

National Reform Programme **2014**

25 April 2014

Table of contents

| | |
|--|------------|
| 1. Introduction | 4 |
| 2. Macroeconomic scenario | 6 |
| 3. Follow-up to the country-specific recommendations | 7 |
| 3.1. Ageing costs and financial sustainability (Recommendation 2) | 7 |
| 3.1.1. Employment of older workers | 7 |
| 3.1.2. Long-term care | 8 |
| 3.2. Wage development and productivity (Recommendation 3) | 9 |
| 3.3. Competition in the services sector (Recommendation 4) | 11 |
| 3.3.1. Retail trade and professional services | 12 |
| 3.3.2. Network industries | 13 |
| 3.4. Tax Shift (Recommendation 5) | 15 |
| 3.4.1. Reductions in labour charges | 16 |
| 3.4.2. Carry-over to other tax bases | 17 |
| 3.4.3. More tax efficiency | 18 |
| 3.5. Labour market (Recommendation 6) | 19 |
| 3.5.1. Adaptation of the monitoring of job seekers | 19 |
| 3.5.2. Reinforcement of interregional labour market mobility | 19 |
| 3.5.3. Simplification and reinforcement of the labour market policies coherence | 20 |
| 3.5.4. Social integration and integration on the labour market of generations with an immigrant background | 21 |
| 3.6. Greenhouse gas emissions (recommendation 7) | 23 |
| 4. Follow-up of the Europe 2020 targets | 25 |
| 4.1. Employment | 25 |
| 4.1.1. Introduction of the Youth Guarantee | 25 |
| 4.1.2. Reconciling work and private life | 27 |
| 4.1.3. Modernisation of labour law | 27 |
| 4.2. R&D and innovation | 28 |
| 4.3. Education and training | 31 |
| 4.3.1. Higher education | 31 |
| 4.3.2. Early school leavers | 32 |
| 4.4. Energy and climate | 33 |
| 4.5. Social inclusion | 36 |
| 4.5.1. Guaranteeing the social protection of the population | 36 |
| 4.5.2. Reduction of child poverty | 37 |
| 4.5.3. Active inclusion of people far from the labour market | 37 |
| 4.5.4. Fighting inadequate housing and homelessness | 38 |
| 5. Other reform measures and the use of structural funds | 39 |
| 5.1. Industrial policy | 39 |
| 5.2. Entrepreneurship and SMEs | 40 |
| 5.3. Structure funds and investment funds | 42 |
| Annex 1: Reporting table for the assessment of CSRs and key macro-structural reforms: description of the measures | 44 |
| Annex 2: Reporting table for the assessment of CSRs and key macro-structural reforms: quantitative assessment | 55 |
| Annex 3: Reporting table on national Europe 2020 targets and other key commitments | 57 |
| Annex 4 of the Flemish Region | 63 |
| Annex 5 of Wallonia and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation | 82 |
| Annex 6 of the Brussels Capital Region | 108 |
| Annex 7: Youth guarantee implementation plan | 138 |

1. Introduction

This National Reform Programme (NRP) covers the measures taken over the past 12 months by the federal government and the governments of the Regions and Communities to reach the targets set in the National Reform Programme of April 2011. In this programme, the governments express their conviction that structural reforms are essential to reaching the targets and that the proposed and updated budgetary objectives should be met¹.

The ambitious targets set in the 2011 NRP are confirmed, despite challenging economic conditions. According to most of the latest observations, the trends are moving in the right direction and several of them are even outperforming the very ambitious targets. This is the case, for instance, for indicators for R&D expenditure, greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy and higher education. On the other hand, it should be said that the trends reflected by other indicators, for example in the area of poverty and social inclusion, are rather disappointing, and that is certainly due to the challenging economic conditions. Moreover, fiscal consolidation is essential to maintaining our wealth and our social security system.

Furthermore, the federal and regional governments agreed on a Pact for competitiveness, employment and recovery at the end of November 2013. It contains several measures to increase the competitiveness of businesses and to boost households' purchasing power. The federal government will thus take measures to reduce labour costs, increase the employment bonus for low wages, further develop continuing vocational training and cut VAT on electricity. Moreover, the link to well-being of social security payments has been confirmed. The authorities have also agreed to develop free zones.

In this regard, the Flemish government is focusing on the following measures. The competitiveness-related provisions and measures are primarily aimed at lowering social security levies. It also seeks to reduce energy costs, to support R&D and innovation and to back business investment, investment in human capital and public investment. Finally, it wishes to provide transversal budgets for boosting the economy and competitiveness.

Together with all the relevant stakeholders, the Walloon government engaged in an in-depth reflection to identify long-term priorities for Wallonia, resulting in the adoption of "2022 Marshall Plan" in December 2013. This paves the way for Wallonia to respond to its challenges in the following areas: competitiveness, fiscal and environmental sustainability, demographics and health, as well as the transfer of powers. The first concrete actions have already been taken, including setting up a group of Walloon social partners. This plan also operates in connection with the recovery plan.

In May 2013, the Brussels government decided, in agreement with all the Brussels social partners, to concentrate on four fundamental areas. In this respect it took 29 key measures to enable it address the following major challenges by 2020: demographic expansion, the interlinked employment, training and education policies, the fight against the growing two-tier nature of the city and its internationalization. The Brussels committee on social and economic concertation regularly monitors the implementation of these measures, eleven of which are levers to boost competitiveness.

The governments are convinced that the measures they have taken address the country-specific recommendations made to Belgium during the Council of July 2013.

This NRP intends to provide a balanced treatment of the EU2020 targets and the answers to the country-specific recommendations. Simultaneously, attention is paid to Belgium's commitments in response to the Euro Plus Pact and the priorities of the European Commission, which are supported by the Council and are

¹ The underlying macro-economic projection and the measures included in this programme and the Stability programme are complementary and consistent.

described in the Annual Growth Survey of November 2013. The Belgian governments are also convinced that the European Semester should deal with all aspects of sustainable development (the economy, social aspects and the environment) on an equal basis. As the programme indicates, fulfilling the European commitments requires a strong involvement of the different entities in the European procedures and projects under the EU2020 Strategy's flagship initiatives.

In its in-depth review, the European Commission² calls on Belgium to undertake an ambitious policy to remedy the economic imbalances noted. The Belgian governments are convinced that this programme is consistent with this essential requirement.

This programme is the result of a close collaboration between the federal government and the governments of the Regions and Communities. The reform programmes of the Communities and Regions are attached to this document and describe in detail the specific measures they have taken³. On several occasions, the social partners and civil society were also involved in drafting the programme and monitoring its progress. Belgium is known for its dialogue-based approach, which is central to the constructive relationship between employers' and workers' organizations. This constant dialogue and the cooperation with the various sectors of our economy are a priority for the different governments. Maintaining and attracting investment is a major asset.

In 2013, the Belgian governments also agreed on major institutional reforms, i.e. the sixth state reform, which will enter into force as from 1 July 2014. The aspects related to these structural reforms are addressed in subsequent chapters. This reform increases the weight of the Regions and Communities and consequently the importance of sound cooperation between the federal authorities, the Regions and the Communities. Every effort is made to ensure smooth cooperation, while respecting the competencies of each entity, to increase the country's efficiency.

The (inter)federal authorities and the Regions and Communities have taken the necessary steps for a smooth transfer of powers. For instance, the Interfederal Taskforce has established protocols organizing the cooperation between the federal, regional and community authorities during the transition period. These protocols are due to be adopted by the federal and Flemish governments in April 2014.

2014 is a landmark year as parliamentary elections are to be held on 25 May. To prepare the post-electoral period in the best possible manner, much work has been done in recent months to define the structural reform options. These initiatives are also dealt with in subsequent chapters.

² European Commission, In-depth review for Belgium, Commission Staff Working Document, 5 March 2014.

³ The summary of the Flemish reform programme (Annex 4) also gives an overview of the situation compared with the Flemish targets set in the Europe 2020 strategy.

2. Macroeconomic scenario

The macroeconomic scenario is described in the Stability Programme⁴. It is based on the situation on 10 March 2014⁵, excluding possible measures ensuing from the budget review. Compared with the 2013 National Reform Programme, the economic conditions are more favourable, with stronger growth, higher job creation and lower inflation. The medium-term prospects remain unchanged, with stable job and economic growth.

For the short term, the programme relies on the Economic Budget of February 2014, which was adjusted to include the latest observations⁶. The international environment is based on the European Commission's Winter Forecast⁷ up to 2015. As regards the years beyond 2016, the international environment is mainly based on the economic forecasts produced by the European Commission within the framework of the European Semester.

Slightly positive growth was recorded in 2013. In 2014, growth should be boosted by the growing global economy. The output gap should gradually close⁸. Employment growth should still be weak this year, but should strengthen in the coming years, in accordance with economic activity prospects. Therefore, the employment rate should gradually increase from 68.4% in 2013 to 69.1% in 2020.

In 2014, inflation should turn out to be markedly low, due to policy measures concerning the VAT cut on electricity and the wage freeze in 2013-2014, without calling into question the automatic indexation⁹ (cf. 3.2.). Likewise, lower oil prices (in euro) in 2014, the negative output gap and weak international inflation should also contribute to curb inflation.

Table 1: Key figures of the macroeconomic scenario 2014-2018
Evolution in %, except when mentioned otherwise

| | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|-------|------|------|------|------|------|
| GDP | 0.2 | 1.4 | 1.8 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.6 |
| Consumer price index | 1.1 | 0.8 | 1.3 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.6 |
| Health index | 1.2 | 0.9 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.6 |
| Domestic employment (change expressed in thousands) | -11.5 | 12.5 | 32.4 | 32.1 | 34.7 | 33.6 |
| Domestic employment (% change) | -0.3 | 0.3 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.8 | 0.7 |
| Employment rate (20-64 year) | 66.9 | 66.9 | 67.2 | 67.5 | 67.9 | 68.4 |
| Unemployment rate (Eurostat definition) | 8.4 | 8.4 | 8.3 | 8.2 | 7.9 | 7.6 |
| Productivity per hour | 0.7 | 0.8 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.0 |
| Output gap (level) | -2.3 | -1.9 | -1.2 | -0.7 | -0.3 | -0.1 |
| Current account balance (National Accounts) | 0.1 | 0.7 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.8 |

Annex 2 shows some results of an impact assessment for a cut in social security contributions on wages. These measures are included in the above results.

⁴ Belgian Stability Programme 2014

⁵ Perspectives économiques 2014-2019, Economische vooruitzichten 2014-2019, FPB, 24 March 2014

⁶ Budget économique 2014, 2014, FPB, INR/ICN, 12 February 2014

⁷ European Economic Forecast-Winter 2014, European Commission, February 2014

⁸ The output gap assessment is derived from a potential output estimate calculated according to the European Union's method, but applied to statistical concepts and forecasts of the Federal Planning Bureau.

⁹ See section 3.2 for further details.

3. Follow-up to the country-specific recommendations

3.1. Ageing costs and financial sustainability (Recommendation 2)

“THE COUNCIL RECOMMENDS to step up efforts to close the gap between the effective and statutory retirement age, including by pursuing the ongoing reforms to reduce the early-exit possibilities. Underpin reforms of the old-age social security systems with employment-support measures and labour-market reforms conducive to active ageing. Increase the effective retirement age by aligning retirement age or pension benefits to changes in life expectancy. Continue to improve the cost-efficiency of public spending on long term institutional care.”

3.1.1. Employment of older workers

The employment rate of workers aged from 55 to 64 continued to increase in 2013 as a result of the measures previously adopted. It rose from 39.5% in 2012 to 41.7% in 2013.

Table 2 : Employment rate of workers aged from 55 to 64

| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Employment rate | 26.6 | 28.1 | 30 | 31.8 | 32 | 34.4 | 34.5 | 35.3 | 37.3 | 38.7 | 39.5 | 41.7 |

Sources: “Labour Force Survey (2002-2012: Eurostat; 2013: Statistics Belgium, own calculations).

Age-related public expenditure has been positively influenced by these developments. In 2013, the growth in pension expenditure slowed down in comparison to the previous year, but remained quite sustained because of the increase in the number of pensioners. Pre-pension expenditure decreased, even in nominal terms, and unemployment expenditure stabilized, notably as a consequence of stricter conditions to enjoy the seniority supplement.

The reforms were gradually further implemented in 2014. The age and seniority requirements to take early retirement have been strengthened again: the age requirement and the seniority requirement are henceforth equal to respectively 61 years old and 39 years of career in the general schemes. Moreover, the law provides that both requirements will be continuously increased until 2016 to 62 years old and 40 years of career. The minimum age entitling to pre-pension (henceforth called “unemployment with company allowance”) has also been raised for companies having difficulties, to 53 years old: in accordance with the law, this age will then be gradually increased to 55 years old in 2018. Moreover, workers enjoying an unemployment benefit with company allowance will be monitored via regular interviews and they will have to remain available for employment until 60 years old instead of 58 years old, unless they prove a career of at least 38 years (cf. Recommendation 6). Concerning the individual unemployment with company allowance at the age of 58 and 60, i.e. the two main new entrants groups a year, the new conditions mentioned in the collective bargaining agreements in force and renewed will be the following on 1 January 2015: 60 years old provided 40 years of career can be proved (with a transition scheme for women).

Furthermore, new measures came into force or were adopted to encourage the elderly to remain longer at work and slow down in this way their effective retirement age.

The reform of the pension bonus has been applied since January 2014. The adjustments made ensure the consistence with pension reforms and maintain its incentive effect.

Thanks to this system, an older worker enjoys a financial advantage per day effectively worked at the earliest one year after having met the conditions entitling to early retirement. The amount of the bonus is a lump sum and is progressive. It increases according to the number of years worked and varies between 1.5 and 2.5 EUR a day. Considering that the bonus has no time limit, it can be granted to the persons who continue

to work beyond the legal retirement age. Moreover, the three pension schemes have been harmonized (bonus for employees and self-employed workers, and seniority supplement for civil servants).

In its report of July 2013, the Study Committee on Ageing assessed the impact of this reform of the pension bonus on the ageing costs: thanks to the reform, the cost of pension expenditure in the different schemes will decrease by 0.6% and 2% respectively by 2020 and 2060. Expressed as a percentage of GDP, this fall represents 0.3% by 2060. The expenditure is reduced because of the decreased number of beneficiaries as a result of the stricter career conditions, and the average amount of the allowance granted.

In order to encourage the citizens to remain longer at work, a degressive tax system was introduced in July 2013 for supplementary pension capital built up by employer's contributions. The older the beneficiary is when he receives the capital, the lower the tax rate is.

The survivor's pension system, which aims at compensating the financial losses related to the death of the spouse, will be changed. The objective is to remove the existing unemployment traps: persons receiving a survivor's pension are currently led to reduce or even to stop their professional activities because this pension must be combined with the limited authorized professional income.

As from 2015, the survivor's pension will be replaced by a transition allowance for widows and widowers under 45 years old. This allowance can be totally cumulated with a professional income; this makes possible to avoid unemployment traps. The age of 45 years will gradually increase by 6 months a year to 50 years in 2025. The allowance will also be time-limited (one year without dependent children or two years otherwise).

The improvement in the pension calculation has also been provided. The principle of the unit of career will be relaxed in order to ensure the effective taking into consideration of all worked days in the pension calculation. This calculation will be based on the number of full-time equivalent days instead of the number of calendar years.

