



Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015–19

BELGIUM

French community



Cedefop monitoring of vocational education and training policies and systems

Progress towards the medium-term deliverables
of the Riga conclusions

Country chapter

FRENCH COMMUNITY OF BELGIUM

Developments in vocational education and training policy
in 2015-19

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Introduction

In June 2015, the ministers in charge of vocational education and training in the EU Member States, the candidate countries and the European Economic Area countries, convened in Riga, agreed on objectives for vocational education and training (VET) policies for 2015-20 ⁽¹⁾.

Cedefop has been entrusted with monitoring the countries' policies implemented towards reaching these objectives.

This country chapter is part of the monitoring process. It was drafted based on input from the national ReferNet team. It presents an overview of the major policy developments that have taken place in the country in 2015-19, in the areas covered by the Riga medium-term deliverables (MTDs).

The country chapter is structured as follows:

- (a) the introductory section Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015 briefly sketches the VET context in the country in 2015, highlighting selected figures and some major policy initiatives that were just being adopted or started at that time. This introductory section is targeted at setting a baseline to put in perspective the policy choices and developments that have taken place since the beginning of the Riga cycle;
- (b) five thematic chapters then follow, devoted to the five respective MTDs outlined in the Riga conclusions. Each thematic chapter also begins with a 2015 baseline, more specifically addressing the MTD-related topics. The baseline is followed by the presentation of the major policy developments in the MTD since 2015;
- (c) the country chapter ends with a conclusion summarising the main lines of the 2015-19 policy developments and highlighting possible priorities for the future.

This country chapter is part of the information which the European Commission used to prepare the European Semester exercises ⁽²⁾ in 2017-19. The chapter also informs the work of Cedefop and the European Training

(1) *Riga conclusions 2015 on a new set of medium-term deliverables in the field of VET for the period 2015-20, as a result of the review of short-term deliverables defined in the 2010 Bruges communiqué:*

https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/RigaConclusions_2015.pdf

(2) European Semester: https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester_en

Foundation (ETF) in preparing a joint monitoring report on the implementation of the Riga conclusions. Both the joint report and the country chapter are aimed at informing the work of EU Member States' Directors General for Vocational Training (DGVTS) and Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT) on taking stock of the outcomes of the Riga conclusions and preparing the next steps for the EU VET policy for the next few years.

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 ⁽³⁾. 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). The rate was higher when taking VET graduates only: 75.6% in 2014, compared to the EU average of 73% (European Commission, 2016). Adult participation in lifelong learning was low: 6.9% in 2015 compared to 10.7% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, 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 of Belgium (BEFR), steps were being taken to reorganise VET provision (initial and continuing) in ten geographic areas (the so-called *Bassins*). A new coordination body (OFFA) 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 of Belgium was in the course of adopting new rules on continuing education and training and e-learning, aiming to promote lifelong training for all.

⁽³⁾ Eurostat, data for 2015.

Table 1. Framework data: score on VET indicators in Belgium and in the EU, 2010-15

Indicator label	2010		2015(*)		Trend in 2011-15 (per year)			
	BE ^f	EU ^f	Yr	BE ^f	EU ^f	Range	BE	EU
Access, attractiveness and flexibility								
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	A	A	'14	59.7 ^b	48.0 ^b _{E1}	'13-'14	▪ -0.5	▪ -0.9
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	A	A	'14	5.9 ^b	34.0 ^b _{E2}	'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 ^{E3}	'13-'14	▪ 0.2	▪ -1.4
Employees participating in CVT courses (%)	52.0	38.0 ^e	'10	52.0	38.0 ^e			
Employees participating in on-the-job training (%)	21.0	20.0 ^e	'10	21.0	20.0 ^e			
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	7.4		'15	6.9	10.7 ^b	'13-'15	→ 0.0	→ 0.0
Enterprises providing training (%)	78.0	66.0 ^e	'10	78.0	66.0 ^e			
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	A	A	'14	58.0 ^b	42.7 ^b _{E1}	'13-'14	▪ -0.5	▪ -1.0
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	34.0	25.0 ^e	'10	34.0	25.0 ^e			
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)			'15	37.7 ^b	33.0 ^b	'14-'15	▪ -0.3	▪ -0.3
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 ^C	4.3 ^{bC}	'13-'15	→ 0.0	↘ -0.1
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	9.7		'15	9.0	9.5 ^b	'13-'15	↗ 0.3	↘ -0.4
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)	12.8 ^B	9.5 ^{eB}	'11	12.8	9.5 ^e			
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)	89.3 ^B	80.2 ^{eB}	'11	89.3	80.2 ^e			
Skill development and labour market relevance								
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)			'13	1.18 ^b	0.56 ^b _{E4}			
IVET public expenditure per student (1 000 PPS units)			'13	10.9 ^b	6.4 ^b _{E5}	'12-'13	▪ 0.7	▪ 0.0
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.9	0.8 ^e	'10	0.9	0.8 ^e			
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET			'14	1.4 ^b	1.0 ^b _{E6}	'13-'14	▪ 0.1	▪ 0.0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	A	A	'14	27.3 ^b	30.0 ^b _{E7}	'13-'14	▪ 1.2	▪ -0.4
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates			'14	^b	9.3 ^{E8}			
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)	60.0	41.5 ^{E9}	'12	48.4	41.6 ^{E9}	'10-'12	▪ -5.8	▪ 0.0
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20- to 34-year-olds)			'15	80.8 ^b	77.2 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 0.5	▪ 0.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)			'15	10.7 ^b	5.3 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 1.9	▪ -1.0

Indicator label	2010		2015(*)		Trend in 2011-15 (per year)			
	BE ^f	EU ^f	Yr	BE ^f	EU ^f	Range	BE	EU
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)			'15	28.5 ^b	23.7 ^b	'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
Overall transitions and labour market trends								
Early leavers from education and training (%)	11.9	13.9	'15	10.1 ^c	11.0 ^c	'10-'15	↘ 0.5	↘ 0.6
30- to 34-year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	44.4	33.8	'15	42.7 ^c	38.7 ^c	'10-'15	↘ 0.2	↗ 1.0
NEET rate for 18- to 24-year-olds (%)		16.6	'15	15.5 ^b	15.8	'11-'15	↗ 0.1	↘ 0.3
Unemployment rate for 20- to 34-year-olds (%)		13.1	'15	12.6 ^b	12.9	'11-'15	↗ 0.5	↘ 0.1
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)		77.4	'15	79.5 ^b ^c	76.9 ^c	'11-'15	↘ 0.4	→ 0.0
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	29.5	27.3	'15	25.3 ^c	23.5 ^c	'10-'15	↘ 0.8	↘ 0.8
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds (%)		68.6	'15	67.2 ^b	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 ^b ^c	52.6 ^c	'11-'15	↘ 0.4	↘ 0.1
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2020 (% of total)			'16	85.3 ^d	82.8 ^d			

(*) The data in this column are the data available in 2016. Where 2015 data were not available, data from previous years were used.

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

(^B) AES (adult education survey) 2011, used as proxy for 2010 baseline.

(^C) 2014 b flags in Eurostat online tables ignored on the basis of other relevant Eurostat metadata.

(^D) Forecast made in 2016.

(^{E1}) Based on 28 countries; partial information for NL.

(^{E2}) Based on 25 countries (missing: ES, PL, RO); partial information for NL.

(^{E3}) Based on 27 countries (missing: NL); partial information for EL, IT.

(^{E4}) Based on 19 countries (missing: BE, DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT, SK).

(^{E5}) Based on 21 countries (missing: DK, IE, EL, FR, HR, IT, PT).

(^{E6}) Partial information for NL.

(^{E7}) Based on 25 countries (missing: HR, IT, UK).

(^{E8}) Based on 23 countries (missing: BE, IE, FR, CY, UK).

(^{E9}) Based on 22 countries (missing: DE, IE, EL, NL, SI, UK).

(^b) Break after 2010, therefore baseline data not included.

(^u) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

(^z) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.

(^e) 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

1.1. Baseline 2015

Initial VET in the French Community of Belgium has for long included school-based programmes (technical and vocational) and apprenticeships. At the beginning of the reporting period, the Government of the French Community, the Government of Wallonia and the French Community Commission (French-speaking Brussels Government) were in the course of reforming work-based learning. A 2008 agreement targeted at unifying the dual system was being brought into force. 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) ⁽⁴⁾;
- (c) the regional policy statement 2014-19 (Wallonia) ⁽⁵⁾;
- (d) the policy statement of the French Community Commission 2014-19 (French-speaking Brussels Government).

