded between FOREM, VDAB and Bruxelles Formation in order to promote language exchanges.

Other initiatives : a new system has been developed in Brussels : Language cheques (chèques langue). In the French and German-speaking Communities, languages immersion training courses are organized. The Walloon Region has created a Fund for the language immersion training courses (Fonds pour l'immersion linguistique).

As regards the intercultural schooling, it is interesting to mention a programme developed in the French Community : The "Language and Culture of Origin Programme" (LCO). Partnership agreements have been concluded with Greece, Italy, Morocco, Portugal and Turkey, to enable schools that so wish to benefit from intercultural teaching provided by one or several teachers from these countries.

08 - ACCUMULATING, TRANSFERRING AND VALIDATING LEARNING

0801 - VALIDATION OF FORMAL LEARNING: GENERAL CONCEPTS AND SCHEMES

In a context of a flexible labour market as well as technological, industrial, cultural and social changes, the capacity of the citizen to integrate into working life depends on other factors than the only possession of a certificate.

Therefore, all the competencies of the citizen must be recognized and enhanced. A cooperation agreement between the French-speaking entities aims at creating a consortium charged to work out a system of validation of competencies, which certifies the competencies resulting from the work experience, vocational training and life and which validates competencies whatever the place or the circumstances in which they were acquired.

This legal system, in addition to the school system of certification delivers "Titles of competencies" giving access to the school certificate of the French Community by an effect of capitalization of competencies acquired and corresponding to the requirements of the school certificate for occupations or training courses. This system makes it possible for workers to give concrete expression to their right to the assessment of competencies. The validation of competencies acquired apart from the school system plays a major role in professional and geographical mobility.

In the Flemish Community, a technical group composed of representatives of education, enterprise and social partners, has determined a political framework project. This project has determined a minimal framework of work related to the validation of experiences gained out of initial education. In 2002, on the basis of this frameworks, concrete projects will be implemented. On the basis of their results, a legal framework will be proposed and developed by the Government. In 2002, Flanders has developed a reference system of key competencies.

Finally, it is worth noting that the social partners (Flanders and Wallonia) are involved with the public actors in the definition of systems of references within the framework of the validation of competencies.

INSTRUMENTS THAT FACILITATE RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS

Some examples:

In Belgium, the creation of professional centers of references is a significant tool of development and recognition of competencies of the workers. Such centers must become places of reference as regards testing and validation of competencies acquired through training modules or professional experiences.

NARIC: The NARIC is a network of National Centers created in 1984 to help in regulating title recognition and facilitating the integration of national educational systems. Three main levels of recognition can be considered, as well as the instruments attached to them: recognition of qualifications, including prior learning and professional experience, allowing entry or re-entry into higher education; recognition of short study periods in relation with student mobility. The instrument attached to it is ECTS (transferable credits); recognition of full degrees. The instrument attached to it is the Diploma Supplement. In Belgium : NARIC Flanders, NARIC Center of the French Community.

0802 - VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

While existing institutions and laws in Belgium acknowledge, to a certain degree, the importance of non-formal learning in the overall educational setting, the emphasis on and interest in questions related to assessment and recognition of non-formal learning has been relatively weak. In comparison with other European countries, the Belgian vocational education and training system is weakly linked to the workplace as exemplified by the small proportion of young people receiving vocational training through apprenticeships. The predominantly school-oriented approach to training may have led to a somewhat weaker focus on the issues of recognising non-formal learning than in comparable countries. However, this seems to be changing and in both the French and Flemish Communities, there is a growing interest in the topic followed by new initiatives.

The Flemish Government recognizes non-formal and informal learning via the Decree on experience diplomas of 30-04-2004 (published in the Belgian official Gazette of 26-11-2004). In the Flemish community employees or job-seekers can acquire an 'experience diploma' if they demonstrate that they have learned or acquired certain skills needed to exercise an occupation.

A certain flexibility has been introduced, so that individuals having acquired competencies at work or elsewhere, may get exemption from at least parts of formal education and training. The system of boards of examiners of the French Community (Jury de la Communauté française) operated by the Ministry of the French Community, provides alternative examinations for those who have followed other "learning routes" than formal schooling. These examinations are intended for "autodidacts", or for "those having given up study" (Eurydice 1998). To prepare for these examinations, candidates have access to necessary facilities in public or private schools and through arrangements for distance learning. Executive orders (arrêtés de l'Exécutif) determine the rules and regulations governing the organization and functioning of the assessment boards. These boards are responsible for organizing examinations. In secondary education, a number of qualifications may be obtained through this route:

- 4th year of secondary education certificate (Certificat d'enseignement secondaire du deuxième degré) in either general, technical, artistic or vocational forms of secondary education;
- upper secondary education certificate (Certificat d'enseignement secondaire supérieur) in either general, technical, artistic or vocational forms of secondary education;
- DAES (Diplôme d'aptitude à accéder à l'enseignement supérieur) for students having completed the 7th year of vocational training, and foreign students having obtained official recognition of their national diploma equivalent to the upper secondary education certificate, which only grants access to short-term tertiary education;
- diploma for admission to the examination in civil engineering.

Moreover, it is still possible, in accordance with the provisions of former regulations, to sit preparatory examinations leading to admission to training as a hospital care assistant (vocational supplementary education).

Particularly relevant are the procedures organised by the acknowledgement committee (Commission d'homologation) responsible for examining certificates gained through partial studies or qualifications acquired in secondary schools abroad. Before taking any decision, the committee is supplied with all students' documents on the basis of which they can verify whether the curricula followed are set and approved by the minister or equivalent standards; the standard level of instruction was provided; the student meets the legal requirements relating to the duration of studies and admission.

The upper secondary education certificates (CESS) form the basis upon which decisions are taken. The committee includes members from public schools and private (grant aided) schools in equal numbers. In the Flemish Community, a certain degree of flexibility has been built into the system. By taking special examinations, adults can – on the basis of individual learning at work or elsewhere – obtain the same qualification as those having followed traditional pathways. This applies to primary education, lower and upper secondary school and higher education. Another option for adults is to follow the continuing education schemes set up by the Flemish Department of Education and Training. These schemes give adults the possibility to follow courses in the evenings and weekends leading to the same qualifications as upper secondary schools (and parts of higher education).