Furthermore, the last months of the professional career in the year during which a worker retires will be taken into consideration in the pension calculation. Up to now, the months of the year in which a worker retires do not entitle to a pension. Thanks to this measure, the elderly will be encouraged to continue to work beyond the 1 January of the retirement year.

Supplementary pensions in the second pillar will become more accessible thanks to the introduction of a legal framework aiming at removing gradually by 2025 the differences between the status of blue-collar workers and the status of white-collar workers.

The drawing-up of future pension reforms is underway, with the introduction in April 2013 of a Committee on Pension Reform 2020-2040. This Committee has been charged to study the specific reforms ensuring the efficiency and the social and financial sustainability of the pension schemes in the medium and long term. A report is expected for the spring of 2014. The different scenarios considered will then be the subject of a political and social debate.

3.1.2. Long-term care

The efficiency of public expenditure related to long-term care has been improved thanks to the adoption in June 2013 of the BelRAI-instrument. This instrument enables a standard and structured assessment of the elderly's health and welfare. It aims at the optimal organization of their care and the monitoring of the quality thereof.

Moreover, a call for projects was launched in August 2013 by the federal government in order to renew and diversify the supply of long-term care to the most vulnerable elderly. The aim is to empower them and to slow down their admission to care institutions.

The Sixth State Reform provides a substantial transfer to the Communities of competences related to elderly people and long-term care (rest and nursing homes, day-care centres, short-stay centres). The care supply can thus be better adjusted to local needs and made more efficient.

In the Walloon Region, it has been decided to create a public interest organization to manage the new competences. A thought process has been launched as regards policy guidelines in order to optimize the management of health care, develop alternative long-term care systems and stimulate innovation. Furthermore, a plan “Great Dependence” for disable people and a plan aiming at improving the quality of hospital care have been adopted. The accommodation and hosting offer for the elderly has also been diversified and made more affordable, notably for people with insecure or low income.

In the Flemish Region, concrete guidelines have been drawn up in the “green book”¹⁰. Those guidelines concern an integrated policy as regards the elderly, the strengthening of front-line health care and a strong health care development for disabled persons.

More generally, the policy of the Belgian government as regards health care aims at ensuring affordable high-quality care to the citizens and employment in this sector. At the same time, the financial sustainability of the system is preserved by the adoption of structural cost-saving measures. Moreover, these measures enable the development of new initiatives, such as the plan concerning rare diseases. From a financial point of view, the statutory rate for the real growth of health care has been limited to 3% for 2014; considering the adoption of cost-saving measures, the effective growth should be lower than this rate. In 2013, the real growth of health care expenditure amounted to 0.7%, while the statutory rate had been fixed at 2%.

The text below gives an overview of the measures taken to meet the country-specific recommendations issued by the European Council in June 2013. The measures related to the first recommendation deal with the fiscal policy and are addressed in the 2014 Stability Programme.

3.2. Wage development and productivity (Recommendation 3)

THE COUNCIL RECOMMENDS to restore competitiveness, pursue the ongoing efforts to reform the wage-setting system, including wage indexation, in particular by taking structural measures, in consultation with the social partners and in accordance with national practice, to ensure that wage setting is responsive to productivity developments, reflects subregional and local differences in productivity and labour-market conditions, and provides automatic corrections when wage evolution undermines cost-competitiveness.

The federal Government has the ambition to close the wage cost gap with the neighbouring countries Belgium has accumulated since 1996.

In order to achieve this, various decisions have been made:

- First, the wage norm for 2013-2014 has been set at 0%. Blocking real wages implies that no wage increase may be granted at any level whatsoever, in addition to automatic indexation and scale increases.
- Linear and targeted measures in order to reduce labour costs, through reductions of the employers’ contributions, were initiated in July 2012, for 818 million, to be charged to the 2014 budget.
- Some modifications have been made to the calculation method of the index in order to bring price evolution more in line with actual consumer behaviour. Thus, the index will take sales better into account and

¹⁰ The “green book” is a concept and consultation document including an analysis of the transfers of competences resulting from the Sixth State Reform and the potential policy choices to be made consequently.

fuel oil will be integrated on the basis of payments instead of order prices. Moreover, the measurement of telecommunication prices and of private rent has been improved. The list of products included in the index basket will also be more regularly updated. Finally, from 2015 on, the prices used will be those appearing on the supermarkets tickets. In February 2014, the social partners established the new calculation method and conversion coefficient for the new index. These measures, combined with low inflation, will exert a significant moderating effect on wage growth.

- In November 2013, the Government agreed on a series of additional measures aiming to achieve an overall reduction of the labour costs of 4.7 billion by 2019. These measures are part of the Pact for growth and employment concluded with the regions in December 2013. Essentially, these measures are:
 - The reduction of VAT on electricity for households, from April 2014 (from 21% to 6%), which should support the blocking of real wages by exerting a moderating influence on the index used for wage indexation. This measure will be evaluated on September 1st 2015 at the latest.
 - Reductions in fixed employers' contributions for an amount of 450 million through additional 150 million tranches in 2015, 2017 and 2019.
 - A reduction in employers' contributions focused on low wages for an amount of 450 million through additional 150 million tranches in 2015, 2017 and 2019.
 - An increased exemption for teamwork for an amount of 450 million through additional 150 million tranches in 2015, 2017 and 2019.

Furthermore, the efforts to enhance the productivity of the Belgian economy, including reducing labour costs (see CSR 5) and through lifelong learning (see CSR 6), industrial policy (chapter 5) and innovation (Chapter 4.2.) will go on.

Beyond wage competitiveness, the different governments have developed several initiatives aiming to support the cost-competitiveness of companies, more particularly in terms of resource efficiency. In Wallonia, some actions have been developed for the promotion of circular economy¹¹ (NEXT device and reference centre for short circuits and circular economy), notably to help SMEs to exploit the operational cost cutting opportunities. Moreover, the 2nd generation of sectoral agreements concluded at the end of 2013 allow the participating companies to reduce their energy bill; they also benefit from subsidies and reductions in electricity tariffs. Furthermore, the "Smart Parks" project, which aim is to help businesses to control their power consumption and facilitate a smart power management, will be extended to the whole of Wallonia. In addition, several R & D projects aimed at improving the energy efficiency of industrial processes and the development of low greenhouse gas emission technologies have been launched. On the whole, through the Marshall Plan 2.vert, Wallonia has prioritized investments on the key drivers of competitiveness: R&D and innovation, competence development and investments.

Flanders is also involved in reducing energy costs. In 2012, the support system for renewable energy and cogeneration has been reviewed. The support that has been allocated since 2013 is much more cost efficient, in order to weigh less on energy bills. Because of the indirect costs of CO₂ in electricity prices, some industrial sectors run a risk of relocation (indirect carbon leakage). This is why Flanders has, in principle, decided to allocate the maximum possible support to companies that qualify. By doing so, Flanders will reduce the industrial energetic costs by 60 million EUR for the consumption year 2013. Flanders has also taken a series of measures to encourage energy efficiency in SMEs.

¹¹ The circular economy is an economic model that allows to decouple the economic growth and the proportional growth of resource consumption. This model is based on creating cycles of positive values each time the material or product is used or reused before its final destruction. It places particular emphasis on new methods of design, production and consumption, the extension of the duration of use of the products, the use rather than the ownership of property, the reuse and recycling of components.

Flanders also continues to invest in innovation (see 4.2). In 2013, the total expenditures of the Flemish authorities for research, development and innovation (R & D & I) in favour of innovation amounted to almost 2 billion EUR. This budget exceeds by 200 million EUR the budget for 2008 on an annual basis. 1.3 billion of this budget is classified as R&D. Flanders is committed to maintaining investment (in terms of school infrastructure, the health care sector, social housing and mobility) at the same levels and, if possible, to strengthen it. In 2014, investment will be further increased by 340 million EUR, besides the investment that has been made within the framework of the public-private partnerships and through capital investment.

Moreover, within the framework of the Growth pact with the Regions, the Federal Government has decided to introduce the obligation to give all the workers at least the equivalent of one training day, as well as the monitoring by the sectors, of the efforts made in terms of innovation and research.

The Federal Government has introduced a new fiscal incentive in response to the wave of major corporate restructuring operations and closures. This stimulus measure implies a partial payroll tax exemption for companies investing and creating jobs in a previously defined “troubled zone”.

On January 31st 2014, the Regions have reached an agreement on the distribution of the 17.89% of the population for non-predefined areas eligible for regional aids. Flanders can take 8 percentage points to its account, just like Wallonia (8 percentage points as well) and Brussels will fill in 1.89 percentage points. In the towns included in the Regional aid map, it is possible to grant big companies up to 10% investment aids, under certain conditions.

On March 28th 2014, the Flemish Government has taken a decision on the selection of the towns in which a regional aid may be granted to companies. The towns included in the suggested Regional aid map were selected on the basis of socio-economic data. In doing so, the impact of the closure of Ford on unemployment and the income in the Limburg towns has been taken into account. A total of 40 Flemish towns have been selected (6 in West Flanders, 7 in East Flanders, 3 in Antwerp and 24 in Limburg).

The Flemish government shall, with the other Regions, submit the suggested Regional aid map to the approval of the European Commission. The new Regional aid map will take effect on July 1st 2014.

3.3. Competition in the services sector (Recommendation 4)

“THE COUNCIL RECOMMENDS to take action within the period 2013-2014 to present concrete and time-specific structural measures to improve competition in the services sector, by removing barriers in retail and excessive restrictions in professional services and improving the provision of mobile broadband. Continue to improve the functioning of the energy sector by reducing distribution costs and monitoring retail prices, strengthen the independence of the regulators in the energy, telecoms and the transport sectors (railway, airport). Remove remaining regulatory barriers in the postal sector.”

In its recovery strategy the federal government has committed to an ambitious competition policy aimed at the key sectors of our economy and at sufficient analysis and monitoring of prices. In that context, the Act of 3 April 2013 should improve the procedures relating to competition issues on the one hand, and collaboration between the Price Observatory and the Competition Authority on the other. The Price Observatory initiated a project involving the development of indicators for identifying business sectors that show an enhanced risk of operating at suboptimal competitive levels. A methodological memorandum was published on 5 March 2014.

3.3.1. Retail trade and professional services

Belgium supports the European harmonisation on consumer rights. Directive 2011/83/EC was transposed into Belgian law and the announced reforms in terms of *'market practices and consumer protection'* were adopted by Parliament and subsequently published in the Belgian Official Journal (30/12/2013). They will enter into force on 31 March 2014. All of the above was realised based on Book VI of the Code of Economic Law. As far as *selling at a loss* is concerned, the law was eased to allow for the inclusion of volume reductions when calculating reference prices. Belgium has chosen to maintain the prohibition in order to protect the economic interests of individual companies and SMEs and to thus guarantee healthy and fair competition between them.

Following the transfer of competences on 1 July 2014, the regions will be free to decide about the criteria that will have to be considered with respect to *commercial establishments*. For the Walloon region, the *Schéma régional de développement commercial*, adopted in August 2013, constitutes an indicative framework whose purpose it is to bring structure to trade based on objective criteria that fit in with the services directive (consumer protection; protection of the urban environment; social policy goals and contributing to more sustainable mobility). These criteria were transposed into a draft *decree on commercial establishments*, which also regulates the administrative organisation. The municipalities will be authorised to provide the permits for commercial establishments with a surface ranging from 400 to 4,000 m². Establishments with a larger surface fall under the authority of the Walloon Region. The decree also installs '*Schémas communaux de développement commercial*', as well as simplified procedures for applicants: a one-stop-shop; integrated permits, etc., linked to the provisions of the future '*Code de Développement Territorial*'.

As far as the Flemish Region is concerned, this matter is managed by the Agentschap Ondernemen (Enterprise Agency). In February 2014, in preparation of the planned regionalisation of the Law on Commercial Establishments, the Flemish government adopted the preliminary draft decree concerning the *integrated commercial establishment policy*. The planning of retail establishments will be integrated into urban planning through the incorporation of the decree in a new chapter of the Land and Buildings Decree. At present there are three separate permit systems for new retail establishments: the urban planning permit, the environmental permit and the socio-economic permit. In future, this number will be reduced to one single integrated permit, which will result in administrative simplification but more importantly, should help to save time.

As far as the Brussels Capital Region is concerned, the Brussels Urban Planning Code will be changed so as to allow municipalities to apply for an urban permit in cases involving a change to the nature of a commercial establishment in a building that already has a commercial designation. The Region also avails of a Scheme for Commercial Development that allows for the structuring of the commercial offer and for the hierarchical categorisation – according to their level of attraction – of the 104 core areas as defined in the Regional Land Use Plan (RLUP).

As far as the professional services are concerned, the possibility of performing a number of economic intellectual professions as a legal person was extended to include land meter experts¹² and real estate agents¹³ in addition to bookkeepers (fiscal specialists), accountants, architects and automobile experts. The personal liability of real estate agents may be restricted under certain circumstances.

As regards access to the profession it was decided that the regions will have this authority for commercial and craft professions as from 1 January 2015. The *enterprise counters* will remain authorised for research into the entrepreneurial capacities following registration in the Crossroads Bank for Entreprises (CBE) as a commercial or traditional trade company. Said authority will be managed according to the current provisions and in good consultation with the regions (principle of mutual recognition).

¹² Act of 18 July 2013 and the Royal Decree regulating the entry into force of the act, discussed in the meeting of the Council of Ministers of 27/09/2013.

¹³ Act of 11 February 2013.

As regards the territorial validity of the permits issued by federal bodies, the principle of mutual recognition is laid down in the Belgian Act of 08 August 1980 on the reform of the institutions. This means that save for derogations for overriding reasons in the public interest, any person offering their services on the territory of a federal entity in accordance with the applicable legislation, is free to perform their activities on the entire Belgian territory.

3.3.2. Network industries

a. Telecom: retail prices and mobile broadband

In the scope of its responsive and decisive competition policy, at the end of 2013 the government conducted an awareness campaign "*Dare to compare*" for telecom matters. The initiative aimed at making consumers familiar with all the different rates and help them in finding the most competitive offer that best answered their needs. Although it is too early to judge the results for the rates¹⁴, the campaign was highly successful in terms of participation levels: in two weeks' time it reached the equivalent of more than 360,000 rate simulations through the BIPT site (www.bestetarief.be) – the same as the sum of all the simulations carried out in 2010, 2011 en 2012.

Furthermore, a draft plan "A digital agenda for Belgium" was drawn up and adopted in November 2013 by the Consultative Committee. The purpose behind the digital agenda is for Belgium to meet the targets of the DAE (Digital Agenda for Europe). Part of the plan was *the proposal in December 2013 of a National Plan for the introduction of a network for fast and ultra fast internet*. The plan contains four main objectives, each of which is split into practical measures.

In order to push the development of *mobile broadband* by simplifying the relevant administrative and regulatory framework, the Brussels Parliament on 24 January 2014 adopted an ordinance for the modification of the ordinance on electromagnetic waves. The text raises the maximum exposure standard to 6 V/m (instead of 3 V/m) and encourages the placement of antennas on public buildings.

b. Energy: retail prices, distribution and regulator

Increasing price transparency and enhancing competition among gas and electricity retailers remain priority issues for the Belgian government. In this context, the Price Observatory developed an indicator for monitoring gas and electricity prices and their components, as well as measuring the impact on inflation. The evolution of prices is laid down in the reports of the Price Observatory.