In the new system being implemented, dual training took place in the workplace (three to four days a week) and in the training centre of an apprenticeship provider (or in a school, on the basis of a jointly agreed training plan). A dual training contract would be signed by the employer and the apprentice / student; a common version of the contract was being introduced (the *contrat d'alternance*), ensuring equal treatment of all apprentices and students (in terms of wages, rights and obligations). The contract would last three years. The apprentice/student would receive remuneration.

Cooperation between all VET stakeholders had been a long-standing tradition. Agreements with sectors for work-based learning were in place. VET providers and the employment service used to cooperate to match the needs of the apprenticeship market, for example to organise speed dating between

⁽⁴⁾ Within this frame the 2025 Brussels' Strategy launched in 2016 aimed at revitalising the Brussels economy; it provides a wide action plan (FP 2020) for vocational training.

⁽⁵⁾ Following a change in the political majority, a new Walloon government took office in July 2017. A new regional policy declaration for 2017-2019 was adopted.

enterprises and young people. Sectors used to fund continuing vocational training in enterprises.

At the beginning of the reporting period, a challenge still to tackle was the dropout from apprenticeship.

1.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20

BEFR's priorities in this area for 2016-20 ⁽⁶⁾, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training (DGVET), are two-fold:

- (a) for apprenticeship:
 - (i) merge existing apprenticeship approaches 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.

1.3. Main actions in 2015-19

1.3.1. Dual Training/Apprenticeship

1.3.1.1. 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 dual training/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 Brussels SME training service (SFPME) must increase by 800 the number of apprentices trained by 2020. To meet this goal, job seekers can now register for free in the Brussels' apprenticeship network, SFPME, and its training centres.

⁽⁶⁾ According to a survey by Cedefop among Directors General for VET in early 2016.

1.3.1.2. 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 dual training/apprenticeship provision:

- (a) increase by at least 1 000, by 2020, the number of dual training/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 ⁽⁷⁾ were launched in March 2017, seeking innovative actions in dual and vocational training programmes through partnerships with companies. The SFPME (the SME training service) promoted a form of contract-free apprenticeship where the apprentice participates in workshops to receive guidance and coaching for reskilling, acquiring soft skills, and jobsearch. The SFPME also launched in-company job trials (*Essais Métiers en entreprise*), one-week placements for trying several jobs, to help future apprentices choose a trade/employer.

1.3.1.3. Pact for excellence in education: reforming the IVET stream

Launched in January 2015, this in-depth reform aims to improve the quality of education and reduce all forms of inequality. The *Pact for excellence in education* (*Pacte pour un enseignement d'excellence*, Section 3.3.1) was approved by the Government of the French Community in March 2018. Guidelines were agreed by all education stakeholders and gradually implemented from September 2017 onwards. In IVET programmes provided by the formal education system (referred to as 'qualifying education'), it was decided that practical training in companies should be strengthened in all streams (school-based and dual, regular education or specialised). Evaluation of needs for this in terms of traineeship places was carried out by the General Directorate for Compulsory Education (within the Ministry of Education). A pilot-project aimed at organising in-company

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

immersions was developed by the cabinet of the Minister for Education. This project focused on supporting the implementation of in-company immersion programmes within streams/subjects leading to occupations where labour shortage exists (in the sectors of technical maintenance, mechanics, and IT). The project was renewed in 2019, involving 14 schools in various professional sectors. It shows an increase in the transfer rate to the job market when focus is on the immersion quality.

1.3.1.4. *Setting up a public dual training coordination service*

In September 2015, the francophone office for dual training (*Office francophone de la formation en alternance*, OFFA) was established and mandated for steering, promoting, developing and coordinating dual training / apprenticeships in BEFR for apprentices and students 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 companies' applications for incentives.

Since September 2016, OFFA's tasks have been extended and human resources increased to support its missions. The additional tasks include drafting a dual training manual (the use of which is now compulsory), and developing a platform to raise the visibility of apprenticeship places and serve as an online mapping tool (e.g. through statistical analyses) and a management instrument. For this, OFFA has set up a working group composed of representatives of all types of dual education, learning providers and the IWEPS (Walloon institute for prospective and statistics). This working group is in charge of creating a consensus of providers on the collection of data and the type and frequency of indicators to be provided. While waiting for the platform to be fully effective, the OFFA published, in April 2018, a first study on apprenticeship describing the evolution of apprenticeship contracts in the French Community of Belgium between 2012 and 2017.

The interactive platform is also expected to assist the setting-up of a database of providers and a single contact point for the various stakeholders concerned. OFFA put the single contact point in place ⁽⁸⁾ in 2017. It answers questions from various stakeholders; in 2018, slightly fewer than 1 400 questions were asked and answers received. Although still in the development phase, the

⁽⁸⁾ info@offa-oip.be

platform is already in use for processing the financial incentives granted by the Walloon Region.

The Single interactive platform of dual training, also led by OFFA, has different objectives in the short, medium and long term: ensure the transparency of supply and demand for work-study placements; support the matching of supply and demand; centralise the process for the approval of companies in the framework of work-study agreements; support the monitoring of sandwich courses on the basis of reliable statistical data; raise awareness, provide information about and promote alternance/dual training; and process financial incentives for sandwich courses in French-speaking areas. The project is planned to reach the production stage in 2019. A website will provide information on work-based and dual training, including the offer of training courses. The platform will allow businesses and learners to submit forms online. It will also be accessible to (work-study) training providers, sectors, and the Walloon Region administration.

In January 2018, the three ministers responsible signed the first OFFA 'management contract', which specifies its missions for the period 2017-22. The main strategic points include:

- (a) steering the dual system;
- (b) synergies and development of common tools;
- (c) promoting dual training / apprenticeships;
- (d) monitoring apprenticeships.

Under point (a), steering the dual system, OFFA has developed and has been operating the network of sectoral coaches and representatives (Section 1.3.1.8);

Under point (b), synergies and development of common tools, OFFA has set up :

- (a) a working group to develop tools and a legal basis for addressing issues which providers and companies may face (e.g. creating a web-based point of contact);
- (b) an annual *vade-mecum* on apprenticeship, providing up-to-date information on the legal texts, incentives for learners and companies, social/legal issues;
- (c) a working group tasked with developing a skills inventory to assist in guiding candidates to training. A first model has been tested as of December 2018. The tool will be available for providers for the school year 2019/20;
- (d) an assessment and mediation committee to deal with appeals against refusals, suspensions and withdrawals of company accreditation.

1.3.1.5. *Higher dual vocational education*

New legislation in June 2016 and February 2017 regulates dual programmes in higher education (bachelor and master levels) and sets requirements for concluding framework agreements for higher dual vocational education programmes ⁽⁹⁾.

A steering committee for dual programmes in higher education was put in place within the framework of the cooperation agreement between the French Community and the Walloon region ⁽¹⁰⁾ for the development of common higher education structures dedicated to continuing training and lifelong learning activities.

1.3.1.6. *Dual vocational education in adult education at secondary level*

A February 2017 decree ⁽¹¹⁾ introduced dual learning programmes in adult education, leading to certificates of value equal to full-time programmes in BEFR. The programmes are specifically targeted to sectors experiencing skills shortages. The qualification certificate issued for a dual learning programme can be referenced to the national qualifications framework.

1.3.2. 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;

⁽⁹⁾ [Decree of 30 June](#), entered into force in September 2016, and [implementing decree of 22 February 2017](#):

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

⁽¹⁰⁾ http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/40278_000.pdf

⁽¹¹⁾ Decree of 9 February 2017 concerning various measures on adult education:

http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/43613_000.pdf

- (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.

According to the regional government declaration 2017-19 ⁽¹²⁾, the social partners of Wallonia will be the Government's preferential intermediary in charting and implementing employment and training policies.

1.3.3. Supporting stakeholder coordination and cooperation

Sectoral coaches (Wallonia) and sectoral representatives (Brussels) for apprenticeship/dual training were hired by the sectoral funds. The OFFA coordinates this network of stakeholders and harmonises processes, preparing company authorisation files, providing support services to companies (and tutors), and developing awareness-raising actions to help increase the number of apprenticeships and internships. A shared funding system for sectoral coaches was established in Wallonia with 50% maximum funding coming from the Walloon region (up to EUR 30 000/FTE) and sectors providing at least 50%.