Following a reform in 1999 (Decree of 2 March 1999), a reduction of study periods can be granted if relevant work experience is proven. It is important to underline that in contrast to the ordinary system, a major part of the Flemish continuing education scheme is modularised. An initiative taken by the Board of Education and Training (Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation) of the French Community in 1998 suggests reforming and harmonising the entire system of validation linked to vocational and professional competencies, both at initial and continuing levels. A broader concept of qualifications compared to that existing system is emphasised and proposed. According to this proposal a qualification must be defined as the totality of those competencies necessary to execute a task or those inter-linked tasks necessary to have a vocation. Competencies

acquired through work experience are underlined in the proposal pointing to the potential inclusion on non-formal learning in the assessment practices of Belgian education and training.

Furthermore, the Flemish authorities have worked on a reform of the vocational training system trying to implement a modularised, output-based model. In this context, the issue of assessment and recognition of non-formal learning has been raised. This reform is an effort to link the different providers of vocational training in Flanders (Department of Education and Training, Department of Labour and Department of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises). The modularisation project aims at establishing such a link through the development of a common set of competence standards. The social partners are heavily involved in this work. Modularisation is an important tool in reducing the number of people leaving compulsory education with no qualifications. When learners obtain certificates, even if partial, they gain a recognition of their knowledge that increases their chances of finding a job or attending further training.

Modularisation is therefore intended to provide a bridge between initial education and continuing training in order to encourage lifelong education. A further aim of the modularisation is to adapt training to the qualification being demanded in the labour market with a view to improved transparency. Modules are designed on the basis of the occupational profiles drawn up by the social partners under the co-ordination of the Economic and Social Council of Flanders.

In order to optimise the training opportunities provided by this system, bridges have been created between study areas and the various training schemes offered, for instance by VIZO and VDAB. The Flemish work has leaned strongly towards the experiences gained in the Netherlands. Both the Dutch system of qualification standards and the APL methodologies developed over recent years are important points of reference. An agreement (GENT 5 Agreement, 7 February 2000) between the Ministry of Education in the Netherlands and the Flemish Department of Education gives priority to the exchange of information on the issue of identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning. The aim is that steps should be taken towards co-operation, co-ordination and learning from each other.

In addition to the practices mentioned above, there are several links to the European norm EN45013. The norm is administered by Belgcert, a body of the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs. The role of EN45013 can be illustrated through the example of the Belgian Institute of Welding Techniques. The qualifications provided by this institute will be accredited according to the rules of Belgcert and EN4501. Similar approaches can also be observed within the construction, heating, refrigeration, metal, as well as the food and catering sectors.

Now, the introduction of a variety of measures to identify, assess and recognise non-formal learning poses a challenge to the role and status of traditional certificates and diplomas. While a lot of experience has been gained over the past 10 to 15 years (France and Belgium), non-formal learning pathways do not represent any serious alternative to the formal education and training system. The role of the "bilan de compétence" is strictly formative; an offer of guidance and feedback rather than an official recognition of competencies. The Belgian initiatives may lead to an approach developed independently from formal education and training but more on the basis of the needs and practices of working life.

TRAINING AND RECOGNITION OF ACQUIRED SKILLS

The use of training cheques is enjoying growing success in the three Regions. For instance, Brussels expanded the use of training cheques for jobseekers going back to

work, from language training to other areas, such as ICT. Wallonia increased the options for using training cheques, both for companies and for workers; it boosted its offering by establishing a special '*language cheque*' and by increasing the number of cheques that a business can order. Flanders is working on adjusting the system on the basis of the conclusion that certain less-favoured groups, such as *unskilled individuals and people aged 50 and over, are significantly under-represented in the group of those people who make use of training cheques*. In late 2005, Flanders decided to integrate various instruments in order to support businesses in various areas, including the cofinancing of training costs. In doing so, support was more strongly geared to SMEs.

Efforts are also being made to streamline the training on offer. To this end, Brussels enhanced the synergies between the employment service and the organisations that offer training, especially those concentrating on specialist centres and based on a modular approach. In 2006, the first additional centre was started up in the ICT sector. In Wallonia, a few new centres were opened and the surrounding network was strengthened.

Wallonia also developed a project whereby an introductory course for jobseekers in ICT and the Internet was organised at the skill centres. To increase the transparency of the training on offer for workers, the social partners agreed to use a new measuring tool starting in 2006. It was also agreed to produce clear, unambiguous reports on sectoral training.

For job-seekers, training combined with work experience leads more easily to a job, which is why Flanders and Wallonia increased the number of practical training places. Flanders is also running experiments in cooperating with private firms (via deployment measures) and temporary work agencies to increase the efficiency and target group reach of work experience programmes. Brussels simplified the associated administrative procedure. *Formal recognition of acquired skills must be the final component in a solid policy on lifelong learning*. Once the jobs had been defined and the standards established, the first vocational skills certificates were issued in the French Community. Here, the aim is to give another 1,000 people access to the recognition procedure in 2006.

09 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR LEARNING, CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT

0901 - STRATEGY AND PROVISION

The question of the coordination of activation policy for assistance beneficiaries and job seekers has not been given much attention in Belgium until recently. This situation is currently changing, mainly as a result of the favourable economic climate. In 1999 the number of minimex beneficiaries was less than one-fifth (17.4%) of the number of non-working job seekers. In comparison with other EU countries the Belgian assistance scheme can therefore be seen as something of a residual system. The unequal ratio between the two systems means that the target group for the social assistance system is seen as being more difficult to integrate than the target group for the unemployment insurance system. Hitherto the central government has been pursuing a two-track policy: on the one hand the federal authorities have further strengthened the instruments available to the OCMWs (Public Welfare Offices), and on the other hand the regional governments are taking more and more initiatives towards a policy of coordination between the competent institutions (PES and public welfare centres).

The employment services in the three regions (VDAB, FOREM, ORBEM and Bruxelles-Formation) also offer opportunities for information, guidance and skill reviews for young people and adults.

In Belgium mainly the two eldest employment services VDAB and FOREM provide a platform for job-seekers and employers. To perform this important social task as well as possible, the VDAB and FOREM provide a relatively accessible, high quality and free service to all job-seekers and employers. VDAB's and FOREM's mission is to exercise an impact on the labour market in keeping with the economic situation and society.

