



# Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015–17

## BELGIUM



Cedefop monitoring and analysis of VET policies

**Developments in vocational education and training  
policy in 2015-17**

**BELGIUM  
FRENCH COMMUNITY**

Cedefop (2018). *Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015-17: Belgium (FR)*. Cedefop monitoring and analysis of VET policies.  
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/vet-policy-developments-belgium-2017>

© European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), 2018.  
Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

This report was produced by Cedefop and reflects contributions from Cedefop's VET policy and systems team, and Cedefop experts working on common European tools and principles for education and training, and statistics. It is based on detailed information on VET policy implementation submitted by Cedefop's European network of expertise on VET (ReferNet) and other sources.

# Table of contents

Table of contents.....	2
List of tables and figures .....	4
Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015.....	5
1. MTD 1 – All forms of work-based learning with special attention to apprenticeships .....	8
1.1. Policy priorities for 2016-20.....	8
1.2. Main actions in 2015-17 .....	9
1.2.1. Apprenticeship.....	9
1.2.2. Funding apprenticeship providers to increase the quality of mentoring .....	12
1.2.3. Involving social partners in practical training.....	12
2. MTD 2 – Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET ( ).....	13
2.1. Quality assurance in line with EQAVET.....	14
2.2. Continuous information and feedback loops in initial VET and continuing VET.....	16
3. MTD 3 – Access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible/permeable systems, guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning .....	17
3.1. Policy priorities for 2016-20.....	17
3.2. Main actions taken in 2015-17.....	17
3.2.1. Pact for excellence in education .....	17
3.2.2. Access for all to VET: the 2020 training plan (Brussels).....	18
3.2.3. Guidance.....	18
3.2.4. Transparency, recognition, validation .....	18
3.2.5. Training, reskilling and upskilling vulnerable groups, jobseekers and employees.....	20
4. MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET.....	21
4.1. Key competences in initial VET .....	21
4.2. Key competences in continuing VET.....	22
5. MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors .....	23
5.1. Initial training for teaching/training staff in VET schools.....	23
5.2. Initial training for trainers and mentors in enterprises .....	23

5.3.	Continuing professional development for teaching/training staff in VET schools .....	24
5.4.	Continuing professional development for trainers and mentors in enterprises.....	24
	Conclusion .....	25
	List of abbreviations .....	26
	References.....	27

# List of tables and figures

## Tables

1. Framework data: score on VET indicators in Belgium and in the EU:  
2010, last available year and recent trend .....6

## Figures

1. Use of EQAVET indicators .....15
2. Share of 15-year-olds with low achievement in reading, maths and  
science .....21

## Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, the proportion of upper secondary students enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) programmes in Belgium was above the EU average: 59.7% in 2014 compared to 48% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 29); 60% in 2015 compared to 47% in the EU <sup>(1)</sup>. However, only 5.9% of upper secondary initial vocational education and training (IVET) students were following work-based programmes in 2014, against 34% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 29). The employment rate of recent upper secondary education graduates was also below the EU average: 67.4% in 2014 compared 70.8% in the EU (European Commission, 2015, p. 10). The rate was higher when taking VET graduates only: 75.6% in 2014, compared to the EU average of 73% (European Commission, 2016, p. 9). Adult participation in lifelong learning was low: 6.9% in 2015 compared to 10.7% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017, p. 29) (Table 1).

VET in the country faced the challenges of addressing early school leaving and resulting NEETs (not in education, employment, or training). In the French Community (BEFR), steps were being taken to reorganise VET provision (IVET and continuing vocational education and training (CVET)) in ten geographic areas (the so-called *Bassins*). A new coordination body (OFFA, Section 1.2.1.3.) for dual training in BEFR was also being prepared. On the adult side, a shared focus among all three regions/communities was to provide adults with additional qualifications and recognise their skills. The French Community was in the course of adopting new rules on continuing education and training and e-learning, aiming to promote lifelong training for all.

---

<sup>(1)</sup> Eurostat, data for 2015.

Table 1. Framework data: score on VET indicators in Belgium and in the EU: 2010, last available year and recent trend

Indicator label	2010		Last available year		Recent trend (per year)		
	BE <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Yr	BE <sup>f</sup> EU <sup>f</sup>	Range	BE	EU
<b>Access, attractiveness and flexibility</b>							
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	A	A	'14	59.7 <sup>b</sup> 48.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E1</sub>	'13-'14	▪ 0.5	▪ -
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	A	A	'14	5.9 <sup>b</sup> 34.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E2</sub>	'13-'14	▪ 0.0	▪ 0.1
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET			'14	20.9 69.2 <sup>E3</sup>	'13-'14	▪ 0.2	▪ -
Employees participating in CVT courses (%)	52.0	38.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	52.0 38.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Employees participating in on-the-job training (%)	21.0	20.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	21.0 20.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	7.4		'15	6.9 10.7 <sup>b</sup>	'13-'15	→ 0.0	→ 0.0
Enterprises providing training (%)	78.0	66.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	78.0 66.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	A	A	'14	58.0 <sup>b</sup> 42.7 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E1</sub>	'13-'14	▪ -	▪ -
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	34.0	25.0 <sup>e</sup>	'10	34.0 25.0 <sup>e</sup>			
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)			'15	37.7 <sup>b</sup> 33.0 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ -	▪ -
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	4.6	5.3	'15	4.5 6.9	'10-'15	→ 0.0	↗ 0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)	3.2		'15	3.0 <sup>c</sup> 4.3 <sup>b</sup> <sub>C</sub>	'13-'15	→ 0.0	↘ 0.1
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	9.7		'15	9.0 9.5 <sup>b</sup>	'13-'15	↗ 0.3	↘ 0.4
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)	12.8 <sup>B</sup>	9.5 <sup>eB</sup>	'11	12.8 9.5 <sup>e</sup>			
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)	89.3 <sup>B</sup>	80.2 <sup>eB</sup>	'11	89.3 80.2 <sup>e</sup>			
<b>Skill development and labour market relevance</b>							
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)			'13	1.18 <sup>b</sup> 0.56 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E4</sub>			
IVET public expenditure per student (1 000 PPS units)			'13	10.9 <sup>b</sup> 6.4 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E5</sub>	'12-'13	▪ 0.7	▪ 0.0
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.9	0.8 <sup>e</sup>	'10	0.9 0.8 <sup>e</sup>			
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET			'14	1.4 <sup>b</sup> 1.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E6</sub>	'13-'14	▪ 0.1	▪ 0.0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	A	A	'14	27.3 <sup>b</sup> 30.0 <sup>b</sup> <sub>E7</sub>	'13-'14	▪ 1.2	▪ -
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates			'14	9.3 <sup>E8</sup>			
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)	60.0	41.5 <sup>E9</sup>	'12	48.4 41.6 <sup>E9</sup>	'10-'12	▪ -	▪ 0.0
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20- to 34-year-olds)			'15	80.8 <sup>b</sup> 77.2 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ 0.5	▪ 0.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates			'15	10.7 <sup>b</sup> 5.3 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ 1.9	▪ -