A database of companies that are likely to welcome trainees was set up by Le Forem in Wallonia. It will centralise information and is expected to help Forem advisors manage internship offers.

1.3.4. Financial incentives for companies and learners

In Wallonia, since 2016, in the framework of the reform of financial incentives ⁽¹³⁾, companies offering training places or apprenticeship places receive an annual financial allowance if their tutors ⁽¹⁴⁾ have undergone a minimum of eight hours basic training, or have a skills certificate (through the validation of skills, Section

⁽¹²⁾ See footnote 5.

⁽¹³⁾ Decree of 20.7.2016, into force in September 2016:
<https://wallex.wallonie.be/index.php?doc=30165&rev=31729-20720;>
 And implementing decree of 20.10.2016:
http://www.etaamb.be/fr/arrete-du-gouvernement-wallon-du-20-octobre-2016_n2016205606.html

⁽¹⁴⁾ In the national context, the term tutor refers to in-company worker, while mentors work at school.

5.2), or have followed other tutoring training ⁽¹⁵⁾. 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.

Since August 2018, the youth bonus is awarded to young apprentices for each four-month work-based learning programme with the same employer. The young learner may receive this bonus only three times during the same training cycle, provided that s/he has successfully completed one year of training. The amount is EUR 500 for the first two applications and EUR 750 for the third ⁽¹⁶⁾.

Since the end of 2017, OFFA is in charge of processing and paying financial incentives granted by the Walloon Region. The number of grants distributed is on the increase.

In Wallonia, funding is also in place for training contracts concluded since September 2016 to support training centres/schools in ensuring mentoring/guidance quality. Support is in place at sectoral level for companies to hire tutors and guarantee the quality of in-company training.

The Brussels Region has decided to support the companies that host and train apprentices and/or learners alternating work and studies. Financial support was long requested by the Association of Small Businesses (*Union des Classes Moyennes, UCM*). Since 1 July 2018, a yearly bonus of EUR 1 750 is awarded to Brussels companies that organise work-based training using trainers from their staff to instruct learners enrolled in alternance schemes, aged 15 to 25 and residing in Brussels ⁽¹⁷⁾.

1.3.5. Promoting work-based learning

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

Since February 2017, specific agreements have been signed with a dozen sectors (including metallurgy and electricity). The aim is to raise the attractiveness of trades and to promote them through campaigns, workshops, and competitions. The specific agreements also involve teacher training and aim at increasing the number of traineeships for IVET students from the formal

⁽¹⁵⁾ This measure is one of the four bonuses (like the one described in Section 1.2.2) implemented following a reform of incentives for apprenticeships. The regional allowances are disbursed by the OFFA (Section 1.2.1.4).

⁽¹⁶⁾ Order of 7 June 2018 of the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region concerning bonuses designed to encourage work-based learning.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Order of 7 June 2018 of the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region concerning bonuses designed to encourage work-based learning.

education system. Many activities are held by providers, companies or sectors to attract learners in the system and to give it a better image: open days, internships discoveries trades; speed jobbing; contests, and Startech days.

CHAPTER 2.

MTD 2 – Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET

2.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, the French Community of Belgium did not have a quality assurance national reference point (QANRP) in place, just a contact and dissemination point for the French Community, located at its education ministry. An Inspectorate was in place, carrying out mandatory external inspection of VET providers. Self-assessment was also in place, as most VET providers had their own quality assurance approaches.

There was no systematic approach to collecting data on IVET and CVET graduates. Public VET providers and employment services used to monitor their own activities. In Wallonia, Le Forem – the public employment and vocational training service – could, on demand, produce panel data on transition to work. A 2014 decree had introduced the obligation for stakeholders to cooperate in the monitoring of student transition after compulsory education. In Brussels, Bruxelles Formation – the French-speaking public vocational training provider in Brussels – published every year a study on the professional pathways of former trainees. Due to privacy issues, the use of a database of secondary school graduates was still under discussion in 2015 ⁽¹⁸⁾. However, cooperation agreements had been signed, paving the way towards combining employment services' and VET providers' data to improve knowledge on graduates' occupational trajectories.

Elements of skills needs anticipation were in place. At the level of the French Community of Belgium, the then recently created *Bassins* started to produce each year a report on the VET programmes and trades that should be developed as a priority in each area. In Wallonia, Le Forem – the regional public employment service in Wallonia – used to analyse labour shortages over a five-

⁽¹⁸⁾ Discussions resumed at the end of 2017. The objective is to start analysing the first paths in early 2019.

year horizon. In the Brussels Region, the Brussels Observatory for Employment published every year an analysis of bottleneck occupations. Bruxelles Formation would match the results with its own training offer. The Francophone service for trades and qualification – SFMQ ⁽¹⁹⁾ was being set up to produce occupational profiles (which would also serve for guidance purposes) and the corresponding training profiles for each occupation ⁽²⁰⁾. All these analyses and tools would help training providers and public authorities to adapt and improve the training programmes.

2.2. Quality assurance in line with EQAVET in 2015-19

For 2016-20, BEFR's priorities in this area, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, are to ensure that:

- (a) quality in education is improved at all levels (*Pact for excellence in education*) (see MTD 1, 2)
- (b) 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;
- (c) quality processes are in place and create added value;
- (d) concrete partnerships for lifelong learning pathways are in place according to the needs of the so-called *Bassins* ⁽²¹⁾ at regional and local levels.

As part of the reform for excellence in education (*Pacte pour un enseignement d'excellence*), a new decree (*Plan de pilotage*, 12.9.2018) recasts the steering of the education system in order to set up processes for 'continuous exchanges and monitoring' between the administration and the schools. Piloting is based on objectives determined by the educational teams themselves.

Work has been carried out at the Institute for apprenticeship and entrepreneurial training in small and medium-size enterprises in Wallonia (IFAPME) to renew the ISO certification for its entrepreneurship training and its accelerated management training (May 2017). Accreditation for apprenticeships aimed at young people (15+) was also obtained (2017). Bruxelles Formation also

⁽¹⁹⁾ Service Francophone des Métiers et des Qualifications.

⁽²⁰⁾ This was done using the Jobs and Trades Directory (*Repertoire Emplois Métiers – REM*), a tool derived from the Operational Directory of Professions and Jobs (*Répertoire Opérationnel des Métiers et des Emplois – ROME*).

⁽²¹⁾ The local committees for VET and employment.

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 of schools, training centres and validation of skills providers'. A team of 'diagnosticians' from education, training or skill validation jointly evaluate the assessment processes for VET providers. This is an external evaluation in accordance with the reference framework set by EQAVET ⁽²²⁾. A working group was set in 2017 and the first diagnoses were implemented in early 2018 ⁽²³⁾. To ensure the consistency of the approach, the team was trained in providing unbiased diagnosis.

The working group has planned a new set of cross-diagnoses for 2019. Among the items analysed by the diagnosticians are the evaluation of the mastery of learning outcomes, the material resources, the monitoring of the quality of the learning outcomes assessment and the staff who evaluate the learning outcomes.

BEFR was below the EU average in the use of EQAVET indicators to monitor the VET system in IVET and CVET in 2018; the EQAVET indicative descriptors are not used to monitor the VET system. In contrast, EQAVET indicators are used to monitor VET at provider level.