VDAB and FOREM need to find a way to reconcile economic and social goals. Economically, job vacancies need to be filled quickly and correctly. Socially, VDAB and FOREM want to guarantee a smooth integration of job-seekers in the labour market and help anyone who has difficulties finding a job.

In this way, for the Flemish Community VDAB plays a part in boosting the Flemish employment level to 65% in 2004 and to 70% in 2010, increasing the participation of under-represented sections of the population in the labour market and aspiring to more individual and social development for everyone.

To achieve these goals, the VDAB and FOREM contribute to improving the balance between demand and offer on the labour market; pay attention to the proportional participation of all sections of the population; take the necessary measures to counteract every form of direct or indirect discrimination on the labour market; encourage and stimulate life-long learning for job-seekers and employees and makes its range of tools more transparent, efficient and effective. In November 2002, a specific Task Force on information and guidance, in which the social partners were represented, delivered an advice to the Flemish government for the implementation of a right to career counselling. Through cofinancing from the European Social Fund (and some sectors) a network of centres for career counselling of workers will be developed. Some of these centres are being developed by trade unions for their members and by VDAB, the Flemish public employment service.

On 22 January 2003, the Flemish social partners agreed that in Flanders the system of training vouchers should be developed for adult workers, in order to raise the participation of adults to lifelong learning. With these vouchers, the worker can buy training or career guidance (including recognition of prior learning), with some restrictions: only training or career guidance in institutions recognised by the Flemish government or the sectoral social partners; only general training; out of working time or during education leave; only for the payment of direct costs (not child care or transport).

Furthermore non-profit-making associations offer information on trades, education and young people's rights: the information service on education and occupations (Service d'information sur les études et les professions – SIEP) and Infor-Jeunes (Info Jeugd in the Flemish Community). Belgium is also a member of the network of national vocational guidance resource centres (Euroguidance) of the Leonardo da Vinci programme.

0902 - TARGET GROUPS AND MODES OF DELIVERY

Priorities or target groups

- long-term unemployed and job-seekers in a supervision plan;
- low-skilled employees and job-seekers;

senior employees and job-seekers (usually starting from 45 or 50); youngsters, especially in case of part-time compulsory education or insufficient qualifications;

- disabled employees and job-seekers; employees who are about to lose their job following technological developments in the sector or a closure of a company;
- migrants and people who return to the labour market may also belong to these risk groups.

Table 1: The scope of the target group bodies				
TARGET GROUP BODIES	YOUNG PEOPLE IN COMPULSORY SCHOOLING	STUDENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS IN INITIAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING	ADULTS IN GENERAL	ADULTS IN COURSE OF SOCIO-OCCUPATIONAL TRANSITION
PMS Centres	X			
Carrefour Formation		X	X	X
FOREM		X (RW)	X (RW)	X (RW)
Bruxelles Formation		X (RBC)	X (RBC)	X (RBC)
Public outplacement companies			X (RW)	
SIEP, CEDIEP, CID, etc.		X		
non-profit-making integration associations				X

PMS, Psycho-Medico-Social Centres

SIEP, Service d'Information sur les Etudes et les Professions

CEDIEP, Centre de Documentation et d'Information sur les Etudes et les Professions

SERVICES OFFERED FOR JOB-SEEKERS (VDAB/FOREM)

Starting from the day of registration, VDAB and FOREM encourage job-seekers to do things independently by offering them a number of self-management tools: file manager, training guide, Work-Information-System vacancy bank, Candidate Information Selection System application bank (computer – based information), etc. These online instruments allow job-seekers to get a better idea of their own interests and knowledge of certain occupations. They learn more about themselves and are more confident entering the

labour market (empowerment). If job-seekers do not find a job within three months, the VDAB and FOREM invite them for an analysis of their strengths and weaknesses with regard to the labour market. Job-seekers who require more intensive and personal assistance are referred to the pathway-to-work principle.

(Pathway-to-work principle: All job-seekers receive tailor-made guidance through the pathway-to-work principle. Together with the counsellor, a pathway or route to find a job is mapped out, taking into account the person's opportunities and requirements.)

0903 - GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING PERSONNEL

CATEGORIES OF STAFF FRENCH-SPEAKING BELGIUM

- *In the PMS (Psycho-Medico-Social) Centres, the categories of staff are laid down by law: they are psychologists (educational psychologists), social workers and doctors or nurses.*

Article 3. - § 2. The technical staff shall consist at the minimum of:

- 1 director;
- 1 educational psychology counsellor;
- 1 social worker;
- 1 paramedical worker.

After the fifth member of the technical staff, the additional staff member shall be an educational consultant counsellor or a social work or a paramedical worker. In each additional group of three staff members, the duties performed shall be different. Nevertheless, the additional group of three staff members referred to in the previous paragraph may include two social workers, in accordance with a derogation allowed by the Government. In this case, the additional group of three staff members may not include a paramedical worker.

If derogation is allowed by the Government, the additional group of three staff members referred to in paragraph 3 may include an auxiliary educational psychologist, provided that this additional group already includes an educational psychology counsellor. In this case, the additional group of three staff members may not include a paramedical worker.

- *In the public vocational training service in the Brussels Region:*

Type of staff: training counsellor - skills audit counsellor - trainer in a vocational guidance and initiation centre.

- *In FOREM:*

The people working in the vocational guidance counselling units in FOREM Conseil are vocational guidance counsellors.

- *In the non-profit-making associations in the non-commercial sector:*

In socio-occupational integration in Brussels, the designations "agent de guidance et d'orientation", "intervenant social" and "agent de guidance et d'intégration" are used.

FLEMISH-SPEAKING BELGIUM

Educational Staff responsible for Support and Guidance

We make a distinction between:

- the personnel responsible for guidance and support of the governing and teaching personnel;
- the personnel of the pupil guidance centres.

Both categories come under the category of the non-teaching staff.

The personnel in the *pedagogical counselling services* consists of (promotion) offices of pedagogical advisors and pedagogical advisor-coordinators. The latter head the Pedagogical Counselling Service. Both offices of pedagogical advisor and advisor-coordinator can be full-time or part-time positions.