Indicator label	2010		Last available year		Recent trend (per year)			
	BE <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Yr	BE <sup>f</sup>	EU <sup>f</sup>	Range	BE	EU
(over general stream)								1.0
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)			'15	28.5 <sup>b</sup>	23.7 <sup>b</sup>	'14-'15	▪ 3.2	▪ 0.1
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)			'15	77.3	83.7			
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	61.2	55.2	'15	61.5	57.3	'10-'15	▪ 0.1	▪ 0.4
<b>Overall transitions and labour market trends</b>								
Early leavers from education and training (%)	11.9	13.9	'15	10.1 <sup>c</sup>	11.0 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↘ 0.5	↘ 0.6
30- to 34-year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	44.4	33.8	'15	42.7 <sup>c</sup>	38.7 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↘ 0.2	↗ 1.0
NEET rate for 18- to 24-year-olds (%)		16.6	'15	15.5 <sup>b</sup>	15.8	'11-'15	↗ 0.1	↘ 0.3
Unemployment rate for 20- to 34-year-olds (%)		13.1	'15	12.6 <sup>b</sup>	12.9	'11-'15	↗ 0.5	↘ 0.1
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)		77.4	'15	79.5 <sup>b</sup>	76.9 <sup>c</sup>	'11-'15	↘ 0.4	→ 0.0
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	29.5	27.3	'15	25.3 <sup>c</sup>	23.5 <sup>c</sup>	'10-'15	↘ 0.8	↘ 0.8
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds (%)		68.6	'15	67.2 <sup>b</sup>	70.0	'11-'15	→ 0.0	↗ 0.4
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)		53.4	'15	45.6 <sup>b,c</sup>	52.6 <sup>c</sup>	'11-'15	↘ 0.4	↘ 0.1
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2020 (% of total)			'16	85.3 <sup>d</sup>	82.8 <sup>d</sup>			

(<sup>A</sup>) UOE (UNESCO OECD Eurostat) back reconstruction of 2010 values based on ISCED (international standard classification of education) 2011 not yet available.

(<sup>B</sup>) AES (adult education survey) 2011, used as proxy for 2010 baseline.

(<sup>C</sup>) 2014 b flags in Eurostat online tables ignored on the basis of other relevant Eurostat metadata.

(<sup>D</sup>) Forecast made in 2016.

(<sup>E1</sup>) Based on 28 countries; partial information for NL.

(<sup>E2</sup>) Based on 25 countries (missing: ES, PL, RO); partial information for NL.

(<sup>E3</sup>) Based on 27 countries (missing: NL); partial information for EL, IT.

(<sup>E4</sup>) Based on 19 countries (missing: BE, DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT, SK).

(<sup>E5</sup>) Based on 21 countries (missing: DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT).

(<sup>E6</sup>) Partial information for NL.

(<sup>E7</sup>) Based on 25 countries (missing: HR, IT, UK).

(<sup>E8</sup>) Based on 23 countries (missing: BE, IE, FR, CY, UK).

(<sup>E9</sup>) Based on 22 countries (missing: DE, IE, EL, NL, SI, UK).

(<sup>b</sup>) Break after 2010, therefore baseline data not included.

(<sup>u</sup>) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

(<sup>z</sup>) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.

(<sup>e</sup>) Eurostat: 'estimated'.

NB: EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified. Arrows ↗ or ↘ signal a positive or negative trend based on more than two data points and of magnitude 0.1 per year or more. Trends based on more than two data points but of smaller magnitude are indicated by →; trends based on two points only are marked ▪. Trends are estimated by means of regression models.

Source: Cedefop, 2017a, p. 29.



## CHAPTER 1.

# MTD 1 – All forms of work-based learning with special attention to apprenticeships

Initial VET in the French Community includes school-based programmes (technical and vocational) and apprenticeships. The latter take place in the workplace and in the training centre of an apprenticeship provider, or at school on the basis of a jointly agreed training plan. An apprenticeship contract is signed by the employer and the apprentice, and the apprentice receives remuneration.