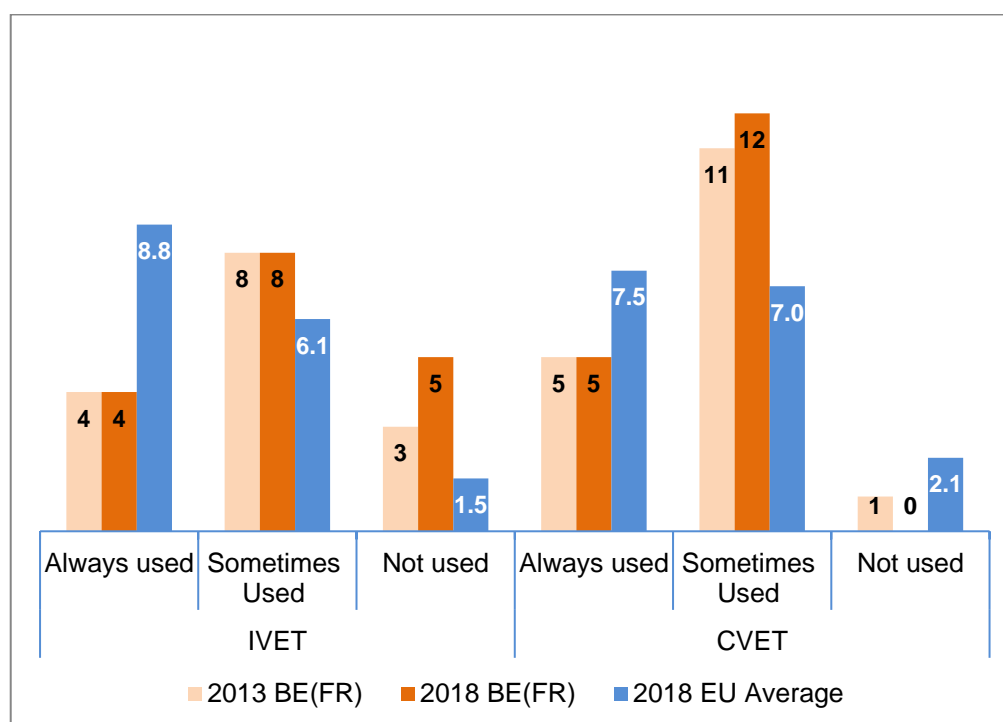
Indicators that are systematically used in IVET are those in relation to consultation with stakeholders to identify local/individual needs, the use of resources, the investment in training of teachers and trainers, and the review procedures. The EQAVET indicators on the participation of stakeholders in the analysis of local needs and learner feedback are not used by IVET operators.

Indicators that are systematically used in CVET are those in relation to specific goals, the quality assurance system, the use of resources, learner feedback, the review processes, and the participation of stakeholders in analysing the outcomes of the evaluation process. The EQAVET indicator on self-assessment is not used by CVET providers.

⁽²²⁾ European quality assurance in vocational education and training.

⁽²³⁾ For example, from January to June 2018, tiling and hairdressing trades were diagnosed by the teams.

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 2018 in Belgium (FR) compared to 8.8 in the EU on average in 2018.

In 2013 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 2018 data.

2.3. Continuous information and feedback loops in initial VET and continuing VET in 2015-19

In Wallonia, 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. The main developments expected in Wallonia in the next five years were identified, as well as corresponding skills and training needs.

The 2020 Training plan (Sections 1.3.1.2 and 3.3.2) foresaw the development of statistical tools to monitor school-to-work transition and the setting up of a Brussels Observatory for Employment and Training (OBEF, now called view.brussels), to match the training offer better with employment needs. This observatory was created in December 2017 and its implementation process started in January 2018. It takes over the missions of the former Brussels

Observatory for Employment, on top of which it will analyse the education and training offer, employment needs, and transitions between training and employment. It also analyses skill needs and shortages in the labour market.

In 2016 and 2017, the ten local committees for VET and employment (*Instances Bassins enseignement qualifiant - formation - emploi*), in charge of coordinating VET provision at local level, produced their analytical and prospective reports. The committees also identified priority training themes, based on trades in labour supply shortage ⁽²⁴⁾. These priority themes will be allocated more resources. Report results are used by all relevant institutions in VET, including the Education System Steering Committee. The Brussels local committee also produced, in cooperation with local Flemish partners, the 2016 registry of the French and Flemish IVET and CVET offers in the Brussels region.

The federation of the technology industry (AGORIA), in collaboration with the regional employment offices (VDAB, Forem and Actiris) carried out the first analysis ever of the main labour market trends until 2030 ⁽²⁵⁾. This in-depth study of the Belgian labour market covers the country, the three regions, 16 sectors of activity and 75 employment profiles. It addresses job vacancies and unemployment by region, sector and profile, and labour mismatches. It provides recommendations for policy makers.

An Observatory on Vocational and Qualifying Education, Trades and Technologies was created on 6 June 2018. It is expected to contribute to education policy through:

- (a) developing (with the support of *Bassins*, the local committees for VET and employment) indicators on the qualifications offer in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and its relevance to labour market needs;
- (b) developing (in particular based on the work of Forem and Actiris) a business watch and a strategic vision for the world of work in relation to the technological, societal, demographic and economic changes that affect employment;

⁽²⁴⁾ For example, the Local Committee of Wallonia-Picardy has identified the trades of mason, screed layer and tiler, home nurse, logistics helper, production operator in the food industry, (pork) butcher, baker/pastry cook, metalworker / welder, and machining technician, to cite a few. The Local Committee of the Brussels Region points to the trades of construction draughtsman, surveyor, assistant building site manager, crane operator, electrical installation technician, maintenance technician specialising in boilers, tiler, hairdresser, paver, screed layer, mason.

⁽²⁵⁾ For more information, see: <https://www.agoria.be/fr/Agoria-Sans-politique-adaptee-il-y-aura-584-000-postes-vacants-non-pourvus-en-2030>

- (c) based on this work, propose a new approach to the supply of qualifications.

A steering plan is also set, based on a feedback loop system. Six-year contracts of objectives are introduced to assist reaching the education improvement goals set by the Government of the Walloon-Brussels Federation. The steering plan lists 15 levers for action ⁽²⁶⁾; pedagogical teams decide about their specific objectives (three to five). The school carries out an annual assessment of the progress made and decides on further actions as needed. Delegates to contracts of objectives (DCOs), assisted by zone directors (DZ), represent the ministry. Constant dialogue between school boards and DCOs is encouraged. DCOs carry out an interim evaluation after three years and a final one at the end of the six-year contract. Modification of specific objectives can be considered in response to the interim review. The introduction of this mechanism aims at reinforcing quality assurance in the education system.

⁽²⁶⁾ For example, in terms of struggling against educational failure and remediation, decreasing school dropout rates, digitalising, infrastructures, external partnerships, relationships with parents.

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. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, all three communities of Belgium were conducting major school reforms. A reform of compulsory education was launched in 2015 in the French Community of Belgium ⁽²⁷⁾. At the same time, adult participation was below the EU average (7.1% compared to 10.7% in 2014) (European Commission, 2015), and the communities/regions aimed to provide adults with additional qualifications and recognise their skills (European Commission, 2015). The communities and regions had announced measures to revise their education policies and improve basic skills for all, with particular attention to the employability and integration of migrants (European Commission, 2015). They had also committed to implement the recommendation on the Youth Guarantee, which had led to an increase in the offer of traineeships targeted at the young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs). In the French Community of Belgium in particular, drop out from VET was high and had been addressed by a 2013 decree ⁽²⁸⁾.

A regional qualifications framework (*Cadre francophone des certifications pour l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie – CFC*) was being developed since 2006 and was formally adopted in February 2015 ⁽²⁹⁾.

A comprehensive validation strategy was in place. Validation mechanisms were used by universities, *hautes écoles*, upper secondary schools, adult education and the competence validation consortium (*Consortium de validation des compétences – CVDC*), a consortium of stakeholders from education, training and the labour market involved in validation.

⁽²⁷⁾ *Pacte pour un enseignement d'excellence*: <http://www.pactedexcellence.be>.

⁽²⁸⁾ Decree of 21 November 2013:
http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/39909_001.pdf

⁽²⁹⁾ <https://wallex.wallonie.be/index.php?doc=29286&rev=30796-20446&from=rss>

Challenges of VET in the French Community of Belgium at the beginning of the reporting period were in relation to guidance, perceived as not connected enough to learners' interests ⁽³⁰⁾; and pupils with an immigrant background, at a disadvantage in terms of academic performance ⁽³¹⁾ and transition to work (European Commission, 2015).

3.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20

BEFR'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* ⁽³²⁾ 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.
- (c) the skills validation system in Brussels is strengthened (2025 Brussels' strategy and 2020 Training plan).

3.3. Main actions taken in 2015-19

3.3.1. Pact for excellence in education ⁽³³⁾

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 dimensions:

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

⁽³⁰⁾ Input from Cedefop (2016).

⁽³¹⁾ See OECD (2013b), PISA 2012 results: <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results.htm>

⁽³²⁾ A partial VET qualification awarded by the competence validation consortium.

⁽³³⁾ See also MTD 2.

(d) governance.

The pact 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) setting up two streams in education: a transition stream and a qualifying stream, the latter through 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.