As regards the admission requirements for an office within the Pedagogical Counselling Service, small differences can be detected between the departments for guidance in subsidized education and those in community education. Generally the candidate needs to have at least 10 years of seniority to be eligible for a temporary or permanent appointment. The Flemish government may always define additional diploma requirements (Decree of 17 July 1991).

A counselling function can also be appointed to educational staff by means of special duty leave.

The personnel of the *pupil guidance centres* (CLB) consists of a number of permanent offices, from governor (promotion office), over physician, consultant, psycho-pedagogical consultant, social worker, administrative employee, paramedical worker, psycho-pedagogical worker, to collaborator.

Since 1 September 2000 each new governor of a CLB – except for the permanent support group (permanente ondersteuningscel) – is appointed with a mandate.

TRAINING FOR THE SELF-EMPLOYED

The learning path counsellor arranges the learning path guidance for the apprentice. This is a new job. Unlike apprenticeship officers (who currently work independently), learning path counsellors will be employed by the Flemish Institute for Independent Entrepreneurship (Syntra Vlaanderen). The aim is to strengthen their independent position.

EMPLOYMENT (VDAB)

Examples of jobs directly involving career guidance include: VDAB consultant, process counsellor, learning path counsellor, job shop consultant and Eures consultant (internationally oriented).

10 - FINANCING - INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

1001 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRAINING

Since 2000, Community financing has come from two main sources: on the one hand, the whole of the radio and television licence fee and part of the revenue from personal income tax and, on the other hand, a proportion of VAT broken down according to strict criteria on the number of young people aged under 18 per Community. There are special financing arrangements for the German-speaking Community.

Financing for the Regions comes from a proportion of the revenue from personal income tax. They may also collect their own taxation revenue (it should be borne in mind that the Flemish Region and Community have merged).

Funds: the Federal State as the main investor in continuing vocational training

- *The employment fund:* administered by the (federal) Ministry of Employment and Labour from contributions paid by enterprises, this fund covers risk groups, training for the unemployed and is also used to finance crèches and child-minding facilities.
- *Sectoral funds:* administered on the basis of agreements drawn up jointly by sector. They are used for a whole range of purposes of which continuing vocational training accounts for only a small proportion. 1998 budget: EUR 37.9 million.
- *Employers' training funds:* administered by each enterprise depending on its needs.
- The State awards financial subsidies via the regional training agencies: FOREM, VDAB, etc.

CURRENT POLICY PRIORITIES

Lifelong learning requires a different approach to educational expenditure which should be spread more widely across the whole life cycle.

Training cheques for employees and employers will be produced on a permanent basis.

To support the participation in training of employees, the Government of Flanders decided to introduce a simple and demand-oriented instrument (the training and guidance cheque). The Government of Flanders pays half of the costs of the training, career monitoring or measurement of competences of employees with a particular maximum government contribution.

Paid education leave:

The employers are held to grant the paid educational leave and to remunerate it as if the workers were at work. However, they obtain from the Federal Ministry of Employment and Labour the refunding of remunerations as well as related social security contributions. The right to the paid educational leave of the part-time workers is proportional to the length of work.

In Wallonia, the action plan called "Marshall Plan" (to reinvigorate the regional economy) is composed of practical measures with a budget of €1 billion - to be financed from the regional budget over four years.

- €160 million for Training. Sectors lacking skilled labor will receive some 8,000 training places per year. Language tuition will be boosted by 8,000 new 'immersion scholarships' for those due to leave school, job seekers, language teachers and specialized workers in very small enterprises and SMEs. Some 500,000 training vouchers will be granted and 12,000 supplementary training courses for job seekers will be financed.

1002 - FUNDING FOR INITIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Diagram Flow of Funding

The federal government has its financial income from the social security resources. This financial income of the federal government is transferred to the other governing levels being the Regions, the Communities, the Provinces and Municipalities and it (this financial income) represents the public expenditure for education by student in Belgium. The public expenditure for education by student refers to an educational principle stipulated in the Belgian Constitution.

The Belgian constitution stipulates that access to education is free until the end of the compulsory education age (Initial Education and Training). This means that primary and secondary schools that are funded or subsidised by the Community government (organizing of education became a community matter with the revision of the Belgian Constitution Law of 1980) are not allowed to charge any registration fees.

The federal government also concludes educational agreements with the communities and the regions concerning the transition from school to work (Continuing Education and Training).

For these educational agreements there is a flow of funding from the federal government to the other governing levels. It concerns all the policy makers of all the governing levels. *Examples* of this are:

- the learning agreement with Flemish Community and the Flemish region;
- agreements with the French and German Community, the revaluation agreement concerning education with the Walloon region and the agreement for promoting alternating learning with the French Community.

All this explains the educational flows from the federal government to the other governing levels being the Regions, the Communities, the Provinces and Municipalities.

Since the revision of the Belgian Constitution Law of 1980 with its specific regional laws and community laws of 1980 *education became a Community matter*. This means that education is *organised by the Communities* for which they receive an annual contribution coming from the federal government and the respective regions.

The Communities, the Provinces, Municipalities or other public law bodies or private bodies also subsidise the people who organise education in accordance with statutory standards.

The communities are paying for the personnel cost, for scholarships and study grants, for family allowance, for school buildings and for Initial education, including the apprenticeship until the age of 18.

Traditionally a distinction is made between three educational networks within each community.

1) Community education is education organised under the authority of the Communities by the public bodies that are called the Flemish Community education, The French – speaking Community education and the German – speaking Community education;

2) the subsidised publicly run schools comprise municipal education organised by the municipalities and the provincial education organised by the provincial administrations and

3) the subsidised privately run schools deliver education organised by a private person or private organisation on private initiative. Privately run education mainly consists of catholic schools.

Hence, the competent authority receives financial means for the operation of the schools through funding or subsidies.

The Communities in Belgium also receive financial means for the financing of educational and training projects from European Social Fund. (Initial and Continuing Education and Training).

In Belgium, the number of students in full-time education during the 2000-2001 school year for the three communities amounted to 400,804 pre-schoolers in preschool education (18%), 771,917 (34%) students in primary education, 784,961 (35%) and 293,648 (13%) students in colleges of higher education and university education respectively. The Belgian education budget (full-time education) for 2001 amounted to EUR 11.33 billion.