There is a tradition of social dialogue. Social partners are involved at all levels of VET policies. Agreements between education and vocational training stakeholders and sectoral funds, are regularly updated and stimulate (notably) CVET in enterprises. VET providers and the public employment service cooperate to meet the needs of the apprenticeship market, such as organising speed-dating between enterprises and young people. Apprenticeship providers also organise/aid finding training places in enterprises for VET learners. A common and centralised accreditation system for recognised enterprises in apprenticeship is in place. It functions as quality assurance for apprenticeship and attracts new enterprises to get involved in training. The use of mini-companies in VET is common practice and is continuously updated. Apprenticeship, along with secondary and tertiary VET schools, provides entrepreneurship skills.

In BEFR, a range of strategic policy documents on apprenticeship and work-based learning had been adopted in 2014:

- (a) the Community policy statement 2014-19 (French Community);
- (b) the regional policy statement 2014-19 (Brussels Region);
- (c) the regional policy statement 2014-19 (Wallonia);
- (d) the policy statement of the French Community commission 2014-19 (French Community Brussels Government).

### 1.1. Policy priorities for 2016-20

The Community's priorities in this area for 2016-20 <sup>(2)</sup>, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training (DGVT), are two-fold:

---

<sup>(2)</sup> According to a survey by Cedefop among Directors General for VET in early 2016.

- (a) for apprenticeship:
  - (i) merge the existing ways of apprenticeship in the French Community into one coordinated system;
  - (ii) increase the possibilities of stages (traineeships) in companies and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);
  - (iii) update incentives for SMEs to increase training opportunities for workers and apprentices;
- (b) for work-based learning in school-based VET:
  - (i) increase the opportunities for pupils, students and teachers to have experiences in work-based settings, including visits and immersion;
  - (ii) increase the esteem of the technical professions.

## 1.2. Main actions in 2015-17

### 1.2.1. Apprenticeship

#### 1.2.1.1. 2025 strategy: prioritising apprenticeship

In the framework of its major economic recovery programme, the government of the Brussels region launched, in June 2015, its 2025 strategy which prioritises apprenticeship. A supporting education-training-employment task force was set up and steered by the economic and social council of the Brussels region. Sectoral roundtables were held and targets were set (for example the SME training service must create 800 new apprenticeship places by 2020).

#### 1.2.1.2. 2020 training plan

The government of the Brussels region adopted in December 2016 its 2020 training plan. Many of the 44 planned measures relate to apprenticeship provision:

- (a) increase by at least 1000, by 2020, the number of apprenticeship and entrepreneurial training places;
- (b) support partnerships between training providers and companies to offer more apprenticeship places;
- (c) attract companies by creating the 'training company' label to signal quality training offers;
- (d) develop quality tutoring in companies;
- (e) guidance schemes, such as placement tests to assess the skills of apprentices and entrepreneurial trainees and better support them during the training period.

Within the framework of this strategy, calls for projects <sup>(3)</sup> were launched in March 2017, seeking innovative actions in dual and vocational training programmes through partnerships with companies.

1.2.1.3. *Pact for excellence in education: reforming the IVET stream*

The *Pact for excellence in education* (Section 3.2.1.2.) foresees, in the long term, two streams in secondary education: a general (or transitional) stream and a vocational one, which will follow a common three-year educational programme. The vocational stream will be trades-oriented, with strengthened linkage to companies (to increase traineeships places and apprenticeships) and partnerships with the regions.

1.2.1.4. *Set-up of a public apprenticeship coordination service*

In September 2015, the *Office francophone de la formation en alternance* (OFFA) was established and mandated for steering, promoting, developing and coordinating apprenticeships in BEFR for apprentices aged 15 to 25. OFFA's purposes include:

- (a) harmonising practices in the framework of the (common) apprenticeship contract;
- (b) centralising accreditation of companies;
- (c) centralising and processing applications from companies for incentives.

Since September 2016, OFFA's tasks have been extended and human resources increased to support its missions. This includes drafting an apprenticeship training manual, the use of which is now compulsory, and developing a platform aiming to raise the attractiveness and visibility of apprenticeship places and serve as an online mapping and management tool.

1.2.1.5. *Apprenticeship in higher education*

New legislation in June 2016 and February 2017 (French Community) regulates apprenticeship in higher education (bachelor and master levels) and sets requirements for concluding framework agreements for apprenticeship in higher education <sup>(4)</sup>.

---

<sup>(3)</sup> <http://www.spfb.brussels/espace-pro/alternance-formation-professionnelle-au-6-mars-2017>

<sup>(4)</sup> Decree of 30.6.2016, entering into force in September 2016: [http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/42853\\_000.pdf](http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/42853_000.pdf);  
implementing decree of 22 February 2017: [http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/43624\\_000.pdf](http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/43624_000.pdf)

A steering committee for apprenticeships in higher education was put in place within the framework of the cooperation agreement between the French Community and the Walloon region <sup>(5)</sup> for the creation and development of common higher education structures dedicated to continuing training and lifelong learning activities,.

1.2.1.6. *Apprenticeship in secondary adult education*

A February 2017 Decree <sup>(6)</sup> introduces dual learning programmes, leading to certificates of value equal to that of full-time programmes in BEFR, into secondary adult education. The programmes are specifically targeted to sectors experiencing skills shortages.

1.2.1.7. *Financial incentives for companies to offer apprenticeships*

In Wallonia, since 2016, in the framework of the reform of financial incentives <sup>(7)</sup>, companies offering training places or apprentices receive an annual financial allowance if their tutors <sup>(8)</sup> have undergone a minimum of eight hours basic training, have a skills certificate (through the validation of skills, Section 5.2), or have followed other tutoring training. Comparable legislation is under preparation in the Brussels region, where a bonus of up to EUR 1 000 annually per tutor of four young people maximum is being considered.