In order to make qualifying education a 'stream of excellence', the French Community and education stakeholders have pointed out the necessity to organise changes by focusing on three main strategic areas: the reorganisation of the qualifying stream, the strengthening of its steering, and the strengthening of the synergies between education, training and employment.

The projects that were carried out in order to reorganise the qualifying pathways pay special attention to the improvement of student guidance; this would happen, not only before entering, or while in, qualifying education but also as from primary education through a set of common years of education (*tronc commun*). The purpose is to provide students, during these common years, with information on the occupations they could be trained for in upper secondary education, thus enabling them to choose between heading to higher education or instead towards qualifying education (leading to an occupation).

For students who change their mind after completing the qualifying stream and would like to continue in higher education, a conversion programme is foreseen. The distinction between vocational education and qualifying education is being abolished.

The qualifying stream will last three years including internships, in-company immersions and dual learning. Programmes will be structured in terms of learning outcomes units. Certification by unit (*Certification par unités, CPU*) is being developed (Section 3.3.4).

A new Education Code was adopted in December 2018, encouraging a reduction in class repetition by 50% by 2030. Learners are to be provided with

individualised support and schools are required to ensure that every pupil masters the basic school curriculum ⁽³⁴⁾.

3.3.2. Access for all to VET: the 2020 Training plan (Brussels)

The 2020 Training plan (Section 1.3.1.2) 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 3.3.6.3) issued per year to 2000 by 2020 (180% increase);
- (f) chart a concerted orientation policy around Cities of trades (*Cités des Métiers*);
- (g) support the recognition of foreign diplomas;
- (h) reach a yearly number of at least 20 000 jobseekers in training by 2020.

As regards persons with disabilities (measure 4 of the 2020 Training Plan), a working group of relevant providers was formed, called Handistreaming. Projects were developed by Bruxelles Formation and its partners, targeted at raising awareness of guidance professionals, improving accessibility to training centres for persons with reduced mobility, and increasing the training offer for this target group.

Access of (former) inmates to training (measure 5 of the 2020 Training Plan) is also being addressed. An action plan to organise 500 training and validation actions by 2020 has been adopted. Since November 2017, information sessions are held in prisons to guide those aspiring to validation and/or training.

Some training mechanisms, such as the business leader (entrepreneurship) programme, offer two annual intakes (September and January), which allows more people to access training offers.

3.3.3. Improving the governance of VET supply

Following a 2016 regulatory amendment, Bruxelles Formation is in charge of regulating the French-speaking training and validation offer in the Brussels Region. A new management contract was signed for 2017-22. Operational objectives and actions were set out in the Management plan 2017-22 approved in

⁽³⁴⁾ The reform implementing the common curriculum in compulsory education was approved on 2 May 2019.

December 2017. On 26 January 2018, the management board of Bruxelles Formation agreed on the extension of the body's mission to setting up priorities taking on board labour market and learner needs; designing a common training and validation programming framework; and monitoring providers' activity. The exercise will be evaluated. Social partners and the *Bassins* will be involved.

3.3.4. Permeability, flexibility: certification by units

Progress has been made in the experimental implementation of Certification by units (*Certification par Unités, CPU*) in formal IVET programmes. As of September 2017, CPU was put in place for three optional subjects in the seventh year (upper-secondary). Schools intending to implement the CPU in other subjects can request authorisation for it from the cabinet of the Minister for Education. The experimentation and developments are carried out in the framework of the *Pact for excellence in education*: the CPU system is thus being gradually implemented but remains difficult to organise. However, a new decree ⁽³⁵⁾ introduces the CPU system in the last three years of the vocational school's pathways. A new October 2018 regulation ⁽³⁶⁾ set up a guidebook for better implementation of the CPU system at the upper secondary level of qualifying education.

3.3.5. Guidance

Since 2016, several Cities of trades (*Cités des Métiers, CDM*) are being developed in Brussels, Namur, Liège and Charleroi. *Cités des Métiers* are multi-stakeholder places open to the public seeking information for career and lifelong learning guidance ⁽³⁷⁾. Brussels CDM was inaugurated on 5 March 2018.

3.3.6. Transparency, recognition, validation

3.3.6.1. 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 training providers and the competence validation consortium (CVDC). SFMQ's objectives are to set up occupational profiles and training

⁽³⁵⁾ 14.6.2018.

⁽³⁶⁾ Circular 6851, 3.10.2018.

⁽³⁷⁾ <http://www.reseaucitesdesmetiers.com/eng/index.php>

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.

3.3.6.2. *National qualifications framework* ⁽³⁸⁾

The 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 ⁽³⁹⁾ but has not yet reached operational status. A steering and positioning authority is operational since 2016. This body is tasked with managing the implementation of the CFC, including positioning qualifications. In the first stage of implementation, only qualifications delivered by public providers will be included. The qualifications directory was opened in August 2017, making it possible to position qualifications for a period of two years under a transitional procedure, after which a new application will have to be submitted for final positioning. The need for this progressive approach comes from the differences between existing systems, which implies agreements for criteria shared by all providers. The positioning phase has started, aiming to reach a critical mass of qualifications that is needed for parties to use the framework. By 2019, 52 qualifications for education and vocational training had been positioned from levels 2 to 5. The 450 graduates from the Belgian higher education system were placed at level 6 of the CFC. The CESS (upper secondary certificate) has been positioned at level 4 of the CFC ⁽⁴⁰⁾.

⁽³⁸⁾ Cedefop, 2017b.

⁽³⁹⁾ *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>

⁽⁴⁰⁾ <http://www.cfc.cfwb.be>; <http://www.cfc.cfwb.be/cfc/certifications/>

3.3.6.3. *Validation* ⁽⁴¹⁾

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 of experience (*valorisation des acquis de l'expérience*, VAE) in higher education;
- (c) recognition of knowledge and skills (*reconnaissance des capacités acquises*, RCA) in adult education.

Some other forms of valorisation of experience in adult education were introduced in 2018 ⁽⁴²⁾.

It is possible to obtain a skills validation certificate (*titre de compétence*, a partial VET qualification awarded by the competence validation consortium) 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, specific 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 since 2016. The competence validation consortium (CVDC) is engaged in a range of validation projects (such as validation of inmate skills, currently being carried out in three Brussels prisons). A memorandum, *Nostra* ⁽⁴³⁾, has been adopted to guide its work up until 2019. In 2017, the CVDC helped with validating skills of workers in sectors faced with deindustrialisation, relocation and restructuring ⁽⁴⁴⁾: nearly 400 validation certificates were issued in the second quarter of 2017. This has generated interest on the part of companies and boosted their demand. A working group called VDC in companies was

⁽⁴¹⁾ Cedefop, 2017b; Mathou, 2016.

⁽⁴²⁾ Decree of the Government of the French Community of 29 November 2017 defining the procedures for the valorisation of acquired experience in reference to Article 8 of the Decree of 16 April 1991 organising the adult education system. The decree spells out the main stages for the validation procedure. It was prepared in consultation with social partners and higher education institutions.

⁽⁴³⁾ <http://www.cvdc.be/sites/default/files/public/uploads/common/Note-orientation-strat%C3%A9gique-validation-competences.pdf>

⁽⁴⁴⁾ For example, Caterpillar's restructuring in Wallonia.

created in connection with social partners to support the CVDC in this strand of action.

In the Brussels region, a pilot project is currently under development to promote the use of validation in the local public services.

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Number of active validation centres	9	12	13	12
Number of trades where validation is possible	13	14	17	20
Number of validation sessions carried out	126	148	150	388
Number of validation tests carried out (ESF 2018 Objective: 430)	337	371	383	1194
Number of registered candidates per validation session	457	466	474	1404
Number of titles awarded following validation tests (ESF 2018 objective: 301)	260	261	279	804

3.3.7. Training, reskilling and upskilling vulnerable groups, jobseekers and employees

3.3.7.1. Training for jobseekers

Bruxelles Formation, the public French-speaking vocational training provider in Brussels, 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 provide low-skilled jobseekers and NEETs with information about the training opportunities offered by Bruxelles Formation and its partners, and to attract/guide them to a training scheme. The truck can also be active at the request of any Brussels' VET providers.

S.KOOL, a public-private partnership in the heart of Brussels, trains groups of eleven young jobseekers during three months to become salespeople and gain experience in the field. Trainees sign a work contract and follow a programme that combines theoretical courses and practice (including in the Dutch language). This programme continues.