In Flanders, the number of students in the 3 sectors in primary and secondary education broke down as follows during the 1999 – 2000 school year: in Community education organised by the Communities 14.4% ; in both municipal and provincial education or official education 16.8% and in the education provided by the third sector, private education 68.8%. The total number of students in primary education amounted to 673,284 for the 2001-2002 school year, 430,163 in secondary education, 99,339 in higher education and 56,693 in university education. Community education which is organised for the Flemish Community receives an annual contribution. The Flemish Community, the provinces, communes or other public law bodies or private bodies also subsidise the people who organise education in accordance with statutory standards. The Flemish community pays for the personnel cost.

Through funding or subsidies the competent authority receives financial means for the operation of the schools. The Flemish education budget amounted to EUR 6.51 billion in 2000. This amounts to 42% of the total Flemish budget (EUR 15 billion) which, since 1989, has shown an average nominal increase of 4% a year. The adjusted 2001 budget amounts to EUR 6.86 billion or an increase by 4.9% compared to 2000. The five per cent of the Gross Regional Product that the Flemish government spends on education is 0.1% higher than the OECD-country average and 0.1% lower than the EU- country average.

The Flemish education budget per education level: primary education receives 28.6% of this budget, secondary education 41.5%, higher education 7.9%, university education 8.9 %, non-education level related education 9.2 % and continuing education 3.9%.

The Flemish education budget increased from 5.97 billion in 1997 to 7.19 billion in 2002.

In the Walloon provinces (French-speaking and German-speaking Community) the number of students in the Community education system organised by the Communities amounts to 25.18%, 16.8% in official education and 54.36% in private education. In the 2001-2002 school year, there were 470,230 primary education students, 341,072 secondary education students, 78,831 higher education students and 61,611 university education students.

The Walloon education budget amounted to EUR 4.33 billion in 1999 - 2000. The adjusted 2001 budget amounted to EUR 4.47 billion which is a 3.6% increase compared to 2000.

The education budget per education level: primary education receives 27% of this budget, secondary education 41%, higher education 7%, university education 10%, special and artistic education 9% and distance education and continuing education 3%, special education 7%, artistic education 2% and 1% goes to the psycho – medical social centres (centres for student guidance in Flanders), medical school inspection and the school building fund.

REGIONAL Industrial training courses The 'leertijd' (an apprenticeship system) (*Syntra Vlaanderen* – IFAPME) or initial vocational training allows apprentices from the age of 15-16 to learn the basics via an apprenticeship contract with a manager -trainer to work as an employee in a company. This apprenticeship comprises a practical training course in a company or with a self-employed person for a period of 4 days a week and 1 day of theoretical training in a centre. The manager -trainer gives a learning fee to the apprentice. For youngsters under 18, this amounts to EUR 247.42 for the first year, EUR 329.90 for the second year and EUR 409.02 for the third year. For apprentices older than 18, the amounts are EUR 329.90 371.15 and EUR 409.02 a month respectively. These amounts are indexed every year. The financial means of the *Syntra Vlaanderen* (approximately EUR 50 million a year for all *Syntra Vlaanderen* courses) are chiefly spent on subsidising the syntra-centres or regional centres and a network of recognised training institutes. In the context of the apprenticeship, a co-operation agreement has also been reached with the education department in order to guarantee the equality of certificates. The target groups are the apprentices older than 15 and all future or already established entrepreneurs in the context of the entrepreneurship training.

FEDERAL The '*leerlingwezen voor werknemersberoepen*' (advanced apprenticeship training) targets youngsters between 15/16 and 18 who are subjected to part-time compulsory education. The '*leerlingwezen voor werknemersberoepen*' (advanced apprenticeship training) is a training system that allows young people to learn an occupation that is usually carried out by a wage earner. On the one hand, students receive a practical study course in a company and on the other hand follow additional theoretical lessons in part-time education (in a '*Centrum voor Deeltijds Beroepssecundair Onderwijs*' (Centre for Part-time Secondary Vocational education) in the Flemish community, in a "*Centre d'éducation et de formation en alternance*" in the French-speaking Community or in a "*Teilzeitunterrichtszenter*" in the German-speaking Community or in other types of training institutes (VDAB, FOREM or Bruxelles -ormation, continuing education, ...). Consequently, students are able to learn a professional skill which - after passing a number of final tests – is certified. The number of current apprenticeship agreements is estimated at approximately 850. The Federal

Ministry of Employment is responsible for the administration. Employers pay less employer's contributions (34% of the pay of an employee).

1003 - FUNDING FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT LEARNING

FOR PUBLICLY PROVIDED CVT

As from the 1st of August 2004 Flemish government earmarks 3 million euro for job-seekers following a training that results in a bottleneck profession. This Pass premium should direct job-seekers in Flanders to the right training:

Job-seekers receive a premium from 150 to 250 euro. The social partners decide which courses entitle applicants to a premium.

The Flemish Service for Employment and Vocational Training (VDAB) and FOREM organise a number of vocational training courses for which companies are eligible for support.

One of these courses is a training course in a centre in which the VDAB spent EUR 96,321,119 in 2001. VDAB spent EUR 9,847,366 on the person-oriented training of job-seekers in 2001. For training and assistance of job-seekers on the shop floor, VDAB spent EUR 16,303,984 and for 'route to work' supervision - and follow-up of job-seekers EUR 17,654,490. In all, this concerns 38,358 courses for job-seekers. In 2001, VDAB trained 67,165 employees and spent EUR 25,278,427. VDAB invested about EUR 165,405,386 in training courses in 2001.

Both *Syntra Vlaanderen* and *IFAPME* provide complete courses for all development stages of a company. Typical for these courses is the fact that theoretical courses are alternated with practical tasks in the companies. In addition to apprenticeships, *Syntra Vlaanderen* also offers starting entrepreneurs an entrepreneurship training where a trade can be learned and they are taught how to start and run a business. The *Syntra Vlaanderen* is recognised as a training centre where training cheques can be cashed.