1.2.1.8. *Supporting stakeholder coordination and cooperation*

Sectoral coaches (Wallonia) and sectoral representatives (Brussels) for apprenticeship training were hired by the sectoral funds. The OFFA ensures coordination of this network of stakeholders and optimises order to harmonise processes, from preparing the companies authorisation file to counselling and support services to companies (and tutors) and awareness-raising actions to help increase the number of apprenticeships and internships. In Wallonia, a shared

---

<sup>(5)</sup> [http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/40278\\_000.pdf](http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/40278_000.pdf)

<sup>(6)</sup> Decree of 9.2.2017, into force in January 2017:  
[http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/43613\\_000.pdf](http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/43613_000.pdf)

<sup>(7)</sup> Decree of 20.7.2016, into force in September 2016:  
<https://wallex.wallonie.be/index.php?doc=30165&rev=31729-20720>;  
implementing decree of 20.10.2016:  
[http://www.etaamb.be/fr/arrete-du-gouvernement-wallon-du-20-octobre-2016\\_n2016205606.html](http://www.etaamb.be/fr/arrete-du-gouvernement-wallon-du-20-octobre-2016_n2016205606.html)

<sup>(8)</sup> In the national context, the term tutor refers to in-company worker, while mentors work at school.

funding system for sectoral coaches was established with 50% maximum funding coming from the Walloon region (up to EUR 30 000/FTE) and sectors providing at least 50%.

#### 1.2.1.9. *Campaigns*

Throughout 2015 and subsequent years, businesses, training providers and social partners have carried out a major awareness campaign on apprenticeship, including seminars and working groups.

### **1.2.2. Funding apprenticeship providers to increase the quality of mentoring**

In Wallonia, funding is in place for training contracts concluded since September 2016 to support the provision of training for training centres/schools to ensure mentoring/guidance quality.

Financial support for hiring tutors is also in place at sectoral level to guarantee the quality of the training courses offered by companies. The purpose of this incentive also is to help providers in their mentoring/guidance activities, in the training centre/school and in collaboration with the company's tutor.

### **1.2.3. Involving social partners in practical training**

Trade unions, employers and the Walloon government signed the first Pact for employment and training in 2016. The Pact is focused on six areas:

- (a) reorganisation of employment aids;
- (b) the creation of training places for dual VET students;
- (c) reinforcing lifelong guidance;
- (d) creation of integration contracts for young people;
- (e) financial incentives for adult CVET;
- (f) supporting social dialogue in Wallonia.

For dual training, the pact focuses on:

- (a) eliminating competition between different forms of dual training;
- (b) better matching traineeship supply and demand;
- (c) more traineeships in large companies and the public sector;
- (d) supporting the quality of tutors in companies;
- (e) strengthening the apprenticeship contract;
- (f) supporting the self-employed in training a first apprentice;
- (g) strengthening the skills certification of learners;
- (h) helping jobseekers to access relevant training;
- (i) monitoring and assessing the mechanisms supporting the apprenticeships system.

## CHAPTER 2.

# MTD 2 – Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET <sup>(9)</sup>

The 2014-19 French Community programme focuses on improving all aspects of education and training, including evaluation, quality and effectiveness. There is no quality assurance national reference point but a contact and dissemination point for the French Community located at its education ministry. By 2015 no common quality assurance approach was yet in place. There is no specific requirement for evaluation and review at system level, apart from those linked to the inspection service. Inspection is mandatory for VET providers; for those receiving subsidy, the decision to grant it depends on the outcome of the inspection. Most VET providers have their own quality assurance approaches including quality standards. In 2014 there was a Community recommendation to all schools to introduce quality coordinators and education advisers. In CVET, providers use an ISO 9001 compatible quality arrangement system.

There is no systematic approach to collecting data on IVET and CVET graduates. Public VET providers and employment services collect data to monitor their activities. A 2014 Decree obliges stakeholders to cooperate in monitoring pupil transition after compulsory education <sup>(10)</sup>. The use of a database of

---

<sup>9)</sup> Sources:

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop):  
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en>

ReferNet: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/refernet>

Priorities reported by Directors General for vocational training for 2016-20;

EQAVET (2016 Secretariat survey, website, newsletters): <http://www.eqavet.eu>

2016 compendium of EQAVET NRP *Erasmus+* funding;

Council recommendations on the 2016 national reform programmes:  
<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-semester/2016/#>

Education and training monitor 2016 country reports:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor_en)

<sup>(10)</sup> <https://wallex.wallonie.be/index.php?mod=voirdoc&script=wallex2&PAGEDYN=indexBelgiqueLex.html&MBID=2014203129>

secondary school graduates was still under discussion in 2015 due to privacy issues. In 2015, cooperation agreements were in place to combine employment services and VET provider data to improve knowledge on learning paths and to set up a register (information system) for graduate occupational trajectories. In Wallonia, the employment agency produces panel data on transition to work on demand. In Brussels, *Bruxelles Formation* – the public French Community public vocational training provider – publishes every year a study of the professional pathways of former trainees.

*Le Forem* (the regional public employment service in Wallonia) monitors the labour market to identify labour force shortage risks before they occur. The *Bassins* produce a report each year on the VET programmes and trades that should be developed as a priority in each area (Section 2.2). This is used by all relevant VET institutions, including the education system steering committee. For IVET, results from inspections are also taken into account to match education and training to skill needs.

In the Brussels region, the employment observatory publishes every year an analysis of bottleneck occupations. *Bruxelles Formation* matches the results with its own training offer. A common report is also drafted every three years on the sectors with employment prospects.