Flanders has provided instruments that should *enhance confidence among buyers (citizens and companies) in the privatised electricity and gas market*: a supplier comparison was added to the V-TEST, as well as a service check allowing for comparison of suppliers' services. A web module has been made available in October 2012 which allows citizens and companies to perform a 'green check'. This online tool permits customers with a 'green' contract to check whether or not their power supplier supplies electricity from renewable sources.

Following a *set of measures* adopted last year at both federal and regional levels – the effects of which can be felt today¹⁵ – the federal government has in its Competitiveness and Employment Pact made a commitment towards *lowering the VAT on electricity* for individuals *from 21% to 6%* as from 1 April 2014. An evaluation of this measure will take place no later than 1 September 2015.

In the scope of promoting renewable energy, the federal government adopted a proposal for the reform of *support for offshore wind turbines*. The system aims at reducing the costs of the support for the consumer and guaranteeing adequate support for investors in renewable energy. The federal government also introduced a

¹⁴ On 5/2/2014 the BIPT published its second "Comparative study of rates of telecom producers in Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom [Rates of August 2013]". The study does not yet reflect the impact of the campaign.

¹⁵ See NRP (National Reform Programme) 2013.

capping mechanism and a gradual reduction system for final electricity bills in order to limit the costs of developing offshore wind turbines for the sector with high energy consumption levels. For 2013 and 2014, consumers' electricity bills have thus been reduced by around EUR 72 million in total. The Walloon government reached an agreement on managing the support system for photovoltaic energy (Solwatt) for the purpose of controlling its impact on the electricity bill of individual consumers. A *new system for support of low-voltage (up to 10 kWc = Qualiwatts) photovoltaic energy* was adopted in January 2014, while higher-voltage photovoltaic energy continues to receive support based on the system of green certificates via an annual closed envelope in order to control its costs for the population. Furthermore, a set of measures was adopted in December 2013 in the scope of introducing a system of exemption for a number of economic and social activities for the purpose of keeping them competitive (legislative activities in 2013 in view of an extension after 2013). In addition, the manager of the electricity transport network will receive a proposal for a system allowing the banking of green certificates in the scope of his public service obligation to buy back green certificates at a guaranteed minimum price.

On 6 July 2012 the Flemish Government adopted the proposal for reforming the *support mechanisms for green energy and cogeneration*, one of its purposes being the appropriate distribution of the costs thereof among all of the consumers. For the support mechanisms concerning renewable energy we refer to chapter 4.4.

In view of fair consumer treatment as well as energy conservation the Walloon Region in January 2014 adopted a new decree on a *progressive, solidarity and family pricing system*. Said system makes pricing progressive and increases its level of fairness, particularly due to the fact that it links the kWh price to electricity consumption. The decree will enter into force on 1 January 2015.

In view of the sixth State Reform, on 01 July 2014 the authority with respect to gas and electricity distribution rates will be transferred from the federal government to the regions. In Flanders, said authority will then be in the hands of the body (VREG) which also has responsibility for the regulation of technical and quality aspects of the distribution network. On 20 December 2013 the Flemish government adopted four amendments to the draft decree which modifies the Energy Decree of 08 May 2009. This involves the necessary transition measures concerning the distribution network rates for the purpose of ensuring a stable transition period.

On 16 January 2014 Wallonia adopted a preliminary draft decree concerning rate-setting for gas and electricity distribution. The CWaPE¹⁶ will be charged with defining the rating methodology and with the approval of the rates of the distribution network managers that will be applied starting 01 January 2015. On 23 January 2014 the Brussels government adopted a draft ordinance modifying the previous ordinance concerning the organisation of the gas and electricity market. The new ordinance predominantly provides guidelines for the design of a framework for the rating methodology which should encourage the distribution network manager to improve his performance, enhance market integration and continuity of the supply, and perform research and development as regards his activities. The BRUGEL regulator will assume the task of implementing this new authority.

Furthermore, the Walloon government plans the adoption in the spring of 2014 of decrees containing provisions aiming at a better operation of the gas and electricity market, more particularly in the area of social measures, professional closed and private networks, the introduction of principles for smart network management and the enhancement of the regulator's independence. In addition a *Forum of Belgian Energy Regulators* was established for the purpose of fostering consultation, particularly about matters concerning shared powers. Furthermore the CREG has offered its expertise to the regional operators.

c. Transport: regulation

Directive 2012/34/EU on the principles of opening the railway sector to competition does not impose an obligation on the member states to privatise *domestic passenger transport*; it is, however, discussed at present at

¹⁶ Commission wallonne pour l'énergie – Walloon Energy Committee

European level. Also, as concerns railway traffic the European legislation allows for the direct awarding of public services contracts¹⁷ and does not impose the granting of *public service obligations via tendering procedure*. The member states are required to transpose *Directive 2012/34/EU* no later than on 16 July 2015. The transposition procedure in Belgium is currently underway.

The Act of 30 August 2013 on the reform of the Belgian railways provides for *complete segregation between the railway operator SNCB and the railway infrastructure manager Infrabel*. The reform was made manifest with the adoption of a set of royal decrees. Following the notice of default Belgium received from the European Committee regarding the provisions of the *Directive 2012/34/EU* which *prohibit the transfer of government funds between the manager and the railway company*, Belgium has amended its legislation. Also, the inspecting body is now allowed to perform audits to ensure that these practices no longer occur.

d. Post: regulation

Article 29 of the Act of 13 December 2010 imposes an obligation on service providers who plan to offer postal services falling under the universal service to apply to the BIPT for the purpose of obtaining an *individual permit*. To qualify, they must meet certain requirements. The legal requirements for obtaining a permit are justified since they prevent newcomers from skimming the market and consequently causing the prices for universal postal services (UPS) to surge. These rules are based on a thorough analysis of the European postal market carried out by the European Commission in 2006. The Committee argued that the Belgian market would be exposed to the risk of "cherry picking", an assumption that was also confirmed with the application of the Postal Regulatory Model for the evaluation of the consequences of the different legislative options for guaranteeing the universal services.

As far as the application of a *uniform rate for the entire territory* as envisaged by the permit is concerned, the granting of the permit depends on the commitment of the applicant to apply a uniform rate to the part of the national territory that is covered by the permit (and not to the entire territory). This requirement for the application of a uniform rate implies that the holders (or candidate-holders) of a permit are obligated to charge all customers a uniform rate throughout the entire territory to which the obligation applies, irrespective of the collection and distribution locations in the territory. The obligation for permit holders¹⁸ of charging a uniform rate should not be confused with the obligation imposed on the designated supplier of the universal services¹⁹.

3.4. Tax Shift (Recommendation 5)

"THE COUNCIL RECOMMENDS to establish concrete and time-specific proposals for shifting taxes from labour to less growth-distortive tax bases, notably by exploring the potential of environmental taxes, for example on diesel, heating fuels and the taxation of the private use of company cars. Simplify the tax system by reducing tax expenditures in income taxation, increasing VAT efficiency and improving tax compliance by closing existing loopholes."

During budget controls in 2013 and the drawing-up of the budget 2014, the federal government adopted measures enabling a first shift of fiscal and parafiscal charges from labour to other tax bases. Loopholes have also been closed and the efficiency of tax administrations' performance has been strengthened. The Regions also adopted measures as regards environmental policy and real property taxation.

Moreover, upon the adoption of the Pact for Competitiveness and Employment at the end of November 2013, additional means were provided by the federal government for new reductions in charges in the period 2015-2019.

¹⁷ Regulation No. 1370/2007 on public passenger transport services by rail and by road (see article 5, § 6 of the Regulation) allows the competent authorities to directly award public service contracts for railway traffic.

¹⁸ See article 148sexies §1 2° of the Act of 21 March 1991 for more details on the obligations relating to individual permits.

¹⁹ For more details on the rate requirements imposed on the designated supplier of the universal service, we refer to article 144ter of the Act of 21 March 1991.

3.4.1. Reductions in labour charges

Reductions in charges having a negative impact on labour costs aim at encouraging economic recovery, revitalizing the growth and supporting the competitiveness of companies. These tax reliefs or reductions in social security contributions are granted to employees as well as employers. They are either general, or focused on some sectors or some categories of workers.

Several reductions in employers' social security contributions were increased or introduced in 2014²⁰.

The basic lump sum amount of the structural reduction in charges, i.e. a lump sum reduction in employers' social security contributions set off against the amount of the contributions in proportion to the remuneration that are due for a worker, has been increased from 452.50 EUR to 462.60 EUR per quarter in the general scheme, to compensate for the abolishment of the unpaid day for blue-collar workers in the context of the harmonization of the blue-collar and white-collar workers' statuses.

The reduction focused on low-wage workers has been increased by an indexation of the upper limit enabling the worker to be considered as a low-wage worker. As a result, a higher number of workers are entitled to this reduction in charges.

Employment is stimulated in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by the extension of the reduction in employers' social security contributions for the 4th and 5th hired workers. Moreover, companies employing less than 50 workers in the Horeca sector can enjoy a lump sum reduction in social security contributions for 5 selected full-time workers, provided that attendance is registered, as part of the fight against undeclared work, which is also materialized in this sector in the registration of the turnover by means of the introduction of secure cash registers. There is a higher reduction if the worker is less than 26 years old.

The "Activa" plan, focused on low-skilled workers, has been strengthened by an extension of the target group. The employer can henceforth enjoy a reduction in employers' social security contributions for hiring a young low-skilled worker aged maximum 30 (instead of 27) who has been a job-seeker for at least 6 months (instead of 12 months). Furthermore, the extension of the measure increases the chances for this young job-seeker to find a job.

Moreover, measures have been adopted in favour of low-wage workers. Since January 2014, the social employment bonus (reduction in employees' social security contributions) has been automatically indexed and increased for each indexation of the minimum wage. The fiscal employment bonus was also increased on 1 April 2014. It consists of a tax credit for low-income workers enjoying the social employment bonus. Considering that these provisions enable an increase in the net wage, labour is made financially more attractive in comparison to inactivity. Those successive increases lead to a rise in the net income of workers receiving, for instance, the minimum wage equal to a gross amount of about 1,500 EUR a month, by about 270 EUR a year. As from 2015, 2017 and 2019, the fiscal employment bonus continues to rise, notably for the above-mentioned workers, each time by a net amount of 120 EUR a year (total: each time 50 million EUR). As far as workers receiving a minimum wage are concerned, the total increase amounts thus to a net amount of about 630 EUR a year.

From a fiscal point of view, SMEs have enjoyed as from 2014 a rise in the rate of the exemption of payment of the withholding tax on earned income. This measure is financed by a part of the revenue from the introduction of the fairness tax presented below.

As from 2014, the exemption of payment of the withholding tax on earned income for continuous work has been extended in the profit and the non-profit sectors. Moreover, the exemption from withholding tax on earned income for night work and shift work will be gradually increased from 15.6% to 18% in 2015, from

²⁰ See also 3.2.

18% to 20.4% in 2017 and from 20.4% to 22.8% in 2019. As a consequence, federal aid in favour of companies in which workers work nights or shifts will rise by about 50% over a 5 years period.

Moreover, the maximum number of hours of overtime for which an exemption of payment of the withholding tax on earned income can be granted, has been increased from 130 to 180 hours for the Horeca sector (January 2014) and the building sector (April 2014). In return, a condition with respect to the use of a reliable performance registration system has been imposed, as mentioned above.

The Pact for Competitiveness and Employment stipulates a reduction in the labour cost by almost 2 billion EUR over the 2015-2019 period, in addition to the estimated impact of the measures adopted since July 2012. Accordingly, the total impact has been estimated at 4.7 billion EUR by 2019. Furthermore, this Pact introduces three further increases in the fiscal employment bonus (in 2015, 2017 and 2019), each time up to 50 million EUR, which will result in significant income gains for the concerned low-wage workers. In the Pact for Competitiveness, it has been decided that, as from the last quarter of 2014, the Flemish authorities will invest an additional amount of 125 million EUR a year to reduce the wage costs in the context of the new competences. In this respect, reductions for young people (-30 years old) or for older workers (+55 years old), for instance, are considered.

3.4.2. Carry-over to other tax bases

In return for those reductions in charges, the taxation of other kinds of income has been increased.

Several categories of excise duties have been increased. As from August 2013, the rate of several excise duties has been increased by 8%²¹. Excise duties on tobacco were increased in 2014. Revenue from excise duties also rises as a result of the abolishment in 2014 of the subsidies for biofuels, in accordance with the request of the European Commission. Moreover, tax exemptions with respect to excise duties on tobacco, alcohol and fuels granted to international diplomats have been limited as from mid-2013.

As far as VAT is concerned, it has been decided to make services supplied by lawyers liable to the VAT rate of 21% in order to align with the system applicable to bailiffs and notaries, but also to harmonize with practices in the other European countries. Lawyers have henceforth the opportunity to deduct the VAT they paid.

Taxation of income from movable property has also been increased. Capital gains realised on SICAV/BEVEKS without European passport have been subject to a withholding tax of 25% since August 2013. In October 2014, the rate of the withholding tax on liquidation surpluses will be increased from 10% to 25%. Furthermore, the tax rate on dividends paid by inter-municipal associations engaged in business activities, has been increased from 15% to 25%.

The banking sector had also to contribute. The rate of the subscription tax was increased to 12 basis points in 2013 and to 19.29 basis points in 2014, to which the rate of the tax on credit companies, fixed at 4.35 basis points, must be added. Those are annual taxes paid by credit companies and of which the tax base is determined by the regulated savings deposits to which the exemption of withholding tax on movable property applies. Tax expenditure with respect to the personal income tax has been limited: the tax credit for service vouchers was limited to 150 vouchers per person and per year in July 2013.

The Flemish authorities currently analyse various options with respect to the shift from labour taxation to a less detrimental taxation for the growth, among which the greening of the Flemish tax system.

²¹ All excise duties are concerned by this measure, except excise duties on petrol, diesel, electricity, coal, natural gas, heating oil and national excise products (non-alcoholic beverage and coffee).

As far as car taxation is concerned, the Regions adopted measures to encourage more environmentally friendly behaviours.

As from 2014, the Walloon Region has applied an ecomalus system to company cars. A higher amount is henceforth required for vehicles with a CO₂ emission exceeding a determined threshold. In 2012, the Flemish Region had already reformed the system related to the tax on the entry into service, by adjusting it to environmental criteria. The Flemish authorities themselves continue to pay attention to alternatives to the use of fleet cars and higher environmental performance is required. The circular concerned, that came into force on 1 July 2013, also mentioned other kinds of vehicles (electric, hybrid or powered by natural gas) which are clearly greener. The Flemish authorities take thus into consideration the developments on the market and take further steps to the greening of their own car fleet, environmental performance being used as a guideline in this respect. The objective of at least 5% of electric or hybrid plug-in vehicles a year for new acquisitions, is pursued. Various actions have also been undertaken under the “Budget mobilité / Mobiliteitsbudget” pilot project. This project encourages the lower use of the car for commuting by proposing the worker alternative or additional means to the use of company cars, according to his personal choices and to the budgetary limits set by the employer.