3.3.7.2. Internships for jobseekers

In January 2016, the Brussels Region Parliament approved new legislation on internships for jobseekers, making access to internships more flexible and making it easier for companies to offer them. A partnership has been under

development since 2017 to provide financing for new training places in the municipal authorities of the Brussels region.

3.3.7.3. *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.

3.3.7.4. *Tackling early school leaving*

IFAPME (the Institute for apprenticeship and entrepreneurial training in small and medium-size enterprises in Wallonia) has in place a scheme to tackle early school leaving. Young people (under 25 years of age) are offered a personalised action plan composed of guidance activities, skills assessment, discovery of trades, and reskilling ⁽⁴⁵⁾. IFAPME also introduced in January 2018 the Coaching project, a one-year pilot action targeted at mentoring future apprentices (to motivate them and provide them with soft skills) and increasing the number of apprentices in companies. Mid-term evaluation of the project showed positive effects. Final evaluation is underway.

In BEFR, the 43 dual training schools (CEFA) are also involved (in cooperation with companies) in ESF projects (2014-20) ⁽⁴⁶⁾ aimed at tackling early school leaving. The TIQO ⁽⁴⁷⁾ project, initially implemented in the specialised education sector, was later extended to the qualifying education one. The aim is to provide students in their last year of secondary education with guidance tools for socio-professional insertion and work.

Since 2015, the formal education system has also been following the principles of the Youth guarantee concerning early school leaving, drop-out and young Neets; it implemented projects subsidised by the ESF, such as My school, My job ⁽⁴⁸⁾, a website which offers information to parents and students but also to professionals about the education system and professions.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ (a) Guarantee for sustainable integration; (b) *IDEALi – Insertion Durable dans l'Emploi par l'Alternance et la Formation d'Adultes* [sustainable integration in employment through adult dual training systems].

⁽⁴⁶⁾ CEFAccroche, CEFAccueil and CEFAgo.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ *Transition-insertion adaptée à l'enseignement qualifiant ordinaire* (transition and integration adapted to qualifying education).

⁽⁴⁸⁾ <https://monecolemonmetier.cfwb.be/>

3.3.7.5. *Training for low-qualified adults*

The OISP (*Organismes d'insertion socioprofessionnelle*, socioprofessional integration centres) welcome, both in Brussels and in Wallonia, very low-skilled individuals and those without a recognised diploma. The centres regularly collaborate with adult education schools. After a vocational guidance session and/or a basic professional training, many centres refer their trainees to the Adult education system (EPS) to obtain an officially recognised certificate or diploma and thereby facilitate their chances of access to decent work. The flexible and modular system offered by adult education schools is adapted to the needs of this public.

3.4. Supporting VET participation through increased attractiveness

A new agreement between IFAPME and a company called Wanty (active in the building sector) defines the principles and modalities of collaboration to:

- (a) encourage dual training to meet the recruitment needs of qualified employees, mainly in critical functions and occupations in short supply;
- (b) promoting sandwich courses as solutions for employment;
- (c) develop continuous training.

As of 2019, IFAPME and Wanty will train about twenty candidates in two specific professions that meet the needs of the company:

- (a) operators of civil engineering machinery;
- (b) road workers and various networks.

CHAPTER 4.

MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET

4.1. Baseline 2015

In 2015, in Belgium, key competences were provided mainly by compulsory education (usually from age 6 to 18) including initial VET (ISCED level 3). Key competences (languages, civic education, mathematics) were part of general courses. The learning outcomes expected from these courses were defined by each community. Within this framework, education providers and teachers in the French Community would also take own measures to more specifically address learners' needs (Bruxelles Formation (2016)).

In 2014, the French Community adopted the 2014-19 Community policy statement (*Fédérer pour réussir*) ⁽⁴⁹⁾ that included priority for cultural and artistic education. The Government of the French Community also planned to focus on basic skills and key competences (reading, speaking and writing; mathematics, science and technology; languages; and ICT skills). It intended to generalise for all (including VET schools) the system of a summative external examination at the end of secondary school (ISCED 3). Since 2014/15, standardised external exams in French and History have become compulsory in upper-secondary education, including VET (Bruxelles Formation, 2016).

In 2015, all three Belgian communities were conducting major education and training reforms and have announced or taken measures to improve basic skills for all, including VET, where academic performance of learners was poor (European Commission, 2015). About 700 000 adults living in the French Community of Belgium had low basic skills (European Commission, 2015). More attention to key competences was also being demanded by employers' unions, which were becoming increasingly concerned by the fast evolution of technology and its impact on upcoming competence requirements in languages and ICT (Bruxelles Formation, 2016).

⁽⁴⁹⁾ <http://www.federation-wallonie-bruxelles.be/index.php?id=dpc2014-2019>

In 2015, the European Commission and the Council recommended the French Community of Belgium to address skills shortages ⁽⁵⁰⁾. The recommendation referred to skills for the labour market, including key competences.

Another challenge to be tackled at the time was the evaluation of key competence policies. In 2015, the data on key competence policies were not exhaustive, given the extreme fragmentation of information (Bruxelles Formation, 2016).

4.2. Key competences addressed in the reporting period

Table 2 outlines the key competences in initial and continuing VET that were addressed in the reporting period. A description of policies is provided in the following sections.

Table 2. **Key competences addressed in 2015-19 (*)**

	IVET	CVET
Country language(s) and literacy		YES
Foreign languages	YES	YES
Digital competence	YES	YES
Maths		
Science		
Technology		
Social and civic competences		
Learning to learn		
Financial literacy		
Entrepreneurship competence	YES	
Cultural awareness and expression		
Key competences as a package	YES	

(*) The seven subjects of the *Pact for excellence in education* that will be addressed in the core curriculum are: languages, artistic expression, science and technology, human and social sciences, artistic activities, creativity, commitment and entrepreneurship and learning to learn.

NB: The list derives from the 2006 EU key competences framework for lifelong learning; it has been restructured and expanded with additional competences that can be considered key.

Source: Cedefop based on ReferNet input.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ See the Country specific recommendations of the European Semester 2015: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2015-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-council-recommendations_en

4.3. Key competences in initial VET

For 2016-20, the priority of the BEFR 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 digitalisation and other changes in the labour market and in society.

In December 2015, the Walloon Government adopted a Digital strategy for Wallonia ⁽⁵¹⁾, to promote the technological skills that are seen as essential for the development of learners. In October 2018, within the framework of the *Pact for excellence in education* (Section 3.3.1), the Government of the French Community adopted a digital strategy ⁽⁵²⁾ for the education system to address the skills required by the digital society of today and tomorrow. The strategy includes measures in terms of coaching and training, digital equipment, dissemination and sharing of teaching resources, and the digital governance of the education system. Digital competence is regarded both as a learning object and a support to other disciplines. Digital education will require active practice in all disciplines, with each field of study having a specific use of digital technology to which learners should be introduced. Digital education will play a key role in bringing together mathematics, science, manual, technical and technological skills.

The Institute for apprenticeship and entrepreneurial training in small and medium-size enterprises in Wallonia (IFAPME) has designed a digital plan for its own network (within the framework of *Marshal plan 4.0, Wallonia*). The IFAPME digital plan aims at supporting the development of the digital skills of apprentices and trainers, and the use of digital tools at IFAPME itself and in companies. The plan includes training actions and infrastructure investments (the budget for 2017 and 2018 amounted to EUR 300 000).

Under the language strand of the *Marshal plan 4.0, Wallonia*, IFAPME organises language immersion courses for its apprentices (IVET and CVET), with two weeks in a language school in London. This project is subjected to an annual assessment.

In 2016, the Decree on Enhancement of the core course for qualifying education entered into force. It strengthened general subjects (such as foreign languages and science) in formal IVET programmes at the expense of more technical and vocational subjects.

⁽⁵¹⁾ <https://www.digitalwallonia.be/strategie-digital-wallonia/>

⁽⁵²⁾ <http://enseignement.be/index.php?page=28101&navi=4540>

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

An ESF project titled *Validation of key competences* ⁽⁵³⁾ is currently being set up in the framework of a partnership between education and training stakeholders. Its objective is to define practices for the recognition of key competences in line with the 2018 European recommendation on key competences. The project is also expected, in the future, to design and pilot validation paths.

The two VET providers for apprenticeship (IFAPME in Wallonia and SFPME/EPF in Brussels) have developed new initiatives to improve key competences. IFAPME includes digital aspects in its offer. At SFPME / EPF (Brussels), young people undergo a skill development session along with getting up to six-month assistance for searching a placement.