## 2.1. Quality assurance in line with EQAVET

For 2016-20, the Community's priorities in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, are to ensure that:

- (a) learning outcomes are understood by any teacher and trainer as added value in supporting student and trainee pathways to more qualification or/and better jobs;
- (b) quality processes are in place and create added value;
- (c) concrete partnerships for lifelong learning pathways are in place according to the needs of the so-called *Bassins* at regional and local levels.

Work has been carried out at the Institute for apprenticeship and entrepreneurial training in small and medium enterprises in Wallonia (IFAPME) to renew the ISO certification for its entrepreneurship training (2016) and to obtain accreditation for apprenticeships (2017). *Bruxelles Formation* also renewed its ISO certification (August 2015) for organising and managing the training offer in the Brussels region.

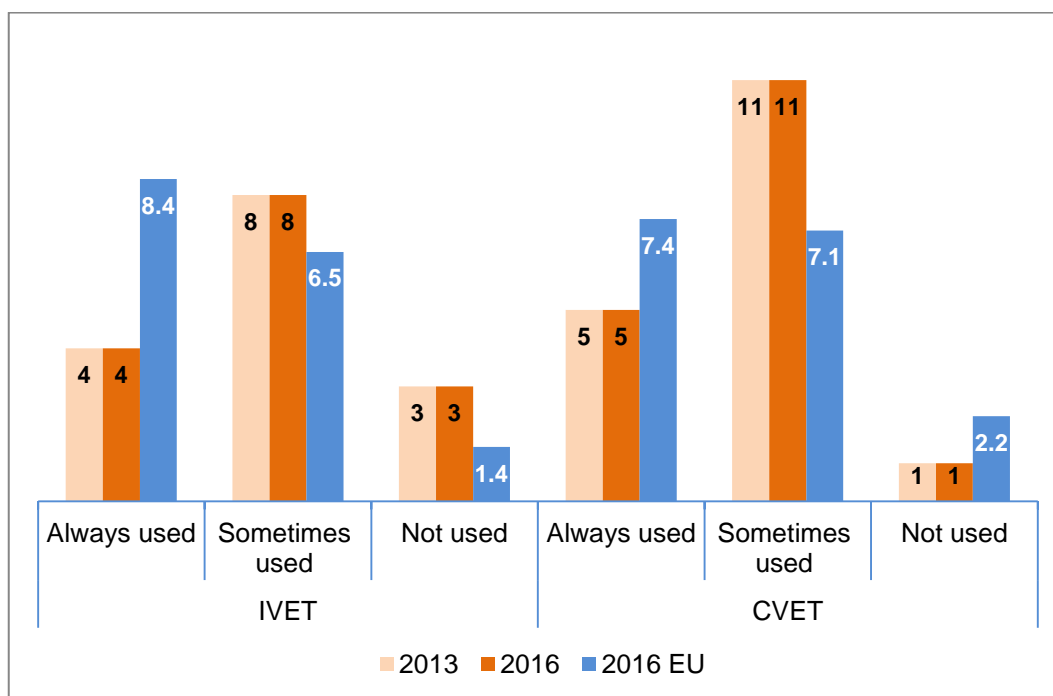
A team has been appointed within the Ministry of Education to coordinate the cross-diagnostics project for the external evaluation of VET providers in

accordance with European quality assurance in vocational education and training (EQAVET) requirements. VET providers are directly involved and a working group is being set up. Among the items under revision are the feedback loop (EQAVET) and the suitability of VET systems with respect to harmonised standards. A working group on quality is also being set up in 2017 by the positioning and steering authority of the national qualifications framework (CFC<sup>(1)</sup>), Section 3.2.3.2).

Data on the use of skills at the workplace and effectiveness of mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market are not available.

The situation on the systematic use of EQAVET indicators to monitor the VET system ('always used' item in Figure 1) has remained unchanged compared to 2013. BEFR was below the EU average in IVET and CVET in 2016.

Figure 1. Use of EQAVET indicators



NB: Of the 17 indicators suggested by the 2009 EQAVET recommendation, four were 'always used' in IVET in 2013 and 2016 in Belgium (FR) compared to 8.4 in the EU on average in 2016.

In 2013 and 2016, no reply was provided for the use of two indicators in IVET.

EU average was calculated based on available information for 31 out of 35 VET systems.

Source: Cedefop calculations based on EQAVET Secretariat surveys for 2013 and 2016 data.

<sup>(1)</sup> *Cadre francophone des certifications pour l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie.*



## 2.2. Continuous information and feedback loops in initial VET and continuing VET

A new structural approach was developed through strategic activity areas (SAA) to identify labour-market needs and to strengthen the link between the training offer and occupations of the future. In May and June 2016, roundtables involving various experts and companies were organised by *Le Forem* on priority areas of socioeconomic development in Wallonia. These were able to identify the main developments expected in Wallonia in the next five years, as well as corresponding skills and training needs.

The 2020 training plan (Section 1.2.1.2) includes the development of statistical tools to monitor school-to-work transition and the setting up in October 2017 of a Brussels observatory for employment and training, to match the training offer better to employment needs.

The ten local committees for VET and employment (*Instances Bassins enseignement qualifiant – formation – emploi*) produced their analytical and prospective reports for 2016. The reports were used by the authorities to produce recommendations and a list of trainings to be developed as a matter of priority. They also produced, in cooperation with local Flemish partners, the 2016 registry of the French and Flemish IVET and CVET offer in the Brussels region.

## CHAPTER 3.

# MTD 3 – Access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible/permeable systems, guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning

### 3.1. Policy priorities for 2016-20

The Community's priorities for 2016-20 for young people and adults in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, are to ensure that:

(a) integrated guidance is offering more transparency to young people and parents;

(b) by 2020, the added value of the so-called *titre de competence* is well known by citizens, VET stakeholders, the public employment services (PES), and social partners; and by 2018, PES, social partners, and sectors play a key role in the implementation of the 2012 European recommendation on validation.