Moreover, the three Regions agreed to introduce in 2016 a kilometre tax for trucks replacing the Eurovignette. The Walloon Region has reformed property taxation on dwelling houses considered as modest. The reduced rate of registration duties now only applies to a limited bracket of the real estate value in order to avoid an application of this reduced rate to falsely modest dwelling houses. In line with the other Regions, the Walloon Region has recently decided to exempt the first bracket of estate duties on the family home in favour of the surviving spouse.

3.4.3. More tax efficiency

Measures have been adopted to encourage taxpayers to comply with tax obligations.

Loopholes at the level of companies taxed with respect to the non-resident income tax/corporate income tax were closed thanks to the introduction of a fairness tax as from tax year 2014.

The fairness tax focuses on large companies paying little or no taxes thanks to tax optimization, notably thanks to the notional interest deduction or to the carry-over of tax losses, but allocating dividends. A special contribution of 5% applies to the amount of dividends paid out of the profit of the tax year that has been compensated by an optimization measure. SMEs are not liable to this new tax.

The federal tax administration is striving for more efficiency with respect to tax collection, by professionalizing and optimizing its working methods (with the “*Better compliance*” project).

As far as the Walloon Region is concerned, the more efficient collection of several taxes (circulation tax, tax on the entry into service, registration duties, tax on axles) will be ensured.

Projects as regards tax simplification are also underway. A special parliamentary committee “Tax Reform” was created in April 2013 in the Federal Parliament. A report including experts’ contributions and hearings was adopted in the parliamentary committee. In this context, the High Council of Finance is preparing an Advice in this respect. In the meantime, several simplification measures have already been adopted (for instance, a decrease in the number of VAT returns which must compulsory be submitted).

In the Walloon Region, a “Conseil de la fiscalité et des finances” (Fiscal and Financial Council) was created in 2013. It is responsible for making recommendations with a view to potential tax developments in this Region, considering the transfer of competences.

The Flemish Region worked towards high-level automation for granting various tax credits and exemptions (automatic reduction in the withholding tax on real estate for energy-saving dwelling houses or buildings, etc.). The introduction of an automatic number plate recognition system for checking payment of vehicle taxes makes superfluous random roadside checks of payment of the automated circulation tax. Only vehicles for which infringement was found are taken off the road. The “Vlaamse Codex Fiscaliteit” (Flemish Tax Code) has been applied as from 1 January 2014. It gathers most of the legal provisions as regards Flemish taxes collected by the “Vlaamse Belastingdienst” (Flemish tax administration). Laws on withholding tax on real estate, vehicle taxes and vacancy tax have been harmonized and gathered in a single code.

3.5. Labour market (Recommendation 6)

THE COUNCIL RECOMMENDS to Establish concrete and time-specific proposals for shifting taxes from labour to less growth-distortive tax bases, notably by exploring the potential of environmental taxes, for example on diesel, heating fuels and the taxation of the private use of company cars. Simplify the tax system by reducing tax expenditures in income taxation, increasing VAT efficiency and improving tax compliance by closing existing loopholes.

3.5.1. Adaptation of the monitoring of job seekers

In recent years, after the introduction of a stronger degressivity of the unemployment benefits, the cooperation agreement between the different political levels on the guidance and follow up of job seekers was renewed and strengthened. The guidance by the regional employment services, which begins when a person gets unemployed, is supported through assessment interviews with the federal institution, which decides if the person is entitled to receive unemployment benefits. For young school leavers, the interviews will take place during the 7th and 11th months of unemployment. To be entitled to unemployment benefits specifically provided for the young people school leavers, both assessments must be positive.

For young people under the age of 25 years receiving ordinary unemployment benefits (after a year of work at least), the first assessment interview will take place after 9 months instead of 15 months previously. For job seekers aged 26 to 55, the first assessment interview will take place after 12 months (instead of 21). Furthermore, the age limit will be raised from 55 to 58 years by 2016. From now on, young people working part-time and receiving a complementary unemployment benefit and people with a limited occupational disability will also be followed through interviews.

In line with the current approach, the regions are committed to offer an individual action plan to all young people during the 4th month of unemployment at the latest and to all job seekers over 25 years in the 9th month at the latest. Besides, those who are repeatedly unemployed for a short period will be more frequently offered a new action plan. For the unemployed with a combination of medical, social and psychological problems, the regions will develop a specific programme in collaboration with specialized partners. In Wallonia, the young job seekers can, from the 7th month of enrolment, benefit from a new insertion and training device including a training period of 3 to 6 months with an employer and a training part.

The Walloon Public Service for Employment individualized guidance for job seekers is now fully deployed. In 2013, there were 100,807 new guidances, 230 231 individual interviews (assessment and follow up, for 220,877 in 2012) and 418,602 individual interviews and distance monitoring services performed within the framework of the individualized guidance. These services have benefitted 179,910 different people.

3.5.2. Reinforcement of interregional labour market mobility

The current cooperation between the regional employment services is continuing. Job offers are exchanged and job seekers are redirected to a job in another Region, which has also led to a visible increase in interre-

gional commuting (+6% from 2008 to 2012). In 2013, the cooperation between Brussels and Flanders has increased, more particularly within the framework of a specific action plan for the airport, where a single point of contact has been set up. The guidance for Brussels job seekers in the towns surrounding the capital has been strengthened. Efforts have notably been made to organise common job dating and employment fairs. Moreover, job seekers from Brussels are encouraged to undertake a vocational training in Wallonia or in Flanders.

In Wallonia, the activities in the field of interregional mobility are gradually integrated into the regional directions of the Public Employment Service, the FOREM. Furthermore, the Walloon and German-speaking employment services have concluded a new agreement to strengthen their collaboration and increase mobility. Mediators from both services can now contact directly all job seekers to prepare them for a job interview. Moreover, Wallonia offers these job seekers a voucher that will enable them to obtain their driving license. Besides, the Government has decided to maintain the language training policy (online learning platform, language immersion scholarships, support measures for job seekers, etc.) and create a "House of Languages" in Louvain-la-Neuve. Considering language skills are a key to regional mobility, the Brussels Region has enriched its "Language Plan" with a new online language-learning platform, Brulingua, freely accessible to all job seekers since the end of 2013.

In 2013, the Walloon Public Service for Employment received 117,344 job offers from the other Regions and transmitted 36,243 job offers to the other Regions. 22,859 people are currently included in the mobile reserve, which means they agree to work in a company situated in Flanders. 5,740 jobs have been handled by the mixed team and 1,191 people have found a job in Flanders thanks to this mixed team. The Flemish and Brussels services have exchanged offers for 1,104 jobs and 1,204 job seekers from Brussels have found work in Flanders.

3.5.3. Simplification and reinforcement of the labour market policies coherence

Within the framework of the 6th State reform, a number of important competences related to labour market policy will be transferred to the regions and communities from July 1st 2014 on. The regions and communities are currently intensively preparing these transfers. In this respect, it shall be ensured that consistency and coherence prevail in order to prevent the labour market actors being faced with greater complexity. Furthermore, coherence between labour market and education and training policies, for instance, shall be reinforced by bringing them together on one policy level.

Flanders is working on this through the "Careers Agreement", concluded in 2012, and through a strengthening of the higher professional education (approved in July 2013). Furthermore, the general reform of the secondary education is still going on and steps are taken to boost the technical and professional education. For instance, on the job training will be given a proper place in the secondary education. The aim is to achieve a better match between education and the labour market.

Besides, Flanders heavily invests in career guidance. Since June 2013, all active people can get a "career voucher" from the PES that can be used for the career guidance service of their choice. The aim is to encourage people to think more actively about their careers. Ultimately, this should lead to a stronger participation in lifelong learning and to an increased labour mobility and, therefore, to a better match between supply and demand and subsequently to more professional satisfaction.

In Flanders, the guidance of older job seekers has been extended to the age of 58, in anticipation of a further increase in the age limit to 60 years from April 2014. The guidance approach has been adapted to take fully into account the diverse needs of this target group. The emphasis is also laid on improving "workability" : the sectors will be encouraged to undertake actions aimed at increasing the job quality for the people over the age of 50 (sectoral action plans attached to the sectoral agreements for 2013-2014, etc.).

The French-speaking Community and the Walloon Region have developed a cooperation agreement bringing together the fields of education, training and employment. The social partners also take part in this agreement. By doing so, the dialogue is encouraged. The coherence of the training policy and the relevance of training for the labour market are both strengthened. Besides, the launching of joint projects and the development of a common analysis are facilitated. A new framework for traineeships in qualifying education has also been approved; it aims to generalize training courses, which are compulsory for a number of options. In practical terms, some centres have been established in Liège, Charleroi and Namur ("cité des métiers") to help improve the image of industrial and construction professions. Furthermore, Wallonia is working on the strengthening of the training vouchers system to match the needs of the labour market as much as possible. Moreover, the funding of centres of competence is maintained for an amount of 3 million EUR per year and their collaboration with qualifying education will be strengthened.

In Brussels, the current dialogue structure in terms of socio-economic policy has been extended to the competent authorities for education and training. Furthermore, a single folder has been developed, in which one follows the path of job seekers through the actions of the employment service and the training offer.

In all three regions, an integrated framework for training is currently developed in the context of the European Qualifications Framework, which aims to improve the transparency of the education and training system in order to spell out pathways that are, at the same time, flexible and focused on the labour market, including basic education, lifelong learning and the recognition of informally acquired skills. The communities are currently finalising their regulatory framework. In Wallonia, a decree on traineeships for job seekers was also adopted in 2014, with a focus on young people, job seekers in retraining units and jobs in demand. In Flanders, in addition to the implementation decree on professional qualifications associated with the decree on the structure of qualifications in Flanders, the implementation decree for levels 1-4 educational qualifications was finalized and fixed the procedures and criteria for defining these educational qualifications. Although the regulation for level 5 educational qualification was already available, the first educational qualification was only recently approved (graduate store management). Through these measures, the aim is to achieve a better harmonization of the "education" and "employment" sectors.

In accordance with the employment agreements concluded with the social partners, Flanders plans to develop the growth of the individual vocational training in enterprises. The target for 2014 is set on 17.000 individual vocational trainings and 800 curative individual vocational trainings.

The Federal Government supports the training policy through the introduction, from 2015, of the obligation to offer annually to each worker at least the equivalent of one day of formal training. The practical implementation of this measure is in the hands of the social partners.

3.5.4. Social integration and integration on the labour market of generations with an immigrant background

In almost all European countries, there is a labour market gap between people from national and people of foreign origin. However, the gap is exceptionally big in Belgium. This situation is related to a general problem of social integration as well as significant differences in terms of education. To evaluate the situation on the labour market, the Federal authorities issued a report²² on "socio-economic monitoring" based on comprehensive administrative data in 2013. This report will serve as a basis for a subsequent follow up and for the development of an appropriate strategy.

The three regions have developed integrated strategies for the integration of newcomers. Furthermore, the integration of people of immigrant origin is tackled via specific approaches developed in the framework of regional policies for socio-professional integration. Each region has developed an integration pathway, in-

²² Federal Public Service Employment, Labour and Social dialogue and Centre for Equal opportunities and Opposition to racism (FOD WASO/SPF ETCS & CGKR/CELR) (2013) Socio-economic monitoring.

cluding an individualized intake, a particular attention to language skills and (possibly) literacy, socio-professional integration and general integration into Belgian society. In Flanders and Brussels, the path is the subject of a compulsory integration contract which, when completed, gives the right to receive a certificate. Anyone evading these obligations is at risk of having to pay an administrative fine in Flanders and Wallonia. The partnership agreement also provides that, within the new ESF program, various projects are to be set up as a support. Six additional million EUR have been foreseen in the 2014 Flemish budget in the framework of integration policy. On June 7th 2013, a new decree on integration has been adopted in Flanders. The Flemish integration policy focuses on inclusion. In Flanders, an autonomous integration agency has been created.

In its economic development policy for the city, Brussels particularly invests in areas where many people of foreign origin live. Moreover, a new Diversity Council has been set up to strengthen the integration of foreigners or people from foreign descent and fight all forms of discrimination.

On the educational field, the focus lies on preventing early streaming because of which the students and pupils of foreign origin are often not given the opportunity to develop their full potential. This is why Flanders invests massively on the follow up of the command of the Dutch language and on tailoring Dutch course offers with the students' needs. Schools must therefore perform a wide screening of all children entering for the first time in the general primary education to assess their knowledge of Dutch. Primary schools then determine a personalised language course pathway for each student. In this regard, it is possible to organize a language immersion for students who do not master Dutch enough to be able to follow the regular class. The French-speaking educational system also provides a similar specific support to newcomers through an individualized reception. In doing so, both communities aim to allow students to integrate into the ordinary education as quickly as possible.

On the labour market, the emphasis is specifically put on language skills, notably in Brussels. Thus, an online platform allows all job seekers to improve their French, Dutch, German and English. A helpdesk has been set up specifically for this purpose. The Walloon employment service also pays special attention to the knowledge of languages.

Moreover, each region uses funded and supervised diversity plans aimed at supporting enterprises in the recruitment, training and keeping process of staff from disadvantaged groups.

With the Centre for Equal opportunities and Opposition to racism, which has got an interfederal structure, it is sought, at all levels, to fight against discrimination on the labour market. The Walloon Government has also adopted a draft decree aiming at the recognition of a mediation centre for Travellers. Flanders has approved the Flemish action plan « MOE(Roma)-migranten », as well as a strategic plan for Travellers.

3.6. Greenhouse gas emissions (recommendation 7)

"THE COUNCIL RECOMMENDS taking concrete measures and agreeing on a clear division of tasks between the federal and regional authorities to ensure progress towards reaching the targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from non-ETS activities, in particular from transport and buildings."

Belgium has undertaken to cut greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in the non-ETS sectors²³ by 15% between 2005 and 2020. At present, the National Climate Commission is making the necessary arrangements to define a clear *division of tasks* between the federal and regional authorities in a cooperation agreement.

In order to ensure the achievement of the targets, the Regions and the federal government are continuing their actions and starting up or proposing new initiatives:

- On 28 June 2013, the Flemish government adopted the Flemish 2013-2020 climate policy plan. This plan is made up of a Flemish mitigation plan aiming at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and a Flemish adaptation plan to take the effects of climate change into account. The Flemish mitigation plan contains concrete measures for non-ETS sectors in Flanders during the period 2013-2020. In this regard, Flanders has paid particular attention to the transport and building sectors, which are the most non-ETS greenhouse-gas-intensive in Flanders. Moreover, a new financing arrangement has been created for the period 2015-2020 in order to support, with the Flemish Climate Fund, projects or measures according to their greenhouse gas emission reduction potential and cost-efficiency. Furthermore, the Flanders Spatial Policy Plan strives, among other things, to set up solid open-space networks for the purpose of climate mitigation and adaptation.
- In February 2014, the Walloon Parliament adopted the *Climate Decree*, which should enable Wallonia to meet its commitments to cut total greenhouse gas emissions (ETS and non-ETS) by 30% in 2020 and by 80-95% in 2050, compared to the 1990 level. This decree determines the GHG emission reduction path through the emission budget mechanism set up for a 5-year period, and introduces an Air-Climate-Energy Plan listing the concrete measures for achieving these targets. This plan was adopted at its first reading in January 2014 and will be subject to public inquiry in June 2014.
- The Brussels Code for air, climate and energy (COBRACE) was adopted on 2 May 2013. It contains many measures regarding energy efficiency, the development of renewable energy sources, transport, air quality and climate. A draft *Integrated Plan for air, climate and energy* was adopted at its first reading on 26 September 2013. It is presently subject to an environmental impact assessment and will soon be subject to public inquiry. This plan introduces 130 measures based on 9 pillars focussing on the major energy-consuming and greenhouse gas and air pollutant emitting sectors, intended in particular to achieve the targets determined by COBRACE.
- At present, the federal government maintains the existing measures regarding the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the key non-ETS sectors (transport and buildings), aiming at supporting and completing regional measures. Additional measures (in the field of transport and product standards) are likely to be adopted as a result of the cooperation agreement with the Regions on the distribution of the non-ETS target.