MODULAR NATURE OF THE COURSES/ ALTERNANCE TRAINING

Syntra Vlaanderen opted to include all apprenticeship and entrepreneurship training courses in modular entrepreneur courses. This started on 1 July 2000 and runs to 1 July 2005. A yearly budget of EUR 471,000 has been earmarked. It should be seen in the debate of life-long learning: certification on completion of a module allows intermediate success and reduces the unqualified outflow. The modular entrepreneur route is in keeping with the entrepreneurial spirit. The course participant is following an alternance training (combination of learning in the workplace with a boss - teacher and lessons in the SYNTRA school, or gets practical experience by reaching a traineeship agreement and/or through employment). The *Syntra Vlaanderen's* financial means amount to approximately EUR 50 million a year for all VIZO courses.

At these courses, not only skilled staff for small or medium-sized enterprises is trained (via the learning system), some students are also prepared for leadership tasks or SME manager (through the training of chief executives). Also, SME managers, through a life-long training cycle are able to learn how they need to adapt to new market conditions. The aim of the Walloon Government for the period from 2002 to 2004 is to increase the participation of the active population in training programmes by 50% compared to 2000. To reach EUR 35 million in 2001, the budgets for continued or alternance training courses between 2000 and 2001 have practically doubled.

A recent development in the Flemish Community is the awarding of 600,000 euros on the Flemish Entrepreneur Training Platform for more and better enterprise in Flanders in the period of 2006-2007. On 20 July 2006 the Entrepreneur Training Platform was founded as a part of the existing Job Creation Plan of 2004. This platform is supposed to make the training offering for entrepreneurs and future entrepreneurs broader and more comprehensive. So places for an extra 1,300 students will be created in the period of 2006-2007. The Flemish Minister of Employment, Education and Training wishes to advance the employment opportunities through more and better entrepreneurship. He is setting aside 600,000 euros on this in 2006.

Other regional funding of education since 2004-2005 in Flanders:

Subsidised part-time education pathways

Five joint venture projects of the *Limburgse Centra voor Deeltijds Onderwijs* (CDO) (Centres for Part-time Education) and the *Centrum voor Deeltijdse Vorming* (CDV) (Centre For Part-time Training) have been granted a subsidy from the province to the amount of 480,000 euro as from the 1st of September 2004. The *Limburgfonds* (Limburg fund) needs to support initiatives that meet shortcomings in the pathway-to-work principle of youths following part-time education.

Part-time education has adolescents suffering from school fatigue. They go to school two days a week, the other three days they work in a company or social workshop. At the moment approximately 300 adolescents in the province are unable to find part-time work for different reasons. The five recognised projects experiment with the development of a preliminary pathway for these youths. This preliminary pathway should be seen as the link between training and employment that increase the chances of finding a job by taking advantage of the personal and social skills of the individuals on the one hand and the orientation on the labour market on the other hand. Hence, in this process emphasis is put on tailor-made, individual assistance. It has to be noted, that even though this part time education is provided in the framework of adult education, its content should be considered as IVET.

Illiteracy has been reduced in all Regions and Communities thanks to the development of action plans for the benefit of the less literate from all layers of the population, passive or active, youngsters or adults, Belgians or immigrants, in all types and at all levels of education.

The Walloon Region allocated a larger budget to achieve this aim, from € 2.15 million in 2000 to € 2.6 million in 2001. Within adult education the coordination of life-long learning is organised in different ways: - on the one hand, by setting up partnerships either at regional level or by the development of co-operation agreements between the public and the private sector, or within the local departments to support companies in their human resources and training policy, and to teach individuals to manage their own careers (see action plan of 7 July 2000, concluded by The Flemish Government - establishment of a network of competence centres in the Walloon and Flemish Region). As far as the Brussels Capital Region is concerned, together with the professional sectors the final touch was made to professional reference centres to, in the same room, accommodate all the necessary equipment for extremely modern vocational training that can also serve for the basic training of youngsters in technical education, for the social-professional insertion of the unemployed, and for the life-long learning of the employees ; - on the other hand, by the wide sharing through the federalised entities of the training and by the simplifying of access; - finally, in addition to the measures of assistance for training within companies (budget 2001: € 16.9 million in the Walloon Region), training cheques encouraging SME's with less than 250 employees to invest in training using a smooth

system of co-financing by the Walloon Region (2000, € 3 million, 181,000 cheques, for 2001, € 3.72 million and 215,000 cheques); this system was also introduced in Flanders in 2002.

A number of branches of industry have long played an active role in the training of young people and/or adults, either through employers' federations or through a joint fund : this is particularly true of, among others, the metalworking, construction and textile sectors. Under the 1999/2000 general multi-industry agreements, the social partners agreed to channel a specific percentage (0,25%) of the wage bill into vocational training. Although compliance with these agreements has varied, they have led to a substantial increase in sectoral initiatives in many industries which have taken the initiative to set up jointly managed vocational training centres. These offer, encourage or co-ordinate training schemes, while also analysing vocational training needs and the training supply.

FOR ENTERPRISE-BASED CVET

Under the 1999-2000 multi-sectoral agreement, the social partners undertook (at federal level) to bring Belgium to the same level as its three European neighbours (France, the Netherlands and Germany). For this purpose, the wage bill levy will be increased from 1.2 to 1.4%. Participation by enterprises in continuing training varies substantially from region to region: 13% of enterprises in Brussels, 63.7% in the Flemish Region and 22.5% in the Walloon Region say that they are trainers.

According to the Eurostat CVTS-2, costs for CVET account for 1.6% of the total costs for employees ([see Table 1](#)). This seems relatively low compared to other countries (cf. UK: 3.6%, Denmark: 3%, EU-15: 2.3%). However, it must be taken into account that the CVTS-2 does not include the smallest businesses, employees in the public sector, the entire agricultural sector and potentially a portion of the professional workers ([see Table 1](#)).

1004 - FUNDING FOR TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND OTHER GROUPS EXCLUDED FROM THE LABOUR MARKET

SUPPORT PLAN FOR THE UNEMPLOYED (VDAB/FOREM/ORBEM)

The Support Plan for the unemployed serves two aims: long-term jobseekers are to be given more intensive support and their labour market situation improved at the moment when their jobsearch motivation appears to be decreasing; and the availability to the labour market of unemployed persons with entitlement to benefits is to be verified more closely.