### 3.2. Main actions taken in 2015-17

#### 3.2.1. Pact for excellence in education

In the framework of the Community policy declaration (2014-19), preparation of the *Pact for excellence in education* – an action plan to reform education – started in January 2015. The pact aims to improve education quality and reduce inequalities (between schools, students and genders) in the Wallonia-Brussels federation. It focuses on four main aspects:

- (a) students;
- (b) education players;
- (c) learning content;
- (d) governance.

It builds on a highly cooperative approach between all key players in education: trade unions, parents' associations, education authorities, students, teachers and actors in the cultural, social, economic and academic fields. In terms of vocational education, it foresees several measures:

- (a) improving career guidance in education;

- (b) creating a database of sectors and professions;
- (c) foreseeing two streams in education: a transition stream and a vocational stream leading to qualifications, the latter by setting up a three-year VET programme;
- (d) better coordinating internships and other work placements;
- (e) strengthening synergies between education, training and employers;
- (f) improving VET governance;
- (g) coordinating funding between Wallonia-Brussels federation and regional authorities.

### **3.2.2. Access for all to VET: the 2020 training plan (Brussels)**

The 2020 training plan (Section 1.2.1.2) promotes several principles and measures supporting access for all to VET:

- (a) guarantee equal rights of access to VET;
- (b) systematically orient jobseekers to training;
- (c) encourage return to education and training;
- (d) ensure all VET programmes lead to certification by 2020;
- (e) increase the number of validation certificates (Section 3.2.3.3) issued per year to 2 000 by 2020 (180% increase);
- (f) chart a concerted orientation policy around the *Cité des Métiers*;
- (g) support the recognition of foreign diplomas;
- (h) reach a yearly number of at least 20 000 trained jobseekers by 2020.

### **3.2.3. Guidance**

Since 2016, several *Cités des Métiers* are being developed in Brussels, Namur, Liège and Charleroi. *Cités des Métiers* are multi-stakeholder places, open to public seeking information for career and lifelong learning guidance <sup>(12)</sup>.

### **3.2.4. Transparency, recognition, validation**

#### *3.2.4.1. Francophone service for trades and qualification (SFMQ)*

In October 2015, the renewal of the cooperation agreement on the Francophone service for trades and qualification (*service francophone des métiers et des qualifications*, SFMQ) was approved by Decree by all relevant Francophone parliaments. The service brings together the public employment service along with education and trainings providers and the regional competence validation consortium (CVDC). SFMQ's objectives are to set up occupational profiles and

---

<sup>(12)</sup> <http://www.reseaucitesdesmetiers.com/eng/index.php>

training profiles in line with the reality of trades, to ensure the labour market relevance of training. It is expected that use of these profiles by all training providers (IVET and CVET) will support learner mobility across training providers by ensuring that prior learning is taken into account; it will also increase education and training system transparency and improve validation opportunities.

#### 3.2.4.2. *National qualifications framework* <sup>(13)</sup>

The technical features of a Francophone qualifications framework for lifelong learning (*cadre francophone des certifications pour l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie*, CFC) had been fully developed and linked to the European qualifications framework (EQF) at the end of 2013. The CFC is based on learning outcomes and comprises all levels, but distinguishes between qualifications awarded within and outside formal education and training. As it takes into account principles that also underpin the Flemish qualifications framework, it might help improve inter-regional transparency. The CFC was formally adopted in February 2015 <sup>(14)</sup> but has not yet reached operational status. A steering and positioning authority is currently being set up and will be operational in early 2016. This body will be responsible for implementation and follow-up of the CFC, including the positioning of qualifications. In the first stage of implementation only qualifications delivered by public providers will be included, opening up at a later stage to other qualifications.

#### 3.2.4.3. *Validation* <sup>(15)</sup>

In BEFR, validation of non-formal and informal learning is divided into different systems:

- (a) validation of competences (*validation des compétences*, VDC) for VET, which is highly standardised and benefits from formal recognition by authorities;
- (b) *valorisation des acquis de l'expérience* (VAE) in higher education;
- (c) *reconnaissance des capacités acquises* (RCA) in adult education.

It is possible to obtain a *titre de compétence* (skills or validation certificate, a partial VET qualification awarded by the competence validation consortium)

---

<sup>(13)</sup> Cedefop, 2017b.

<sup>(14)</sup> *Décret portant assentiment à l'accord de coopération conclu le 26 Février 2015 entre la communauté française, la région wallonne et la commission communautaire française relatif à la création et la gestion d'un cadre francophone des certifications, en abrégé CFC*: <http://archive.pfwb.be/10000000201500e>

<sup>(15)</sup> Cedefop, 2017b; Cedefop et al., 2017.

through validation. A person who has all the necessary partial qualifications can obtain a full qualification through adult education. Validation grants access to formal education. Quality assurance mechanisms for the validation of work experience are in place.

In the reporting period, special approaches are being implemented through projects funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) for the skills validation of immigrants and refugees. Revision of the 2003 Decree on skills validation in CVET is in progress in 2016. The competence validation consortium is engaged in a range of validation projects (such as validation of inmate's skills). A memorandum, *Nostra* <sup>(16)</sup>, to guide its work up until 2019 has been adopted.

### **3.2.5. Training, reskilling and upskilling vulnerable groups, jobseekers and employees**

#### *3.2.5.1. Attracting jobseekers to training*

The Brussels public vocational training provider *Bruxelles Formation* launched the *Formtruck* project in 2017. Designed as a front-line service, this project aims to have a mobile information centre circulating in Brussels to inform low-skilled jobseekers and NEETs, and to attract/guide them to a training scheme.