With regard to *transport* greenhouse gas emissions in particular, the Regions have introduced new measures to sustain the trend of emission reduction observed since 2008. They are also pursuing their work towards setting up a road pricing system. It is currently assumed that the system will be operational for trucks in 2016. For passenger cars, a pilot project involving one thousand car drivers was launched in February 2014.

In order to reduce emissions in the transport sector, Flanders will bring the number of road kilometres under control (cf. kilometre tax), enhance the environmental characteristics of transport modes and fuels (for example, hybrid, electric or hydrogen-fuelled (urban) buses, public electric charging stations for electric vehi-

²³ Those sectors include the residential sector, the tertiary sector, agriculture, transport (excluding air transport) and non-energy-intensive industry.

cles, the use of LNG as a marine fuel, shore power for ships) and promote environmentally-friendly transport modes (walking, bicycle, public transport and car sharing for passenger transport; co-modal solutions and green and sustainable logistics for freight transport). The Flemish Government has taken note of the draft Flanders Mobility Plan, which is subject to public inquiry.

In Wallonia, the environmental penalty scheme aiming at promoting the purchase of vehicles emitting less CO₂ has been extended to company cars since 1 January 2014. Furthermore, investments in multimodal transport are being maintained in order to encourage the shift to green alternatives. For instance, the Walloon Government issued its opinion on rail investment priorities in November 2013 and allocated funds to cofinance regional projects. The building of the multimodal platform Trilogiport (Liège) began in June 2013. It is scheduled to become operational in the second half of 2015.

In the Brussels-Capital Region, the adoption of the Integrated Plan Air-Climate-Energy, which supports and completes the measures taken in the framework of the *IRIS 2 plan*, is pending (see above). It includes in particular an overhaul of transport taxation according to environmental criteria. Moreover, a provision of COBRACE aiming at reducing car use by acting on free car parking available at the workplace came into force on 5 February 2014.

As for the greenhouse gas emissions of the building sector, they are given special attention by the different Regions. The measures mainly fall within the scope of the implementation of European directives regarding the energy efficiency and performance of buildings²⁴.

The new Flemish initiatives include the launching of the long-term strategy for an in-depth renovation of the building stock (consultation of stakeholders, information session, inventory of buildings), the measures of the Flemish Government as regards the commitment to renovate public buildings, the consolidation of financial instruments for energy-efficiency renovations (social housing, etc.) and the launching of the regulatory development process to finalize the transposition of the EU directive on the energy performance of buildings.

In Wallonia, new measures and initiatives include the upgrade of standards concerning the energy performance of new buildings, the extension in 2014 of the interest-free loans scheme for the financing of energy-efficiency works in housing, a call for projects on the construction and renovation of non-residential model buildings, financing arrangements for the renovation of high energy-consuming public buildings (PIVERT 2) and additional subsidies for the renovation of school, municipal and voluntary sector buildings (special UREBA 2013).

In the Brussels-Capital Region, a second phase for the support, implementation and large-scale promotion of a sustainable city project has been launched and includes higher energy performance requirements for buildings (in particular, a compulsory passive standard for all new buildings as from 2015), an increase in the funds allocated to energy bonuses, renewed calls for projects on "model buildings" and the setting-up of local services such as the energy info houses.

²⁴ In Wallonia and the Brussels-Capital Region, some of the measures are part of multiannual "Employment-Environment Alliance" programmes.

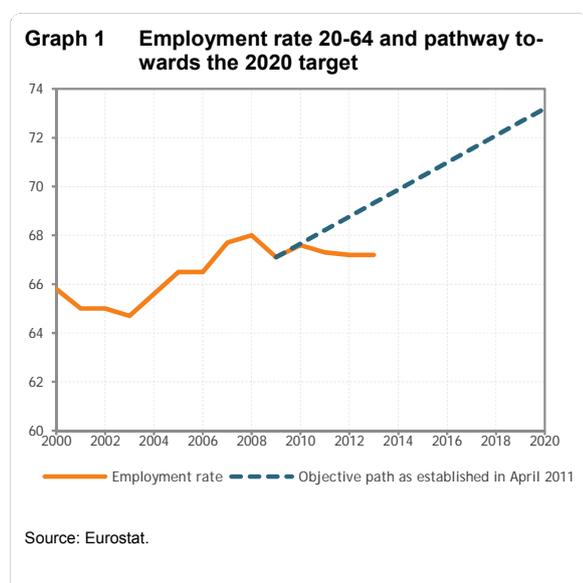
4. Follow-up of the Europe 2020 targets

4.1. Employment

Table 3: Employment targets

| | BE2010 | BE2013 | EU2012 | BE2020 | Required job creation 2013-2020 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------------------------------|
| Employment rate 20-64 | 67.6% | 67.2% | 68.4% | 73.2% | 433,913 |
| Employment rate women | 61.6% | 62.1% | 62.3% | 69.1% | 253,404 |
| NEET (youth neither in employment, education nor training) | 10.9% | 12.3%* | 13.2% | 8.2% | |
| Employment rate 55-64 | 37.3% | 41.7% | 48.8% | 50% | 185,716 |
| Employment rate gap between non-EU citizens and Belgians | 28.4% | 29.8%* | 12.2% | < 16.5% | |

*2012.



Even though the Belgian labour market has withstood the crisis relatively well, the improvement of the situation on the labour market has been too limited since 2010 to reach the 2020 targets. Moreover, the situation of disadvantaged groups, such as people with an immigrant background (see CSR 6) and young people, remains a concern. The growing number of young NEET requires a strengthening of the fight against youth unemployment.

4.1.1. Introduction of the Youth Guarantee

In December 2013, the Belgian authorities have filed the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan with the European Commission. An updated version of this plan, providing responses to the Commission's remarks, is attached to this Reform programme.

Synerjob, the consultative body of the employment services, has been appointed as the single point of contact for Belgium. Furthermore, the regions and the German-speaking Community have all established a consultation structure within which the various stakeholders are represented.

The Flemish policy towards young job seekers is already very close to the Youth Guarantee. By automatically searching for matches between job offers and job seekers, the young job seekers receive job offers within the first month of unemployment. Moreover, the employment service strives to offer all young people at least one type of guidance within 4 months. To put the Youth Guarantee into practice, some efforts will have to be done to reach also the young people who have not registered as job seekers, through collaboration with local organisations working with the disadvantaged youth. Besides, training periods and other professional experiences will be offered at an earlier stage (around the 4th month of unemployment). To do so, the capacity of the employment services will be reinforced with 2,500 additional intensive guidance pathways, 500 of which will specifically focus on the young people with vocational disabilities. Young people who have not completed secondary education will receive a second chance thanks to a training period at the end of which

they will be awarded an officially recognised diploma. For the highly skilled, specific guidance through internet and flexible training modules will be developed.

In Wallonia, the Youth Guarantee is realized through a combination of measures structured around nine key areas:

- A study focusing on a better understanding of the situation and the needs of young people.
- An adaptation of the guidance and training process, using the sponsorship by experienced workers and individualized learning paths.
- Actions to fight against early school leaving through preventive actions (by putting the emphasis on general and non-technical skills) and a better follow up, certification and through the use of web-based trainings possibilities.
- A better identification of the skills through a screening, guidance, brief work experiences and more efficient language tests.
- A strengthening of the collaboration with businesses to encourage field learning for students and job seekers. In this regard, from the 7th month of their registration to the FOREM (Walloon PES), the young Walloon job seekers will benefit from a new insertion and vocational training device, including a 3 to 6 months training period with an employer and a training part.
- A better collaboration with schools at guiding students through information sessions on jobs in demand and technical professions also focused on vocational training opportunities.
- An improvement in the transition between school and working life through individual and collective actions, in collaboration with the sectors.
- Actions aiming at putting young NEETs in contact with the labour market.
- The promotion of entrepreneurship, notably through workshops and pilot enterprises.

The reform of the apprenticeship system adopted in January 2014 provides for the harmonization of the statutes of training operators, a single contract, a training course, etc. The alternate learning for job seekers will also be developed with a focus on the young people.

The resources allocated in the framework of the Youth Employment Initiative are dedicated to these actions. They will also be integrated in the ESF programmes in order to ensure continuity over the period. Thus, a lateral initiative for young people will be developed; it will focus on facilitating cooperation between educational institutions and encourage the lifelong learning culture, especially by investing in the “second chance school” as well as in professional initiatives for the youth in the context of a comprehensive policy to fight against school dropout.

The Brussels Youth Guarantee device aims to contribute to the fight against unemployment and underemployment of young people under 25 years and to improve young people’s skills (in the broad sense) so they are well integrated on the labour market.

Given the specific context of Brussels, remedial actions (second chance studies type), are promoted as well as prevention. Six themes structure the device: (1) Information/Guidance, (2) Education/Actions for the youth, (3) Education/Informal training, (4) Training, (5) Training period in a professional setting, (6) Employment.

A 7th transversal axis focuses on the monitoring of the device and its inclusion in the follow up and evaluation process implemented on the level of the main Brussels tools. Brussels has also established a special de-

partment for the Youth Guarantee within the employment service to allow a specialized approach for the information and guidance of the young job seekers.

An additional annual budget of 3.5 million EUR has been released by the French Community Commission for this purpose for the years 2014 and 2015, while an additional annual budget of 1.7 million EUR was generated by the Brussels Region in 2014.

Moreover, the new Brussels ESF operational programs include an investment priority dedicated to the sustainable integration of young people under the age of 25 years on the labour market.

The German-speaking Community has developed an integrated path for young job seekers, focusing on an integration agreement to be signed before the end of the fourth month of unemployment, concentrating specifically on the young job seekers who are furthest from the labour market. Furthermore, the cooperation between the employment services and the training institute for SMEs has been enhanced to increase the transparency of the offer in terms of field learning. A specific training for young job seekers has been developed, which is based on childcare, as well as a project aiming at facilitating the transition from school to work for young people with disabilities through individual guidance.

The Federal authorities support the introduction of the Youth Guarantee by focusing on the hard core of the young job seekers who are still unemployed after 6 months. For this purpose, a system of training periods pour young people was set up in 2013. Furthermore, a significant reduction in labour costs has been introduced for hiring low-skilled young people under the age of 30 and unemployed for at least 6 months : the employer is granted a reduction in labour costs of 1 000 EUR per month during 36 months.

4.1.2. Reconciling work and private life

The Government of the Walloon-Brussels Federation adopted in June 2013 a plan to raise the capacity of childcare facilities to meet the consequences of demographic change. 2.049 places will be created in 2014 and, subsequently, an average of 1.600 places per year. To support this plan, Wallonia will put employment aids at the Federation's disposal for the managerial staff in these structures and raise funds in order to create new childcare facilities.

Flanders has also invested more in childcare: the decree on the organisation of childcare services will come into force on April 1st 2014. Moreover, the incentive bonus was also adapted in 2013 to support the 4th month of parental leave.

4.1.3. Modernisation of labour law

The differences between blue-collar and white-collar workers are deeply embedded in Belgian labour law and contribute to the labour market segmentation. In 2013, the negotiations to eliminate the most significant differences were completed. They helped develop a single status, with uniform notice periods and a similar regulation for the motivation of dismissal as well as for the first day of illness.

In the new work contracts, the notice period to be respected by the employer is of a minimum of 2 weeks and a maximum of 63 weeks, plus one week per year of service from 21 years of seniority onwards. For the current contracts, a regulation combining existing and new rules has been developed. In the sectors where, until now, notice periods were usually short, some transition periods will be introduced. When a worker is entitled to a notice period of more than 30 weeks, the employer also has to offer outplacement services.

The different rules for the motivation for dismissal have also been suppressed. Except during the first 6 months and in special cases (temporary work, student work, restructuring), each dismissal will have to be motivated in writing and may subsequently be challenged in the courts.

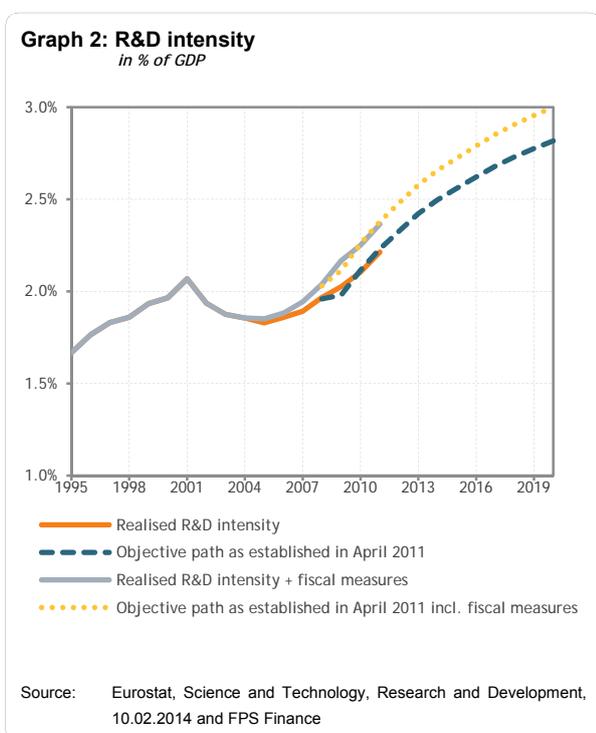
4.2. R&D and innovation

In the 2011 National Reform Programme, the Belgian government set a target for R&D expenditure of 3% of GDP in 2020, including the budgetary costs of federal tax measures in favour of R&D staff. This cost is estimated at 0.18% of GDP in 2020.

Table 4: R&D target
(as a % of GDP)

| | BE2010 | BE2011 | BE2020 | Required change 2012-2020 2012-2020 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--|
| R&D intensity | 2.10 | 2.21 | 2.82 | 0.61 |
| R&D tax incentive (%) | 0.15 | 0.15 | 0.18 | 0.03 |
| R&D intensity, including tax incentive | 2.25 | 2.36 | 3.00 | 0.64 |

Source: Eurostat, Science and Technology, Research and Development, 10.02.2014 and FPS Finance.



When establishing this target and the path to reach it, the latest available official data on R&D expenditure dated from 2007. Actual R&D intensity in 2008 and 2009 surpassed the target projection, but in 2010 and 2011 it went back to the projection's path as a result of the crisis. In 2011, Belgian R&D expenditure amounted to 8.2 billion EUR, representing an R&D intensity of 2.21%. That same year, the payroll tax exemption for R&D staff reached 0.56 billion EUR, or 0.15% of GDP. The most recent figures regarding R&D expenditure show a continued improvement.

For the purpose of strengthening cooperation between the Regions, Brussels-Capital participated in a joint call with the Flemish Region under the programme "ZorginnovatieRuimte Vlaanderen" (Care Innovation Space Flanders). This programme was organised as Living Labs and aims at boosting innovation in healthcare for elderly people by supporting innovative projects on all related aspects. Furthermore, in the framework of the transversal technology intelligence

platform initiated in the Federal Government economic stimulus plan, it was decided to create an online database on innovation in order to pool information. This database should be available by September 2014.