FINANCIAL RESSOURCES

The Support Plan is financed by an employer contribution equal to 0.05% of the wage bill. It should be added that the resources available from the Employment Fund have also been used to finance support for the unemployed since 1.2.1995. These funds consist of the 0.10% contribution paid by employers in 1997 and 1998 who were not party to a collective agreement benefiting risk groups.

Employment Funds - Groups at Risk (Fonds pour l'emploi - groupes a risque)
"Employment Funds - Groups at Risk

The objective of this measure is to finance job creation and vocational training and vocational integration initiatives for risk groups among jobseekers.

Financial resource :

Supplementing the national agreement of 1989-1990, the Finance Law of 30.12.1988 obliges employers to conclude a collective contract of employment for 1989 and 1990 that sets aside 0.18% of their wage bill for employment promotion for risk groups among jobseekers. For 1991 and 1992, this rate was raised to 0.25% of the wage bill. Enterprises which were not bound by such collective contracts had to pay a corresponding amount to the Employment Fund. Other initiatives promoting vocational integration of risk groups were granted subsidies from the resources accumulated in this way.

1005 - PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES: FROM FUNDING TO INVESTING IN HUMAN RESOURCES

As far as the Walloon Region is concerned, the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) must leave the list of priorities open in order to allow the region to make choices that are best suited to its needs for economic restructuring in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Contract for the Future of Wallonia, the Regional transversal strategic plans and the Priority actions for the future of Wallonia.

This being so, the portion of the expenditure on cohesion contributing to the Lisbon Strategy must be clearly identified in such a way as to ensure that a minimum proportion of the interventions are allocated to it in the operational programmes. Thus, at the regional level, 60% of the sums included in the "Convergence" programmes and 75% of the amounts included in the "Regional Competitiveness and Employment" programmes will be allocated to actions contributing directly to the implementation of the Lisbon strategy (targeting will be carried out on the basis of average amounts per programme over 2007-2013 and will be specifically monitored on the basis of the categories of expenditure fixed by the Commission's regulations, the various elements of which will be in the annual implementation report.

Moreover, from the outset, the Lisbon objectives have been integrated into the Contract for the Future of Wallonia (the transversal strategic plans, including the Priority Action Plan for the Future of Wallonia) which defines the strategic framework at the regional level up to 2015. This served as a basis for the identification of the priorities and actions to be favoured in the framework of the future planning period for the Structural Funds. In particular, the priorities defined in the Priority action plan for the Future of Wallonia have also been favoured in the next programmes so as to support the dynamic in place at the Walloon level.

European funds will thus help to expand and complement the policies conducted at the Walloon level, which themselves contribute to meeting the guidelines for growth and employment and, ultimately, the Lisbon Objectives. Monitoring for each Operational Programme will enable progress of the targeting to be assessed in the framework of the National Reform Programme, which is the subject of an annual examination by the Commission with a view to the preparation of its progress report to the European Council and to Parliament.

The Structural Funds also support the action priorities of the French-speaking Community Commission. This has also made occupational training an absolute priority. Thanks to these structural resources, an important development in training supply has been initiated and will continue with an overall increase in training supply of 22% over 2 years.

From 2007, European resources allowing the continuation of diversified training actions, giving priority to the improvement of the qualifications and skills of poorly qualified job seekers.

These actions will be specified in the Operational Programme "Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective" Wallonia-Brussels (COCOF). They are set out as follows:

- The development of training programmes to meet the needs of sectors where there is a manpower shortage so as better to respond to the expectations and needs of poorly qualified populations who are least able to compete in the labour market;
- Measures favouring the learning of Dutch will be strengthened, in particular those concerning the learning of job-oriented Dutch as well as Dutch for finding work, aimed at poorly qualified job-seekers;
- Programmes to combat illiteracy and the learning of French as a foreign language will be strengthened;
- Information on training possibilities in Brussels will be expanded, notably through the improvement and development of on line information tools as well as the organisation of actions to raise awareness of technical jobs;
- The connections between occupational training mechanisms and the occupational sectors, notably via private sectoral funds for the detection, development and implementation of new training provision to meet the needs of job growth sectors in the Brussels-Capital Region, for a concerted participation in the regional reference centres as well as for the placing and supervision of trainees in businesses;
- The arrangements for the validation of the skills acquired will take off fully with the approval of new validation centres and new validation criteria in the prioritised sectors of the economy of the Brussels-Capital Region;
- The synergies with the present training and educational facilities over the whole French-speaking Community will be developed.

The NSRF, which was devised in collaboration with Flanders, gives concrete expression to the strategic dimension of the cohesion policy (concerning the use of the European Structural Funds for the period 2007-2013) It relates to Objective 2 Regional Competitiveness and Employment and constitutes the framework for a mixture of political measures to do with growth and employment. On 9 June 2006, the Flemish Government approved the preliminary plan of the Flemish contribution to the NSRF. In what follows, both the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund will be dealt with.

Strategic Objectives: ESF for Flanders (aspiring to a maximum impact according to the Lisbon European objectives), which are quantifiable:

- Increasing the employment rate, in particular that of older workers, people of foreign origin, people suffering from occupational disability, and those with little education;
- Increasing the effective retirement age of the job market;
- Increasing the employment rate of the long-term unemployed;
- Doubling the number of Flemish employees who follow a continuing training scheme, career accompaniment or an EVC procedure (= previously acquired skills) on their own initiative;
- Increasing the number of firms investing in continuing training, diversity and socially responsible entrepreneurship;
- Increasing the employability rate.

11 - EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS, TOWARDS AN OPEN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING

1101 - NATIONAL STRATEGIES RELATED TO POLICY PRIORITIES, PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES AT EU LEVEL

LIFE-LONG LEARNING: POLICY

Because powers relating to education, training and life-long learning were transferred to the Communities and the Regions, the different aspects of this subject are dealt separately.

FLANDERS

Since 1999 the subject of 'life-long learning' has become important to the different authorities. The Flemish coalition agreement referred to the introduction of an entitlement to life-long learning. The Flemish Minister for Education and Training, the Minister for Employment and the Economy Minister devoted much attention to the matter in policy documents and papers. A turning point arrived with the Flemish Action plan 'Life-long learning in good jobs', an alliance between the three (and subsequently four) authorised ministers. The emphasis is placed on education and the labour market formulated in 9 (and subsequently 10) guidelines:

- the monitoring and enhancing of education,
- the determining of a development pattern relating to life-long learning,
- the development of training credit,
- the bolstering of individual careers,
- giving users a voice,

- the development of an incentives policy for companies,
- recognition of competencies acquired elsewhere,
- the ensuring of coherence in the education world,
- Flanders on the fast track of the knowledge economy and
- the repositioning of socio-cultural training in the context of informal learning.