#### *3.2.5.2. Internships*

In January 2016, the Brussels Region parliament approved new legislation on internships for job-seekers, making access to internships more flexible and making it easier for companies to offer them.

#### *3.2.5.3. House of employment and training*

In February 2017, the first house of employment and training was created in a Brussels municipality to enable local stakeholders to develop common actions and projects aimed at informing jobseekers and employers on training and employment procedures, and providing them with assistance.

---

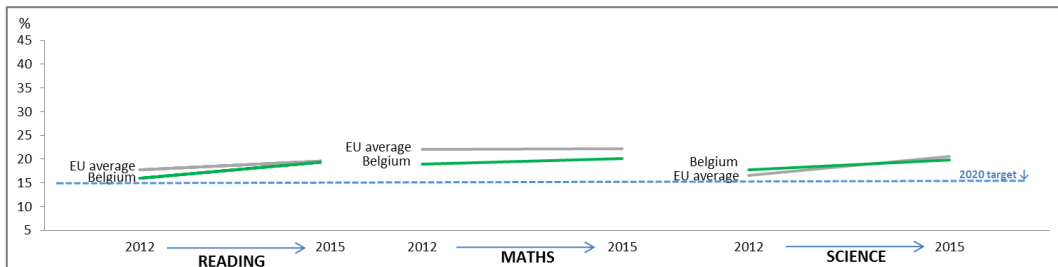
<sup>(16)</sup> <http://www.cvdc.be/sites/default/files/public/uploads/common/Note-orientation-strat%C3%A9gique-validation-competences.pdf>

## CHAPTER 4.

# MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET

The context of key competences in 2015 was mainly characterised by an increasing share of young low achievers in reading, maths and science compared with 2012 (Figure 2). However, the share of low achievers in Belgium is lower than in the EU on average, where the trend is similar.

Figure 2. **Share of 15-year-olds with low achievement in reading, maths and science**



NB: Low achievement means failing level 2 on the PISA (programme for international student assessment) scale.

Source: OECD, 2014; OECD, 2016

VET enrolls 60% of all upper secondary learners in the country <sup>(17)</sup>, so this trend is likely to be reflected in the key competences trained for in VET programmes; these are central to compulsory education until age 18, including initial VET. This is happening against a background of highly decentralised VET in the three Belgian communities <sup>(18)</sup>.

### 4.1. Key competences in initial VET

For 2016-20, the priority of the French Community in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is gradually to strengthen key competences in IVET curricula in light of the digitalisation and other changes in the labour market and in society.

<sup>(17)</sup> Calculated from Eurostat, data for 2015.

<sup>(18)</sup> For more information on key competences in VET see Bruxelles Formation, 2016.

In December 2015, the Walloon Government adopted a digital strategy for Wallonia <sup>(19)</sup>. Skills and employment is one of five themes of the strategy that promotes digital skills, also in VET. Measures include modern equipment in schools, teacher training to accelerate the digital transition of learning, and creating more digital resources for education and training.

The Institute for apprenticeship and entrepreneurial training in small and medium enterprises in Wallonia has also designed a plan for its own network, promoting the development of digital competences.

In 2016, the Decree on enhancement of the core course for qualifying education entered into force. It introduces more general subjects (such as foreign language and science) in VET at the expense of technical and vocational ones.

The 2015-20 entrepreneurial generations programme (part of *Marshal plan 4.0 – Wallonia*) supports schools that provide creative and entrepreneurial qualifications, as well as entrepreneurial experience for learners and relevant teacher training.

#### 4.2. Key competences in continuing VET

The priority of the French Community in this area for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is gradually to strengthen key competences in CVET curricula in the light of digitalisation and other changes in the labour market and in society.

In the Brussels Region, the 2020 training plan (Section 1.2.1.2) promotes key competences. The objective is to double the training offer in literacy by 2020.

Within *Bruxelles Formation*, a new test tool in French as a foreign language aimed at newcomers was developed and a new e-learning centre (*espace public numérique de formation*, EPNF) was put in place at the beginning of 2016. This provides training places and a range of certifications for online training. The initiative was financed by the asylum, migration and integration fund (AMIF).

In Wallonia, a new version of the online language platform *Wallangues* <sup>(20)</sup> was launched in August 2016.

---

<sup>(19)</sup> <https://www.digitalwallonia.be/strategie-digital-wallonia/>

<sup>(20)</sup> <https://www.wallangues.be>

## CHAPTER 5.

# MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors

## 5.1. Initial training for teaching/training staff in VET schools

The *Pact for excellence in education* (Section 3.2.1.2) has been under preparation since 2015. It promotes the quality of initial and further training of teachers and the use of new teaching tools and innovative teaching practices. It also aims at increasing the attractiveness of a teaching career and the status of teachers.

*FormaForm* as the main public training structure (IVET and CVET), responsible for trainers of French Community public vocational training providers, has developed a multi-year strategic plan for 2016-20. *FormaForm* is also in the process of revising its initial training scheme to turn it into a customised, multi-modal pathway that includes various learning procedures and teaching tools (mostly digital).

A major reform of titles and positions in primary and secondary education entered into force in September 2016; it aims at harmonising titles, positions and salary scales of primary and secondary education teachers. The initial training, which leads to obtaining the certificate of teaching skills (CAP), has undergone major changes, including strengthening of field practice through traineeships <sup>(21)</sup>.

## 5.2. Initial training for trainers and mentors in enterprises

For 2016-20, the Community's priority in this area, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to ensure that the profession of trainer is of high standard and can cope with changing needs.