In spite of budgetary difficulties resulting from the economic crisis, the Belgian authorities have taken care to reinforce research and innovation support measures by focussing on sustainable development and answers to social challenges. The fiscal support policy for R&D was intensified in 2013, particularly with regard to the payroll tax exemption for researchers (an increase from 75% to 80% as from 1 July 2013).

The European Agreement of 19 February 2013 on the Unified Patent Court (UPC) was ratified by the Federal Parliament. The UPC Agreement constitutes a crucial step in the development of the European patent with unitary effect, as intended in regulation 1257/2012 of 7 December 2012 implementing enhanced cooperation in the area of the creation of unitary patent protection.

Under Wallonia's Marshall Plan 2.Green, 61 million EUR has been allocated to: competitive clusters, with additional support for public/private partnerships (5 million EUR), specific programmes focusing on SMEs, particularly as regards cooperation with research centres and knowledge transfer (10 million EUR) and "green support" to young innovative enterprises (5 million EUR); to R&D programmes on thematic priorities of the Research Strategy, particularly for ICT, sustainable development, energy, health; and to a programme of excellence on industrial redeployment towards an ecological transition (14 million EUR). A call for social innovation has also been launched, as well as a new arrangement for researchers' mobility. The decree on scientific research funds allowing the related financial efforts (yearly more than 100 million EUR) to be sustained has been adopted. Moreover, the financing of the Fund for strategic fundamental research is sustained for its two strategic pillars: research on sustainable development (5 million EUR/year) and life sciences (6 million EUR/year). Finally, the decree on research and innovation support has been amended to introduce maturation funds and new subsidies for the purchase of exceptional equipment, to group registered research centres together in research institutes and to open innovation partnerships to non-technological innovation and to international partners in the research consortium.

In implementing its strategy for Research, Development and Innovation, the Brussels-Capital Region supported various projects in the priority domains of ICT, life sciences and sustainable development for a total amount of 33 million EUR in 2013. In 2014, the Region's R&D budget will reach 46 million EUR in commitment appropriations.

Flanders also plans to allocate additional funds to R&D and innovation again in 2014. An additional 45 million budget is planned following the agreement on the competitiveness pact in December 2013. Moreover, 18.9 million EUR has been released for the integration of higher education within the Flemish Community. In the beginning of 2014, an additional 10 million EUR was allocated to the SOFI fund of PMV to support innovative spin-offs. During Summer 2013, the Flemish Government decided to set up a strategic research centre (SOC) for the manufacturing sector within which companies, research centres and universities cooperate to do high-level research for the manufacturing industry.²⁵ Under the strategic action plan for Limburg (SALK), several initiatives in the field of research have been taken in addition to economic initiatives. For instance, a research group of VIB (biotechnology) on immune diseases, a Careville Limburg lab dedicated to innovations in healthcare for elderly people, the Digital Health Innovation (DHI) expertise centre and an incubator (iMinds) on ICT and digital media for technological enterprises will be set up in Limburg. In 2012, social innovation developed around three pillars: innovation on the workplace (Flanders' Synergy), social entrepreneurship, (Sociale Innovatiefabriek (SIF), which started its activities in October 2013), and supportive innovation in general (a call for social innovation paths in 2013). Different initiatives in healthcare innovation were also supported in 2013. The Sprint projects, which are a new aid channel for innovative companies, were launched as from 2013. A Sprint project is especially aimed at large companies with a development project with limited scope, allowing them to develop or gather and apply new knowledge for an important innovation. In 2013, some 19 projects were approved for a total aid amount of 3.2 million EUR. That same year, a specific (pilot) call was launched for Flemish innovation partnership paths dedicated to innovation followers (VIS trajectIV). These paths aim at speeding up the transition from innovation to market for companies that are not proactive as regards innovation and do not develop new products, processes or services themselves, but implement or use them. Sixteen projects have been selected for financial aid for a total amount of around 4.6 million EUR.

The Belgian authorities have also confirmed their participation in different European initiatives of the Horizon 2020 programme (EUROSTARS II, AAL II, JTI Ecsel) and have allocated large amounts to fund research infrastructures and to integrate research teams in the European Strategy Forum in Research Infrastructure.

The Belgian authorities' concern was also to strengthen the economic fabric around innovative large companies and SMEs to reinforce the presence of these companies on Belgian territory and maximise the economic

²⁵ The strategic research centre for the manufacturing sector is a practical achievement of the New Industrial Policy (Nieuw Industrieel Beleid) - see also Chapter 5.

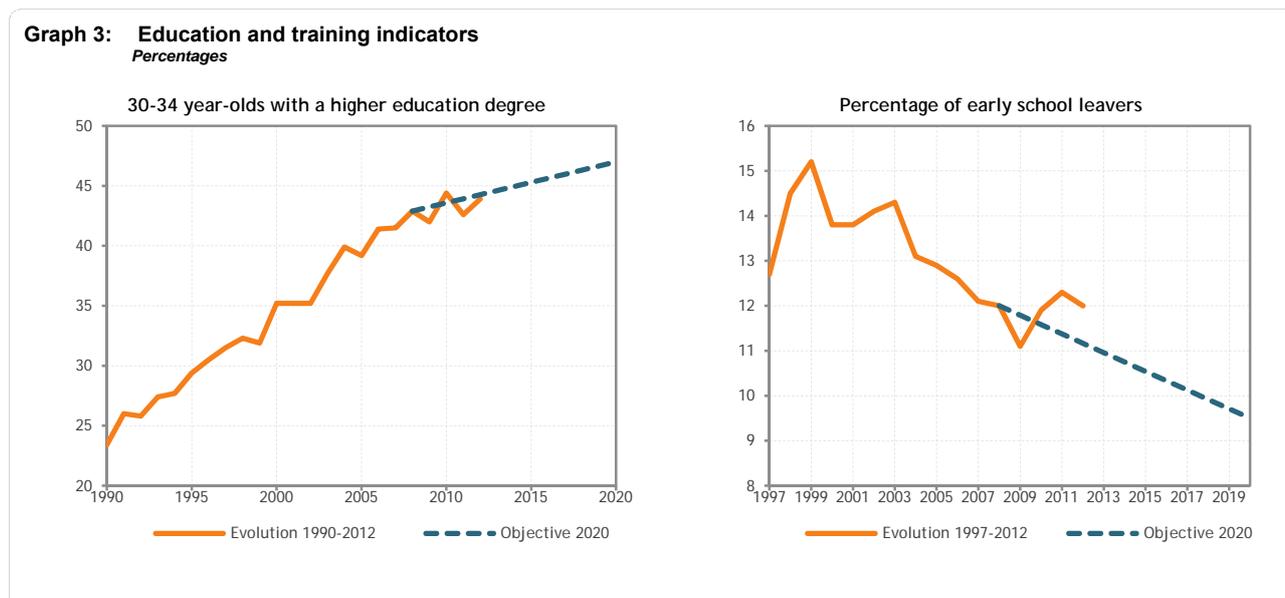
benefits of the research conducted, and to make innovation the key to reindustrialisation. In Wallonia, this target is pursued by developing competitiveness clusters and by the Plan Creative Wallonia, which is aimed at boosting the development of a creative economy. In 2013, different projects were started, among others a call for "living labs" projects (e-health and Open domain), a mobile fast prototyping lab, a premium for guidance in the creative economy, a call for "creative hubs", "digital cities" and digital school projects, and several projects on training and creativity. A "Wallonia Big data" platform for competitiveness clusters is due to be set up in 2014 and the start-up accelerator Nest'Up will be developed with hosting, finance and guidance services. The phased plan of the concept note 'Een slimme specialisatiestrategie voor een gericht clusterbeleid' (a strategy of smart specialisation for a well-targeted cluster policy), adopted on 8 March 2013 by the Flemish Government, includes a pre-path for a policy of advanced clusters during the next legislative period. Since November 2013, test paths have been started in sustainable chemistry, additive manufacturing and critical metals to develop a partnership to design a roadmap for clusters. Under "innovatief aanbesteden" (innovative tendering), several projects in fields such as agriculture, education, mobility, the labour market, etc. are in a pre-commercial phase. In order to support the Flemish global approach for the six key technologies (KET), a call for roadmaps was issued in 2013. The first results are expected in April/May. In October 2013, a new campaign, "ikinnoveer!", was launched to increase the innovation potential of Flemish SMEs. In the Brussels-Capital Region, a new strategic platform with a budget of 8.2 million EUR in e-health was set up at the end of 2013, allowing ICT solutions in the health sector to be developed. Supplementing similar arrangements dedicated to the environment and encouraging academic and industrial collaborations, it aims at shortening the transition between research and economic development. Similarly, a pilot programme of "innovation cheques" was created at the end of 2013 to allow SMEs to receive strategic advice on innovation and technological guidance services given by regional research centres.

The simplification of the institutional landscape and improved coherence and efficiency of public actions were also a major objective of the Belgian authorities. In Wallonia, for instance, the decree on setting up an agency for entrepreneurship and innovation was adopted at the beginning of 2014 and an optimisation process for R&D support management is in progress. For the implementation of its Regional Plan for Innovation, the Brussels-Capital Region has increased its support to RDI regional players wishing to take part in European programmes and partnerships.

4.3. Education and training

Table 5: Education targets

| | BE2011 | BE2012 | EU2012 | BE2020 | Required change 2012-2020 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------------------------|
| Percentage of 30-34 year-olds with a higher education degree | 42.6 | 43.9 | 35.8 | 47.0 | 3.1 |
| Percentage of early school leavers | 12.3 | 12.0 | 12.8 | 9.5 | 2.5 |



In Belgium, education is the responsibility of the Flemish, French-speaking and German-speaking Communities, whereas training belongs to the powers of both the Communities and Regions. This section describes the new initiatives taken by the Communities and Regions with regard to the EU2020 objectives on education and training.

4.3.1. Higher education

Belgium has committed to raising the share of people aged 30-34 years with a higher education degree to 47% by 2020. This objective is more ambitious than the target set for the whole EU (40%). In 2012, the percentage reached 43.9% in Belgium but the latest figures suggest a slight drop.

The decree strengthening higher vocational education in Flanders was passed on 12 July 2013. As from 1 September 2014, this type of education will only be provided as joint training in both a college of higher education and an adult learning centre or high school. Several aspects of higher vocational education (the legal position of students, the use of training profiles, training funding) are still incorporated into the reform with the aim of improving its position in the Flemish education landscape. All types of higher vocational education are subject to the external quality control procedure for higher education. All bachelor and master degree programmes provided in colleges of higher education have been incorporated in universities to streamline education supply and improve access to scientific research. Another benefit of the decree is that the academic degrees of bachelor and master now benefit from higher international recognition. The decree entered into force at the beginning of the 2013-2014 academic year.

A decree reforming the higher education landscape in the Brussels-Wallonia Federation was passed in November 2013. The decree aims at improving the coherence of school careers, promoting success at school and

broadening the principle of cooperation within higher education institutions. Higher education institutions are grouped together in a single academy that was set up on 1 January 2014. Partners of the 5 geographical zones can develop an education supply and outreach services for the benefit of all students. In this context, the governments of the Walloon Region, the Brussels-Wallonia Federation, the Brussels-Capital Region, the German-speaking Community and the French Community Commission introduced in November 2013 the concept of collective structures of higher education. For this purpose, all higher education institutions and professional training providers in target education zones, where the supply is weak, will be given access to high-quality educational infrastructure and equipment through newly created platforms. A draft decree adjusting the funding of higher education institutions to this new organisation was adopted in January 2014.

4.3.2. Early school leavers

The rate of early school leavers in Belgium should be reduced to 9.5% by 2020. This objective is also more ambitious than the overall EU target (10%). In 2012, the Belgian rate amounted to 12.0%, compared to 12.3% in 2011 and 11.9% in 2010. The latest figures show a further improvement.

To enhance dialogue and cooperation for joint interest issues, a cooperation protocol was signed in January 2014. It aims at setting up an Interministerial Conference bringing together the ministers in charge of education in the three Communities.

The Cooperation agreement between the governments of the Brussels-Wallonia Federation, Brussels-Capital Region, Walloon Region, the French Community Commission and the German-speaking Community aiming at organizing the implementation of a register of educational and post-educational pathways was approved in December 2013. This tool will allow education and training policies to be steered better and will also improve the connections between the different policy measures. Additionally, two decrees, one intersectoral and the other sectoral, dealing with school reintegration, violence prevention and guidance on courses were adopted in November 2013. They aim at better interfacing the policies of compulsory education and of youth support services. For example, a regional platform including 10 local cells entrusted with preventing early school leaving will be set up in Brussels. Moreover, a decree on school structures helping developing social skills was adopted; these structures are meant to help young people with structural behavioural and/or personality disorders. The government of the Federation Brussels-Wallonia also adopted a draft decree adjusting and deepening the reform of the first cycle in December 2013 and the decree reforming teaching titles and functions in January 2014. The amendment of the cooperation agreement between the French-speaking Community, the Walloon Region and the French Community Commission on work-linked training will make it possible, on the one hand, to harmonize the status of young people and, on the other hand, to organize a preparatory module before starting work-linked training and thus preventing school leaving.

On 27 September 2013, the Flemish government adopted the action plan against early school leaving. The plan includes preventive measures, interventions and compensating measures. Measures on monitoring, analysis/identification and policy coordination are also planned. The action plan states that the Flemish authorities intend to pursue a strong policy against early school leaving at a central level, supplemented by local policy initiatives. Local authorities are invited to play a directing role. On 4 June 2013, the Flemish government adopted a master plan reforming secondary education. By means of this reform, Flanders aims to tackle a number of weaknesses in the current system such as early school leaving, the significant impact of social origin on the choice of school and type of education, school fatigue, wrong study choices and the abrupt transition from primary to secondary education. Both in primary and secondary education, high-achieving pupils will be more challenged and weaker pupils will enjoy more support.

4.4. Energy and climate

The climate change and energy topic of the Europe 2020 strategy encompasses the following three targets for Belgium: (1) a 15% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 compared to 2005 in sectors not covered by the EU Emission Trading System (i.e. non-ETS sectors), including higher emission ceilings for the 2013-2020 period (referred to as linear path to target), (2) a 13% share of gross final energy consumption from renewable energy sources by 2020, and (3) an indicative target of reducing primary energy consumption by 18% compared to projections for 2020. The following table and graphs illustrate each target and show where Belgium stands today with respect to those three objectives.