Besides the action plan, the Flemish Government launched a 'colour paper' on 11 July 2000: a framework for thought to develop a long-term vision for Flanders. The SERV responded with a platform text 'A long-term vision for Flanders: a hand outstretched to the Flemish social partners'. The combination of both initiatives led to the establishment of five crossroads, including 'Flanders as a crossroads for learning'. Their activities resulted in specific goals, formulated as '21 goals for the 21st century'. The first two propositions exclusively relate to the subject of life-long learning. For the first time clear target figures were set concerning participation in life-long learning activities, the number of functionally literate people, people with ICT skills and qualified school-leavers. Finally, in recent years the Flemish Government commissioned a number of policy-supporting investigations relating to life-long learning, including on literacy projects, leaving school prematurely, competencies acquired elsewhere, funding, and the analysis of life-long learning policy plans.

The regional level is undoubtedly an extremely important platform for the concrete realisation of lifelong learning: it is the place where offer and demand are coordinated and where all actors involved in the implementation negotiate and define the policy priorities. Independent from which choice will be made – the Edufora or the Regional Councils for Lifelong Learning – the socio-cultural sector needs to be fully represented in the regional policymaking in order to guarantee lifewide learning and to place lifelong learning in a context which is broader than just a mere synchronisation from the educational offer with the employment. The sector clearly has difficulty to take a satisfactory place in the Edufora. In Flanders there is also the *Trivisi-project*: learning with alternative learning methods. This project is geared by the administration employment from the Flemish community.

THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF A DATABASE OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC TRAINING IN FLANDERS AS FROM 2005.

At the moment a number of initiatives already exist to pay more attention to opportunity groups, but up to now none of them has been sufficient, according to the various players asked. Therefore education database and website were developed. The education database and website were developed by VDAB sub-contractors. In the first place, the database contains all 'study activities' of Education (OSP, Part-time Art Education, Basic Education and BIS), VDAB, Socio-cultural work and VIZO, but an expansion is also being prepared to include the private training operators. *Offering help with searching, understanding and evaluating the information*. This will happen first and foremost in the 'local work or study shops', depending on their department functions, with regard to work and training.

WALLONIA

The Walloon view of the concept of life-long learning is based on the principle of the individual entitlement to training, and therefore the guarantee

- of access to information on the training available,
- of advice and orientation,
- of equality with regard to the training offered,
- of the recognition of results achieved,
- of the constant development of training provisions and content by the permanent evaluation of the parties involved and
- of no charges for individual participants in courses aimed at avoiding of the obsolescence of qualifications.

The Region took various action to contribute to the achievement of the objectives set, in particular: To increase accessibility to the training on offer by encouraging operators to lengthen their opening hours, to provide the training in a modular fashion, to develop supervised self-learning and remote learning, and the restructuring of the physical network of centres. To increase equality for the training on offer. In this respect, since 1998 twelve *Centres de Compétence* (Competence Centres) have been set up with several partners, several target groups and a 'quality label', all brought together in a network structure. These centres are aimed at economic market sectors with promising perspectives and are responsible for technological supervision. This is also one of the goals striven for by the reforms of the FOREM and by the measures taken to switch from reactive responding to shortages to a systematic and anticipatory approach to bottlenecks. The increasing of the transparency of the training market by offering all people remote information about the training (*Formabanque on hotjob.be*), as well as information at specialised centres (11 Carrefour-formation centres) that will gradually coincide more with the information and advice provided (*Espaces Ressources Emploi*). Following on from Lisbon, the Walloon Region is also involved with the development of international databases, while researching the feasibility of the on-line linking of job offers and competencies based on classifications of international scope.

Increasing investments in training. To this end, since 1998 the Region has been developing cheque systems (training, advice, formation, reading) so companies or private persons can choose a recognised provider. A *Fonds d'équipement* (Equipment Fund) was also set up to modernise both technical and vocational education in contributing to the permanent training of teachers.

Special attention is devoted to the high priority fields (ICT's and languages) and to the target groups requiring specific support. As regards this second point, the unemployed are given the guarantee of free access to public service vocational training, and from 2002 they will have 'once-only/unique' training contract with an operator with an additional financial inducement (e.g. for childcare facilities). Finally, resources are granted for literacy initiatives and courses for immigrants, some of which will fully exploit the cultural advantages of these people. Also in this spirit, all people must be able to obtain government advice in the course of the development of their careers (that are less and less determined by one single contract for a full career), both for 'self-service' provisions for people with a high degree of independence (*Espaces ressources emploi*) and for training initiatives.

Finally, there is another approach of encouraging the transfer of competencies of the oldest to the youngest by initiatives such as support when seeking work and 'mentor/tutor/coaching' during training at the workplace. Increasing the effectiveness of private and public initiatives by encouraging partnerships where the energy and expertise are shared (*Centres de compétences, Carrefours formation* and - in 2002 - *Maisons de l'emploi*), by a review of the '*Parcours d'insertion*' (Insertion pathway) with the objective of making entry as quick and smooth as possible, and by providing support for the modernising of the SPE (method and structure of management). With the better matching of education and the labour market in mind, the French-speaking community set up the 'Community Commission for Occupations and Qualifications' (CCPQ). The purpose is the revaluing of technical and vocational training courses by making them more operational. A total of 114 qualification profiles have already been developed by the different study groups of the CCPQ.

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EU mobility programmes have been an important driver in introducing the European dimension in Belgian education and training. For instance, legal obstacles for recruiting foreign teaching staff in all levels of education have been lifted. In higher education, the implementation of Socrates/Erasmus has accelerated the process of establishment of specialised international relation offices in each higher education institution.

The Leonardo da Vinci programme has been instrumental in organizing mobility of Flemish students and teachers within the EU and VET schools have made partnerships with other VET schools in Europe.

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