The competence validation consortium set out a definition of the profession of in-company tutor, including the related key activities and skills, specified in a

---

<sup>(21)</sup> [http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/40701\\_000.pdf](http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/40701_000.pdf)



vocational certification profile. Following this, in cooperation with the VET providers, a validation frame of reference was adopted, indicating how to establish and verify that the skills have been mastered. Thirteen centres now offer this validation service in Wallonia and in Brussels and the first candidates were validated in 2016. This is linked with the reforms on financial incentives as described in Section 1.2.1.7.

In the Brussels Region, the *Mentoring in companies* project was launched during the reporting period. The project aims at training in-company mentors to implement apprenticeship in SMEs. A mobile team offers modular training adapted to specific company needs at the company's premises.

In November 2016, *Bruxelles Formation*, the public French Community vocational training provider, adopted a 2016-18 diversity plan, targeted at raising in-company trainer awareness of social diversity, and improving their preparedness to cope with diversity and integration in workplace training.

### 5.3. Continuing professional development for teaching/training staff in VET schools

The *Pact for excellence in education* (Section 3.2.1.2) also addresses the quality of further training of teachers.

According to a February 2016 Decree, all schools have to establish by 2018 an action plan that includes a strategy for the continuous professional development of their teachers.

### 5.4. Continuing professional development for trainers and mentors in enterprises

The Community's priority in this area for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training, is to ensure that the profession of trainer is of high standard and can cope with changing needs.

*FormaForm*, the partnership association set up between Walloon and Brussels public CVET operators, has developed its multi-year strategic plan for 2016-20, which also addresses the continuous professional development of in-company trainers.

Under the ESF-funded project *Business tutor*, a mobile team (of two) is appointed to visit companies and coach tutors onsite. Tools are used to address difficulties that tutors may encounter with young apprentices.

## Conclusion

Since 2015, a wide range of regulations to develop apprenticeship and practical training have been adopted in the French Community. Steps have been taken in quality assurance, even though complete and systematic mechanisms for quality assurance and data collection for guiding the development of VET are still missing. The 2020 training plan and the *Pact for excellence in education* have paved the way for improving accessibility of all to VET and qualifications. An important milestone has been reached in developing the Francophone qualifications framework. Measures have also been taken in the areas of guidance, developing tools to direct jobseekers towards training, supporting the development of key competences, and improving the initial and continuing training of school and in-company VET teachers and trainers.

The actions carried out show that the main lines of the Riga conclusions and the Community's policy priorities for 2016-20 are being addressed. Yet, information available to Cedefop at the time suggests an issue which could benefit from further consideration: more systematically using the EQAVET indicators to monitor the development of VET. Cedefop also suggests setting out policy priorities, for the remaining period until 2020, on:

- (a) continuous information and feedback loops in IVET and CVET;
- (b) initial and continuing training of VET school teachers and trainers.

## List of abbreviations

AES	adult education survey
AMIF	asylum, migration and integration fund
BEFR	French Community of Belgium
CAP	certificate of teaching skills
CFC	<i>cadre francophone des certifications pour l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie</i> Francophone qualifications framework for lifelong learning
CVDC	regional competence validation consortium
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
DGVT	Director General for vocational education and training
EPNF	<i>espace public numérique de formation</i>
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
EQF	European qualifications framework
ESF	European Social Fund
Eurostat	statistical office of the European Union
GDP	gross domestic product
IFAPME	Institute for apprenticeship and entrepreneurial training in small and medium enterprises in Wallonia
ISCED	international standard classification of education
IVET	initial vocational education and training
NEETs	not in education, employment, or training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFFA	<i>office francophone de la formation en alternance</i>
PES	public employment services
PISA	programme for international student assessment
PPS	purchasing power standards
RCA	<i>reconnaissance des capacités acquises</i>
SAA	strategic activity areas
SFMQ	<i>service francophone des métiers et des qualifications</i> francophone service for trades and qualification
SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
STEM	science, technology, engineering and math programmes
UOE	UNESCO OECD Eurostat
VAE	<i>valorisation des acquis de l'expérience</i>
VDC	<i>validation des compétences</i> validation of competences
VET	vocational education and training

# References

[URLs accessed 17.1.2018]

Bruxelles Formation (2016). *Key competences in vocational education and training: Belgium*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.

[http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2016/ReferNet\\_BE\\_KC.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2016/ReferNet_BE_KC.pdf)

Cedefop (2017a). *On the way to 2020: data for vocational education and training policies: country statistical overviews: 2016 update*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/5561>

Cedefop (2017b). *European inventory on national qualifications framework 2016: Belgium*. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/belgium-european-inventory-nqf-2016>

Cedefop; European Commission; ICF (2017). *2016 update to the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning: country report: Belgium*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.

[https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2016/2016\\_validate\\_BE\\_NL.pdf](https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2016/2016_validate_BE_NL.pdf)

European Commission (2015). *Education and training monitor 2015: Belgium*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/repository/education/tools/docs/2015/monitor2015-belgium\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/tools/docs/2015/monitor2015-belgium_en.pdf)

European Commission (2016). *Education and training monitor 2016: Belgium*. Luxembourg: Publications Office.

[https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/monitor2016-be\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/monitor2016-be_en.pdf)

Eurostat. *Pupils enrolled in upper secondary education by programme orientation, sex, type of institution and intensity of participation* [database].

[http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ\\_uoe\\_enrs04&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ_uoe_enrs04&lang=en)

OECD (2014). *PISA 2012 results in focus: what 15-year-olds know and what they can do with what they know*. <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results-overview.pdf>

OECD (2016). *PISA 2015: PISA results in focus*.

<https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-results-in-focus.pdf>