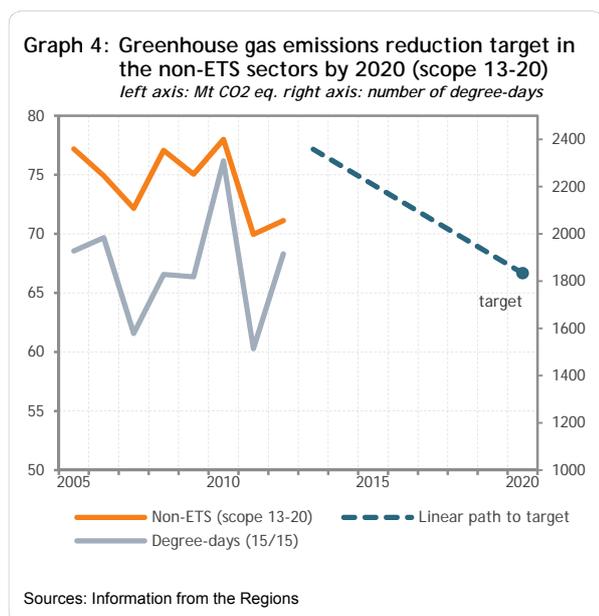
Table 6: Climate-energy targets

| | BE2011 | BE2012 | BE2020 | Required change 2012-2020 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|---------------------------|
| Greenhouse gas emissions - non ETS (scope 13-20) (Mt CO ₂ -eq) ⁽¹⁾ | 70.0 | 71.1 | 66.7 | -4.4 |
| Share renewables (%) ⁽²⁾ | 5.2 | 6.8 | 13.0 | 6.2 pp |
| Primary energy consumption (Mtoe) ⁽²⁾ | 51.6 | 48.7 | 43.7 | -5.0 |

pp: percentage points.

⁽¹⁾ These figures are based on information from the Regions.

⁽²⁾ The 2012 figures are provisional (Eurostat 17 January 2014).



In 2012, greenhouse gas emissions in the non-ETS sectors slightly increased. However, they remained 8% below the 2005 level (i.e. halfway towards the 2020 target) but also just below the starting point of the reduction path for the 2013-2020 period. To a large extent, those emissions depend on heating needs²⁶. 2012 was indeed colder than 2011. Since 2008, adjusting for temperature effects, non-ETS emissions have dropped regularly²⁷

After a strong increase in 2009 followed by moderate growth in 2010 and 2011 (see graph 5), the share of renewables in gross final energy consumption rose significantly in 2012. Still, this share remained above the indicative path mentioned in Belgium's national renewable energy action plan sent to the European Commission in November 2010: 6.8% vs. 5.2% in 2012. In 2012, the gap to the 13% target by 2020 was slightly more than 6 percentage points.

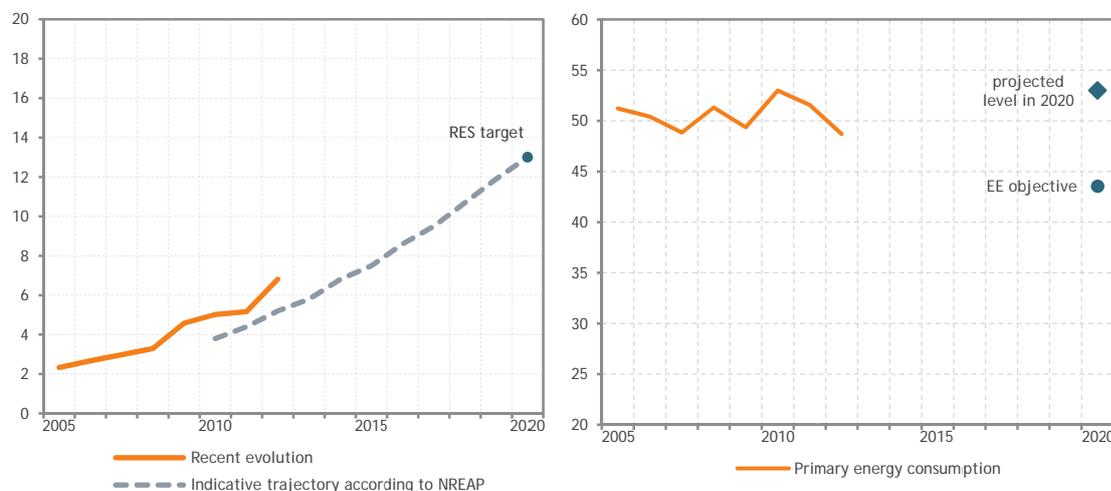
Finally, primary energy consumption, the indicator selected to set the indicative energy efficiency target, decreased for the second year in a row. In 2012, primary energy consumption (48.7 Mtoe) remained some 9% below the projected level for 2020²⁸, i.e. halfway towards the Belgian objective of 18%.

²⁶ In Belgium, one third of non-ETS greenhouse gas emissions come from the residential and tertiary sectors, whose emissions are mainly generated by heating buildings (cooking and production of domestic hot water being the other emission sources). Nevertheless, this breakdown varies significantly from Region to Region.

²⁷ It should be noted that the method for reporting the consumption of petroleum products changed in 2008. This change impacts consumption and thus transport emissions in particular, and explains in part the sharp increase in emissions in the non-ETS sectors between 2007 and 2008.

²⁸ According to the PRIMES scenario, baseline 2007, of the European Commission.

Graph 5: Target for the share of renewable energy sources in gross final energy consumption (left) and the energy efficiency objective (right)
left graph: in %; right graph: Primary Energy Consumption in Mtoe



Sources: Eurostat (17 February 2014), NREAP, EC (DG Energy, PRIMES baseline 2007)
 NREAP = National Renewable Energy Action Plan (November 2010).; RES = renewable energy sources; EFF: energy efficiency
 Note: the figures for 2012 are still provisional.

The responsibilities in the field of energy and climate policy are divided between the Federal Authority and the three regions. Moreover, the distribution between the Regions and the federal level of climate-energy targets and the corresponding opportunities is currently being discussed. The policy measures defined and approved at the different levels may help achieve several objectives. This is particularly so with regard to the GHG reduction targets in the non-ETS sector and the improvement of energy efficiency, for which many common measures exist.

Some of the new measures relate to the implementation of European directives on the energy efficiency and energy performance of buildings (see chapter 3.6): stricter energy performance standards for new buildings, new calls for projects for the construction of model buildings, different initiatives and policy instruments for the in-depth renovation of the building stock (public buildings, social housing), increased quality of the energy performance certificate, a revision of the granting conditions and of the amount of energy bonuses, etc.

Faster progress towards the realization of the GHG emission reduction targets in the non-ETS sector and in primary energy consumption by 2020 should also be supported by other initiatives focusing on transport (see chapter 3.6) and industry. As regards transport, three key areas are involved: (1) better road traffic management through a road pricing system for heavy trucks that should be operational in 2016; (2) better environmental characteristics of transport modes and fuels by developing alternative engine types (electricity, hydrogen, LPG as marine fuel, etc.) in Flanders and the extension of the environmental penalty scheme in Wallonia; (3) the promotion and development of environmentally-friendly transport modes (walking, bicycle, public transport, car sharing, multimodality, etc.). As for industry, the new sector agreements coming into force in 2014 and the extension of the Smart Park project aiming at helping companies to control their energy consumption are worth mentioning for Wallonia.

For the long term perspective, a decree published in July 2013 makes it compulsory for subsequent Walloon governments to adopt a sustainable development strategy (establishment of a diagnosis, a long-term vision, transition targets and an action plan), as well as a sectoral "Employment-Environment" Alliance within the first year of their coming into office. The first sustainable development strategy was approved in its first reading in June 2013. In this context, an advisory cell on sustainable development has been set up.

With regard to the RES objective, finally, the Regions have continued their strategy for the development (or action plan) of renewable energy sources.

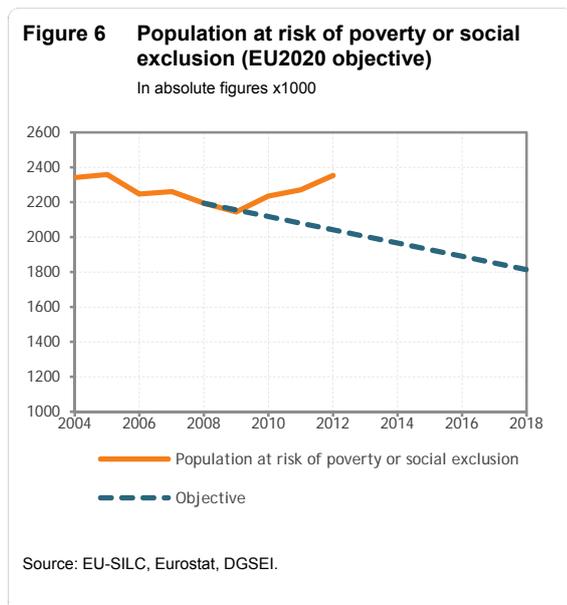
New initiatives take different forms according to the Regions. In Wallonia, there are: the adoption in its first reading of a roadmap for the paths and objectives for the large wind turbine (3800 Gwh) and photovoltaic (1250 Gwh) sectors to reach the target for electricity generated from renewables by 2020, and the adoption of a preliminary draft of decree on the siting of wind turbines; the launch of a call for "biomass" and "collective heating systems" projects and of pilot projects for micro-bio-gas technology; the adaptation of mechanisms to support photovoltaic installations so as to control the development of the sector and its impact on prices for consumers. In Flanders, the new initiatives are the reinforcement of the bonus scheme for solar thermal energy and heat pumps, the promotion of co-generation units at the level of local authorities, the introduction of a new support arrangement for large-scale green heat production, projects for waste heat recovery and biomethane injection and the compulsory integration of a renewable energy production system for all new offices, homes and schools. In the Brussels-Capital Region, there is the adaptation of the multiplying factor for the number of green certificates granted for photovoltaic installations.

4.5. Social inclusion

Table 7: Social inclusion objective (absolute figures x1.000) ²⁹

| | BE2008 | BE2012 | BE2018 | Required decrease 2012-2018 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|-----------------------------|
| Population at risk of poverty or social exclusion | 2.194 | 2.356 | 1.814 | 542 |

Source: EU-SILC, Eurostat, DGSIE.



During the most recent years, the composite indicator 'risk of poverty or social exclusion' showed a slight increase that remained within the margins of statistical significance. This evolution is not in line with the path to reduce the number of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion by 380,000 by 2020 (EU-SILC 2018), compared to 2010 (EU-SILC 2008).

4.5.1. Guaranteeing the social protection of the population

Social security and social assistance play a key role in social protection. The policy is aimed at increasing effectiveness, controlling the growth of expenditure, combatting social fraud at the income and at the expenditure side and computerising and modernising the management. On 1 September 2013, a number of benefits were adapted to the evolution of prosperity (on top of inflation): the scales of

social assistance benefits were increased by 2%. Certain minima, lump sums and calculation ceilings in the field of pensions, unemployment and incapacity for work were also increased at that date. On 1 January 2014, the scheme of higher health care reimbursements was reformed and extended. As of 1 January 2015, the health insurance funds will proactively propose the access to the scheme of higher reimbursements (in order to reduce the non take-up). At the occasion of the transfer of the competence for family allowances to the Communities on 1 July 2014, the family allowances scheme for self-employed persons will be harmonised with the scheme for employed persons (increase of the allowances for the first child) and the income ceilings for the social supplements to the family allowances and the supplement for single parents will be increased. The survivors' pension will be reformed on 1 January 2015, in view of making it more activating. In February 2014, in the context of the harmonisation of the status of blue collar and white collar workers, the social partners concluded an agreement on the equal access of both groups to the second pillar pension by 2025. That should broaden the access to the second pillar pension. As of 1 January 2015, the social contributions of self-employed persons will be calculated in a new way, in order to make them more in line with the income of the year during which they are paid. In the context of the pact for competitiveness, employment and recovery (November 2013), it was decided that the application of the mechanism for adjusting the social benefits to the evolution of prosperity will be further guaranteed in the future and that the net wage of low-wage earners will be increased by increasing the fiscal work bonus (in 2015, 2017 and 2019).

At *federal level*, a Network of federal anti-poverty officers has been created (Royal Decree of 21 December 2013). These civil servants' mission is to help the federal public institution they work for with the implementation of the measures of the federal anti-poverty plans. On 14 March 2014, the *Flemish Government* decided that, henceforth, relevant decision and decree proposals should be analysed as regards their possible impact on poverty, on people living in poverty or on inequalities that may lead to poverty. This test is integrated in

²⁹ A working group has been created in view of the structural reinforcement of the EU-SILC survey in Belgium.

the existing regulation impact analysis. In *Wallonia*, after a participative evaluation of the first social cohesion plan, which confirmed its effectiveness, a call for projects was launched in June 2013, in the context of the second programming period (2014-2019). The Plan is implemented in 181 cities and municipalities and has a total annual budget of about 35 million EUR. Moreover, a new regulatory framework for recognising and subsidising an anti-poverty network was adopted at the beginning of 2014. Its objective is to reinforce the dialogue with the most deprived persons, by providing a single interlocutor.

4.5.2. Reduction of child poverty

In June 2013, a national plan to combat child poverty, based on the recommendation of the European Commission, was approved. 140 actions of the *Federal Government, the Communities and the Regions* should help to attain the global poverty objective (a proportionate reduction would imply that at least 82,000 children have to be helped out of poverty or social exclusion). In December 2013, the *Federal Government* made 2 million EUR available to support the Public centres for social welfare in creating a local consultation platform with e.g. schools, nurseries and poverty associations. The purpose is to preventively and proactively detect hidden child poverty and to find remedies together. In the *Brussels Capital Region*, the French Community Commission has re-launched the nursery plan. 9.6 million EUR has been made available for new places in care facilities for children aged 0 to 3 years. The plan focuses on the creation of more places in existing collective child care facilities, with social tariffs and guaranteed access for parents thanks to a limited lump-sum parent contribution. The support concentrates on the areas with the smallest numbers of places in child care facilities. In *Flanders*, the programming decree that was approved in 2013 stipulates that the local administrations will receive subsidies for the fight against child poverty every year. For 2014, 4.5 million EUR has been made available. The Strategic action programme "Limburg in het Kwadraat" ("Limburg squared") also provides funding for local child poverty reduction actions in the areas with the highest needs. A Child poverty fund has been created, which will collect funds from citizens, organisations, companies and authorities for innovating projects that will support deprived families with children (0 to 3 years old). Successful projects will be integrated in the structural anti-poverty policy afterwards. A decree on preventive family support, voted in November 2013, creates a regulatory framework for local alliances ("Huizen van het Kind" – "Children's houses") and other projects that are already being subsidised. In November 2013, the *Walloon Government and the Government of the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles* updated the action plan concerning children's rights, on the basis of the evaluation made in 2013.

4.5.3. Active inclusion of people far from the labour market

On 28 February 2014, the *Federal Government* decided to relax the conditions for the social-professional exemption, which allows persons receiving an integration income to earn a little extra and to acquire professional experience. The period of the exemption is still 3 years, but the beneficiary can make use of it during maximally 6 years (currently 3 years), as of the first day he or she benefits from the exemption. In the *Brussels Capital Region*, the fight against poverty and the promotion of active social inclusion are two objectives of the partnership agreement, supporting the reinforcement of the coherence of the implemented public policies. The new operational ESF programmes 2014-2020 make it one of their common action priorities. On 14 June 2013, the *Flemish Government* approved the concept note "w²-decreet" ("w²-decree"). As in 2013, at least 750 new work-well-being trajectories are planned in 2014 and 4.2 million EUR have been made available again. In 2013, an additional 5 million EUR was made available for tackling youth unemployment. In this context, professional introduction projects have been launched in the major Flemish cities. Professional introduction is the first component of the measures for unqualified youngsters. The second component is introductory internship (with early unemployment benefits). In order to enable people with foreign backgrounds to access the labour market, their language skills are screened and adapted language courses are provided. In *Wallonia*, a new decree on the centres for social-professional insertion was adopted in July 2013 and new measures were taken to support the inclusion of people with disabilities. A draft decree regarding the centres for adapted social-professional training and insertion, aims to extend the evaluation and orientation missions to the entire sector in order to harmonise the offer of services. The text introduces automatic post-training follow-up, simplifies the procedures and introduces a financial contribution in the costs for child

day care in order to facilitate the parents' access to training. Finally, the Walloon Government has earmarked a budget of 30 million EUR for the launch of 6 calls for projects for the financing of the transformation and the improvement of the care and accommodation facilities for people with disabilities (the first call was launched in October 2013).