4.4. 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 (Sections 1.3.1.2 and 3.3.2) promotes key competences. The objective is to double the training offer in literacy training by 2020.

In 2016, Bruxelles Formation set up a new test tool in French as a foreign language, targeted at newcomers and financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. A new e-learning centre (*Espace public numérique de formation, EPNF*) was established at the beginning of 2016. It provides training places and a range of certifications for online training. In Wallonia, a new version of the online language platform *Wallangues* ⁽⁵⁴⁾ was launched in August 2016.

Web-related projects (*BeCode; MolenGeek*) were launched in March 2017 in Brussels, intended to enable young jobseekers under 25 to acquire basic web developing skills in six months. These projects are now part of the structural training offer and are very popular with young people.

⁽⁵³⁾ *Validation des compétences clés*, on ESF projects list at:

<http://www.fse.be/index.php?id=193>

⁽⁵⁴⁾ <https://www.wallangues.be/>

Bruxelles Formation has also strengthened its offer of foreign languages training and French as foreign language for migrants and incomers.

A new project called *e-Tremplin Jeunes* aims to secure the career paths of young people under 25 in Brussels. The project includes:

- (a) vocational training in sectors related to new technologies, using active pedagogies;
- (b) support for the resumption of studies to build bridges to higher education in sectors related to new technologies, in collaboration with schools of social advancement (*Enseignement de promotion sociale*);
- (c) assistance for internship / job search.

In 2017, under its digital plan (Section 4.3), IFAPME introduced (in its entrepreneurial training and business creation programmes) modules on the digital transformation of business models. Modules on creative, innovative and organisation processes of SMEs were also introduced. Also, in addition to language immersion sessions (Section 4.3), the IFAPME offers its CVET trainees (entrepreneurial training) an opportunity to undergo part of their training abroad in the form of an internship (Erasmus+ HORECVET 2017 project). These internships lead to attainments recognised in the training paths. The IFAPME is also involved in the *Validation of key competences* project (Section 4.3). For adults, the project aims to develop key skills identification and recognition tools, assist the recognition of non-formal and informal skills, and support the return to learning, certification and access to employment.

CHAPTER 5.

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

5.1. Baseline 2015

Already at the beginning of the reporting period, Belgian VET was highly decentralised, particularly as regards teacher and trainer training.

Six main groups of teaching/training staff were at play in upper-secondary VET programmes:

- (a) teachers of general subjects;
- (b) teachers of vocational theoretical subjects;
- (c) teachers of occupational practice or technical courses (e.g. in workshops);
- (d) practical training instructors (accompanying students during their workplace practical training);
- (e) classroom-based trainers teaching general and vocational courses in centres of apprenticeship, i.e. the SFPME ⁽⁵⁵⁾ and the IFAPME⁽⁵⁶⁾;
- (f) in-company trainers (nationally referred to as in-company tutors)

There were also trainers for continuing VET (CVET) programmes offered by Bruxelles Formation, Le Forem, IFAPME and SFPME, via the common BEFR training centre called 'FORMAFORM'.

5.1.1. Becoming VET teaching/ training staff: entry requirements and initial training

People wishing to become a VET teacher had to hold a relevant diploma: a teacher's diploma for upper secondary education (usually concerning general subjects); or a teacher's diploma for lower secondary education (in general, technical or practical occupational subjects); or a secondary or higher level diploma along with an additional higher level diploma in pedagogy. Professionals

⁽⁵⁵⁾ The SME training service.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ The Institute for apprenticeship and entrepreneurial training in small and medium-size enterprises.

with another type of diploma (if deemed sufficient) and/or professional experience could also be recruited as IVET teachers.

Requirements (diploma and/or professional experience) to become trainer of general or vocational courses in apprenticeship centres varied, but professional skills were the major criterion. Both at SFPME and IFAPME, being a trainer of vocational courses had to be a secondary activity, as trainers had to be active professionals.

In Wallonia, IFAPME general and vocational course trainers who did not hold a teaching diploma had to attend training within three to five years of taking up duties. Basic teacher training of 158 hours was required for those working as a trainer for more than 256 hours per year. Completing full teacher training was required for those working as trainers for more than 512 hours per year.

In the Brussels Region, SFPME general and vocational course trainers who did not hold a teaching diploma had to attend pedagogical training within three years of taking up duties. Basic teacher training was required for those working as a trainer for more than 128 hours per year. Completing full teacher training was required for those working as trainers for more than 352 hours per year.

Requirements for CVET trainers were uniform nationwide. They had to have:

- (a) a bachelor (or master) degree along with professional experience of three to five years;
- (b) or a certificate of upper secondary education with five to six years of experience in their occupation;
- (c) or professional experience of 10 to 12 years.

5.1.2. In-company trainers: entry requirements and initial training

In Belgium, the tutor position had been gradually formalised and recognised. In the French Community of Belgium, the competence validation consortium (CVDC) had established an occupational profile for the tutor position. IFAPME, SFPME, schools and employers applied a common approach according to entry requirements in which tutors had either to have at least five years of experience in their field of activity, or to hold a tutorship training (or skills validation) certificate. Tutorship training courses existed throughout the country. In 2013, the federal government gave access to paid educational leave (32 hours maximum) for those wishing to follow a tutorship programme. Tutors could also benefit from waived social security contributions.

5.1.3. VET school teachers, IVET and CVET trainers: main lines for CPD

In the French Community of Belgium, an institute for in-service training ⁽⁵⁷⁾ was established to provide teachers (including VET) with continuing training. All teachers had to attend six half-days training per year; six additional half-days were possible on a voluntary basis. On-site teacher training courses (e.g. on technological developments or the use of new equipment) were available in all regions/communities. They were financed by sectoral funds and (often) the ESF. Training on how to support disadvantaged learners, and on entrepreneurship was also available to teachers (Cedefop, 2015). In addition, framework agreements between VET providers and sectors in 2014 offered teachers opportunities for in-company training.

Continuing training (such as updating of core skills, educational professionalisation) for IVET and CVET trainers was provided by FormaForm. Training included both face-to-face and distance training. Individual and collective coaching and networking were also provided. Multicultural and entrepreneurship training was available to trainers (Cedefop, 2015).

In Wallonia, trainers had to attend two-day continuing teacher training per year. An additional two to eight days per year for training in relation to technical skills could also take place, often organised in cooperation with sectors.

5.2. Initial training for teaching/training staff in VET schools and VET providers' training centres 2015-19

For 2016-20, BEFR'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.

Discussions on the *Pact for excellence in education* (Section 3.3.1) started in 2015. The pact 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.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ Institut de la formation en cours de carrière – IFC. Decree of 11 July 2002 on mid-career training in education:
<http://www.ifc.cfwb.be/documents/multi/decrets/Decret%2011-07-2002%20fcc%20Sec%20Sp%20PMS%20et%20IFC.pdf>

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 ⁽⁵⁸⁾.

FormaForm, the main public training structure (IVET and CVET) responsible for trainers in the French Community of Belgium, has developed a multi-annual strategic plan for 2016-20. FormaForm is also in the process of revising its initial training scheme to turn it into *FormaGo*, a customised, multi-modal pathway that includes various learning procedures and teaching tools (mostly digital). *FormaGo* is now part of the initial training of trainers at Le Forem and Bruxelles Formation. A university-level trainer-training certificate (FUFA), in which FormaForm would take part, is also underway.

Since March 2018, the French-speaking public partners in vocational training have gathered around a consortium aiming at the mobility of trainers in Europe for the purposes of continuing training. This partnership is managed by FormaForm in the context of the Erasmus+ programme. The project is called *Itineris* and funds mobility grants for VET trainers.

In the French Community of Belgium, the Parliament of the French Community adopted, on 6 February 2019, a decree reforming initial teacher education. The challenge of this reform is to equip teachers better to cope with the increasing complexity of the profession, to give them the ability to help each student succeed and to upgrade the profession to encourage more motivated people to become teachers. The decree creates a master degree in Education (ISCED 7) with the objective of increasing the attractiveness of the function. It helps strengthen the skills of teachers by opening up new areas of expertise such as guidance, media literacy or even gender diversity and multiculturalism. It also allows for better transition between the different education levels.

5.3. Initial training for trainers in enterprises 2015-19

The competence validation consortium (CVDC) set out a definition of the profession of in-company tutor, including the related key activities and skills, specified in a vocational certification profile. Following this, in cooperation with VET providers, a validation frame of reference was adopted, indicating how to establish and verify that the skills have been mastered. Thirteen centres now

⁽⁵⁸⁾ http://www.gallilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/40701_000.pdf

offer this validation service in Wallonia and in Brussels and the first candidates were validated in 2016. This is linked with the reform of financial incentives as described in Section 1.3.4.

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

5.4. CPD for teaching/training staff in VET schools and VET providers' training centres 2015-19

BEFR'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.

The *Pact for teaching excellence in education* (Section 3.3.1) also addresses the quality of teacher continuing training.

According to a February 2016 Decree, six-year action plans must be developed in every school (Section 2.3). The action plan is required to set out the school's strategy for staff continuing training, particularly the topics and areas in which specific support to education staff will be offered. By 1 September 2020, all schools have to establish an action plan.

Training is provided to the teaching staff of some schools to help them handle changes in IVET curricula, for example the transition to certification by units (Section 3.3.4).

FormaForm's multi-annual strategic plan for 2016-20 also addresses the continuing professional development of trainers. Emphasis has been placed on projects relating to digital technology, particularly in connection with the European profile DigCompEdu, the deployment of which is currently being planned. Consensus conferences on the professionalisation of trainers have been organised, intended to take stock of the situation and make recommendations. In Brussels, the FormaForm offer has since 2017 been accessible to the trainers of other training providers.

In November 2016, Bruxelles Formation – the French-speaking public vocational training provider in Brussels – adopted a 2016-18 diversity plan, targeted at raising trainers' awareness of social diversity, and improving their preparedness to cope with diversity and cultural integration in workplace training.

As part of the reform under the *Pact for excellence in education*, the number of hours for continuing teacher training was increased from three days to four/six

days per year. This is meant to better meet teachers' needs, the objectives of the school and the priorities of the education system.

The *Entr'Apprendre* project offers teachers opportunities for in-company internships to observe the current reality and immerse themselves in its operational, technical, communication and human dimensions. They will also be equipped to make the links between these realities, teaching standards and practices to be worked on in schools. They will become the relay of this experience to their colleagues and students. Developed by the Fondation pour l'Enseignement, *Entr'Apprendre* is part of the dynamic of promoting qualifying education. It is jointly constructed by the Institut de la Formation en cours de Carrière (IFC) and networks of training organisations (CEFAFOC and FCC). It also receives financial support from the ESF and support from the inspectorate.

Statistical overview: 2019 update

Table 3 updates the figures that were provided in Table 1. Although Table 1 may contain data for 2015, these are not systematically repeated here. In some cases, not repeating is due to breaks in time series, which prevent comparability. In other cases, values differ due to methodological changes.

Table 3. **Score on VET indicators in Belgium and in the EU: 2015, last available year and recent change**

Indicator label	2015	Last available year				Recent change						
	BE	f	EU	f	Yr	BE	f	EU	f	Range	BE	EU
Access, attractiveness and flexibility												
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	59.6		47.3	ce	'17	57.8		47.8	ce	'15-'17	-1.7	0.5
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	5.8		28.3	ce	'17	5.9		27.9	ce	'15-'17	0.1	-0.5
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET	21.2		68.1	ce	'17	22.5		68.6	ce	'15-'17	1.3	0.4
Workers participating in CVT courses (%)	53.9		40.8		'15	53.9		40.8				
Workers participating in on-the-job training (%)	39		34		'15	39		34				
Adults in lifelong learning (%)			10.7		'18	8.5	b	11.1		'15-'18		0.4
Enterprises providing training (%)	83.9		72.6		'15	83.9		72.6				
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	57.8		42	ce	'17	55.9		42.7	ce	'15-'17	-1.9	0.7
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	41.5		30		'15	41.5		30				
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)			33		'18	42.6	b	33				0
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)			6.9		'18	4.9	b	7.3		'15-'18		0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)			4.3		'18	3.2	b	4.3		'15-'18		0
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)			9.5		'18	12.3	b	10.7		'15-'18		1.2
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)					'16	12.7		11.4				
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)					'16	81.1		79.4				

Indicator label	2015	Last available year				Recent change						
	BE	f	EU	f	Yr	BE	f	EU	f	Range	BE	EU
Skill development and labour market relevance												
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)	1.1		0.5	ce	'16	1.1		0.5	ce	'15-'16	0	0
IVET public expenditure per student (1000 PPS units)			7.1	ce	'16	10.5		7.4	ce	'15-'16		0.3
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.9		0.9		'15	0.9		0.9				
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET	1.2		1	ce	'17	1.2		1	ce	'15-'17		0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	20.8		29.2	ce	'17	34.1		29.1	ce	'15-'17	13.2	0
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates					'17	4.2		14.3	b ce	'15-'17		
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)					'16	60.2		37.7	ce			
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 year-olds)			77.2		'18	83.1	b	80.5		'15-'18		3.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)			5.4		'18	10.3	b	6.6		'15-'18		1.2
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)			23.7		'18	28.3	b	23.3		'15-'18		-0.4
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)	77.3		83.7		'15	77.3		83.7				
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	60.6		57		'15	60.6		57				
Overall transitions and labour market trends												
Early leavers from education and training (%)			11		'18	8.6	b	10.6		'15-'18		-0.4
30-34 year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)			38.7		'18	47.6	b	40.7		'15-'18		2
NEET rate for 18-24 year-olds (%)			15.8		'18	11.5	b	13.7		'15-'18		-2.1
Unemployment rate for 20-34 year-olds (%)			12.9		'18	8.7	b	9.4		'15-'18		-3.5
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)			75.9		'18	81.8	b	80.6		'15-'18		4.7
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)			23.5		'18	21.8	b	21.9		'15-'18		-1.6
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds (%)			70		'18	69.7	b	73.1		'15-'18		3.1
Employment rate for 20-64 year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)			52.6		'18	45.6	b	56.1		'15-'18		3.5
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2030 (% of total)					'18	90.7	D	85.8	D			

EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified.
(D) Forecast made in 2018.
(ce) Cedefop estimate based on available country data
(b) Eurostat: 'break in time series'.

(u) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.
(z) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.
(e) Eurostat: 'estimated'.
(d) Eurostat: 'definition differs'.

Source: Cedefop (2020).

In 2017, 57.8% of all upper secondary students in Belgium were enrolled in IVET. This is 10 points above the EU average. It appears, however, that the percentage of upper secondary students in IVET is lower by 1.7 points compared to the situation in the country in 2015.

In 2017, 5.9% of all upper secondary IVET students were enrolled in a work-based learning setting which is slightly higher (0.1 points more) than in 2015. In contrast the EU average is 27.9%.

In 2018, 8.5 % of adults participated in lifelong learning activities. The EU average is 1.1%.

In 2018, the employment rate for IVET graduates (20-34 years old) was 83.1%. The EU average is 80.5%.

For the two last indicators, though data were available in 2015 (Table 1), due to a break in time series, 2018 and 2015 cannot be reliably compared.

Conclusion

Since 2015, a wide range of regulations to develop apprenticeship and practical training has been adopted in the French Community of Belgium. 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 main changes in 2017 have taken place in MTDs 2, 3 and 4. In MTD 2, the Brussels Observatory for Employment and Training was created (Section 2.3), a working group for the evaluation of VET providers was set up (Section 2.2) and training priorities at local level were identified (Section 2.3). In MTD 3, a qualifications directory was created, opening way to the positioning of qualifications into the qualifications framework (CFC) adopted in 2015 (Section 3.3.6.2). On flexibility, the piloting phase for certification by units was started (Section 3.3.4). In MTD 4, web developing/encoding projects were launched in Brussels (Section 4.3).

No new major policy avenue was opened from mid-2018 to February 2019.

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 that an issue which could benefit from further consideration is that of more systematically using the EQAVET indicators to monitor the development of VET.

Acronyms

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> [public e-learning centre]
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> [coordination body for dual training]
PES	public employment services
PISA	programme for international student assessment
PPS	purchasing power standards
RCA	<i>reconnaissance des capacités acquises</i> [recognition of knowledge and skills]
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> [valorisation of experience (in higher education)]
VDC	<i>validation des compétences</i> [validation of competences]
VET	vocational education and training

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