4.5.4. Fighting inadequate housing and homelessness

On 1 September 2005, the pilot project "Housing First" was launched in five major Belgian cities. The basic principle is the unconditional right to have a roof over one's head. With that certitude, people can evolve towards living a regular life. In addition to security of tenure, numerous types of guidance are offered simultaneously. On 1 April 2014, the VAT on electricity for private persons was reduced from 21% to 6%. On 11 July 2013, the *Brussels Capital Region* adopted a new Housing Code. The reform includes a series of changes aimed at reinforcing the fight against unhealthy housing and unoccupied dwellings. In *Flanders*, it was decided that people who are on a waiting list for social housing will be entitled to rental assistance after four years (instead of five). Henceforth, a rental guarantee fund will insure the affiliated landlords against non-payment. By the end of 2013, the Flemish Government also voted a decision regarding the social public service obligations of the Flemish water companies, which lays down the procedures for cutting water supply and which protects vulnerable groups. A fund for the prevention of evictions has also been created. The social rent rules have been modified. It is now possible to link a rental agreement to a guidance agreement. The Centres for General Welfare have been reinforced in view of this change. In May 2013, the *Walloon Government* adopted the cadastral mapping of the sites to which the Plan for permanent housing applies. A new bonus for the improvement of caravans for long-term housing in these areas has been introduced. The installation premium granted to persons moving into a decent dwelling has been increased in a number of situations. Since 2013, administrative fines can be imposed on landlords of dwellings that have been declared uninhabitable or dwellings for which no renting permit has been issued. A decree on the granting of moving, rental and installation premiums has been adopted. It introduces new aids for tenants who leave a dwelling early to move into a social dwelling and for households that leave an under-occupied social dwelling to move into a dwelling that they rent on the private market and a higher installation premium for persons who leave a dwelling they own that is situated in phase 1 of the Plan for permanent housing (flood risk areas). The rules on the allocation of social housing units have been adapted in order to reduce under-occupation and a decree aimed at maintaining the social referents in the social housing companies was adopted in February 2014. In May 2013, it was decided to extend the "energy coaches" project, which is aimed at helping vulnerable households to reduce their energy costs (60 coaches and 5,300 households involved).

5. Other reform measures and the use of structural funds

In an economic climate where growth models and sources of competitiveness are changing rapidly, industrial policy and the development of entrepreneurship play a key role. In view thereof, Belgium has in May 2013 submitted a Draft Paper about the industrial policy to the Council for the purpose of initiating the debate and proposing new initiatives at a European level, based on a more integrated approach of the industrial competitiveness at various levels. In this context Belgium took the initiative of writing a letter that has been co-signed by 10 delegations with a view to the theme debate of the European Council of March 2014.

5.1. Industrial policy

The regions have incorporated the industrial policy as an important pillar of their economic policy. They emphasise *competitiveness poles and clusters*, adding variations in accordance with their own economic development. The three regions have all taken the route of *smart specialisation* in support of the economy and employment.

In Flanders, as from October 2013 the Strategic Support for Investment and Training (SIOS) has been transformed into Strategic Transformation Support (STS). The STS provides support for key investment and training projects, with more specific use of the company grants in accordance with the New Industrial Policy (NIB) and enhancement of the clusters as described in Flanders in Action (ViA). The new system of financial support is much more accessible for SMEs thanks to its lower thresholds and evaluations adapted to suit the individual companies. The Flemish government makes an annual contribution to the support scheme of EUR 40 million. STS thus supports investments in Flanders in strategic clusters and lead plants in Flanders, in international future growth of innovative SMEs in Flanders and in transformative investments that help to realise the sustainable establishment of important employment in Flanders. The SALK (Strategisch Actieplan voor Limburg in het Kwadraat - lit.: Strategic Action plan for Limburg Squared) was established to support Limburg in its economic reform after the closure of Ford Genk in 2014. It aims at creating new jobs through innovation, education and training. Resources are aimed at short-term solutions, at spearhead sectors and at preconditions. Early 2013 it was decided that the Limburg Province will receive an additional EUR 124 million for implementation of the SALK. The sum is made up of a EUR 100 million loan to the Limburgse Re-conversiematschappij (LRM) for increasing its capital so that it can issue subordinated loans, and an amount of EUR 24 million which was added at the budgetary audit of March 2013. Together with the EUR 57 million from the Hermes Fund (economic funding) the Flemish government thus injects EUR 81 million for the recovery and transformation of the Limburg economy. Another EUR 66.5 million has been promised in EU support, while the Limburg Province will make EUR 50 million available and the City of Genk another EUR 20 million.

In the Walloon Region, the industrial policy is laid down in the policy on Competitiveness Poles. Several essential guidelines were drawn up under this policy for further development of the smart specialisation strategy of the region (non-technological innovation; links to services; participation of the SMEs; internationalisation). The 9th project procurement was completed in 2013, involving the selection of 20 projects and representing an investment of EUR 65 million. The projects mainly concern Research & Development (18 projects; EUR 61 million). The 10th procurement was commenced late 2013; resolutions are expected to be taken by the first quarter of 2014. Today, the 6 poles have more than 1,100 members. No less than 258 projects have received support since the start of the pole policy, representing a total investment of EUR 744 million (government budget of more than EUR 430 million). Also, Wallonia provides EUR 1.5 million in funding to a joint programme for companies that was developed in collaboration with the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center. The development of a new *Plateforme Wallonne de Thérapie Cellulaire* was started. This involves an investment of EUR 20 million in total. The government also decided to establish an incubator for the agricultural and food industry, and 2014 will see the launch of a "Wallonia big data" platform. In view of attracting foreign investors a 7th Welcome Office was inaugurated in January 2014, specifically targeting North Ameri-

can companies and clean technology companies. In order to point the smart specialisation strategy towards the spearhead sectors, at the end of 2013 in the Brussels Region the new cluster screen.brussels – aiming at the creative multimedia industries – was added to the existing clusters and incubators in the fields of NICT, life sciences, eco-building and environment. The Brussels Capital Region thus continues its transition towards a knowledge economy by promoting R&D as well as bringing together companies, universities and research centres. In the Brussels Region, smart specialisation must take consideration of the integration of the companies into a complex urban network that is characterised by limited space and strong demographic growth. For this reason the financial support schemes for economic expansion (EUR 27 million) should foster this integration even more. The Brussels Region also pays extra attention to local economic development. In this context, the new "Zone of economic development in the city" will become effective in the course of 2014, aiming at stimulating entrepreneurship and creating jobs in socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

In the past few years, "sustainability" of the industry has become increasingly important in Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels. After the transition from the ecology bonus to the ecology bonus plus scheme on the one hand and the strategic ecology bonus on the other, the Flemish government in 2013 established the VEB – Vlaams Energiebedrijf (Flemish Energy Company). The VEB will be involved in the preparations for transposing the EU Directive on energy efficiency (particularly as regards article 5), the action plan regarding nearly zero-energy buildings, and the 2020 Energy Renovation Programme. Another measure involves the addition of the *Green Guarantee* to the generic Guarantee Scheme. Under the Green Guarantee scheme, entrepreneurs will be able to find funding for energy saving investments with a payback period of ten years at most. Flanders also takes measures to become a circular economy. Roadmaps have been designed for the construction, metals, chemicals/plastics and bio-economic industries. Also worth mentioning is the Flemish materials programme (which pays attention to eco-design, industrial symbiosis, materials scans, etc.).

Besides the initiatives in the area of efficient usage of resources (extension of the NEXT scheme, establishment of the *centre de référence en circuits courts et en économie circulaire*; the "smart parks" project and industrial agreements) as mentioned in section 2.3, a few other initiatives can be reported for the Walloon Region. Several projects have been started to trace the *potentiels de gisements locaux de matières* and to find new innovative routes for the *traitement des déchets*. In the context of waste processing this specifically involves solar panels, plasterboards, dredging sludge, electrical devices and electronics. 2013 also saw the start of the "Coq vert" initiative as a public-private partnership between the pole GreenWin, AWEX and the professional federations involved. This initiative aims at developing new projects that are essential for the development of *bio-based chemicals*. The initiative is targeted at the processing chain of biomass raw materials based on non-food products (by-products, residues, waste, etc.). Finally, a new technological help tool was developed for SMEs related to the processing of industrial waste and treatment of contaminated soils and terrains (Valowall). For the Brussels Region the sustainability aspect also shows from the three axes of the *Employment-Environment Alliance*: "Sustainable building" (2011), Water (2012), "Raw materials-Waste" (2013) and "Sustainable Foods" (late 2013), which aim at: reducing the energy bill of both the government and the private sector; leveraging the employment opportunities in the water sector; promoting the use of secondary resources, and creating new jobs in the sustainable food sector, mostly by developing urban production and processing facilities. Following the establishment of the Brussels Sustainable Economy Academy, works have started to build the premises of a new incubator for companies active in the green economy, *Brussels Greenbizz*.

5.2. Entrepreneurship and SMEs

SMEs are the driving force behind the Belgian economy. They represent 99% of our economy! Given their importance for the Belgian economy, the federal government has decided to focus some of the measures of its reform strategy on these companies.

The fact that SMEs have a hard time finding credit is nothing new, but the problem has sharpened as a result of the financial downturn. The federal government therefore has developed a few measures to bring added

balance to the contractual relation between banks and SMEs (Act of 21 December 2013). Based on this Act that entered into force on 10 January 2014, a few provisions must be applied via a code of conduct agreed between the organisations representing the SMEs and the credit industry. Said code of conduct was signed on 16 January 2014 and comes into effect on 01 March 2014, after confirmation by way of royal decree. The code of conduct contains a clear and accurate description of the information that the bank must provide to the entrepreneur and of the data that is expected from the entrepreneur.

In view of the Competitiveness Pact of November 2013 the federal government has taken two additional measures in support of entrepreneurs and SMEs: 1. enhancement of the fiscal investment deduction and 2. An increase of the VAT exemption threshold. The investment deduction is an added tax deduction for companies that invest in new depreciable intangible and fixed assets. 4% of the purchasing or investment value of the investments made during the taxable period may be deducted from the taxable profits. This reduces the costs of investments. The VAT exemption offers starting entrepreneurs an opportunity to develop an independent activity without being confronted with considerable administrative obligations as far as VAT is concerned. The exemption is granted if the annual turnover does not exceed a predefined threshold. The government has decided to increase the threshold amount from EUR 5,580 to EUR 15,000. The higher threshold implies a simplification as it allows a greater number of companies to reduce their administrative burden. The Flemish Banking Plan contains measures in four categories that should enhance the provision of loans to companies, and more particularly to Flemish SMEs. The necessary actions are being taken to ensure that sufficient funding is available to keep investments in Flanders at acceptable levels. In this context, a care package has been developed by banks for support of families in financial problems as a result of the closure of companies; the win-win loan and the green guarantee have been evaluated and adapted; and the application options of the Gigarant scheme (for SMEs or large enterprises in need of credit guarantees in excess of EUR 1.5 million) have been adapted also. The SME portfolio, the funding measure for Flemish SMEs, was adapted in 2013. The aim is to use it more effectively for certain policy challenges, such as the succession and takeover of SMEs and the greenification of the Flemish economy. In this context, the pillar 'coaching' has been added and the pillar 'strategic advice' will be expanded. In addition a new qualification system will be introduced for the service providers of the SME portfolio. Furthermore, the EFRO project 'Strategic Entrepreneurship' and the project 'Gazellespong' (lit. gazelle leap) have been integrated in the SME portfolio. A sum of EUR 38 million was available in 2013 to realise this. Within SALK (see above) specific attention is paid to the support and development of SMEs by offering an attractive loan to small companies, the 'KLIM-OP' loan (lit.: climb up loan). Introduced at the end of 2013, this involves a subordinated loan from the Limburgse Reconvertiemaatschappij (LRM) ranging from EUR 50,000 to a maximum of EUR 250,000. At the start of 2014 189 Limburg SMEs had already applied for a KLIM-OP loan and meanwhile eight loans have been granted.

Following a cooperation agreement between Belfius and the Caisse d'investissement de Wallonie, a fund of EUR 70 million is made available for SMEs. In addition, the resources of the Walloon financial instruments were enhanced in view of the support to the SMEs, the participation in funds and the consolidation of companies in the context of the crisis. Sowalfin is working on the instalment of a platform that should bring together companies and investors of all kinds and it has finalised preparations for regionalisation of the Participation Fund. In addition, SOFIPOLE, the financial instrument of the competitiveness poles policy, will have the ability to grant funds to spinoffs that participate in very large fund formations, and the project Nest'up will be complemented with a fund for start-ups. Measures for improving access for SMEs to funding were also taken in the Brussels Region, such as a platform for participative funding; enhancement of the resources of the Guarantee Fund; start-up capital for innovative companies; allowances for establishing companies in the social economy, etc.

Flanders was selected as the European Entrepreneurial Region of the year by the Committee of the Regions and was awarded the EER label. In that capacity, Flanders will be organising numerous events and also aims at realising concrete goals over the upcoming period, such as providing guidance to 2,000 start-ups during the initial phase of their enterprise; selecting 1,200 ambitious SMEs that will receive support to realise a

Gazelle Leap in terms of growth; providing information to and raising awareness among 30,000 entrepreneurs about "succession and takeover"; and finally, in the scope of 'transformation events', reaching 500 companies on the subject of Flanders' Care, creativity and innovation, and greenification and sustainability.

The Walloon Region continues its Small Business Act (SBA) with the measures mentioned above in the fields of funding, promotion of entrepreneurship, innovation and internationalisation. The *soutien à l'entrepreneuriat* was expanded via education, mentorships and traineeships, but also through the guidance measures helping to create jobs independently and via the establishment of a new platform for the transfer of companies. A new entrepreneurship programme was drawn up for 2014-2020 which will be funded through the Structure Fund. Coaching, sponsoring and guidance in tapping into foreign markets have helped SMEs in their internationalisation process. In the field of innovation a tender was called for a 'living labs' project, and a new system of diagnostics for innovation was introduced. In addition, several achievements can be reported in the field of administrative simplification: the establishment of a Frenchspeaking coordination committee; the introduction of the *espace personnel et professionnel*; the introduction of the first 'authentic sources database'; a regulation by decree for electronic communication; approval of the new Act on territorial development; the test phase for dematerialisation of the environmental permit; reduction of payment terms, etc. And finally, thanks to the new *Agence pour l'entreprise et l'innovation (AEI)*, it will be possible to rationalise the multitude of organisations that support and provide guidance to SMEs.

In the Brussels Capital Region, the promotion of entrepreneurship is realised via: a set of measures in the scope of administrative simplification (plan for less administrative hassle); quicker access to funding for SMEs, specifically via the new "quick security" – traditional quick security, green quick security, quick security for micro funding – that allows for the provision of security within 8 days; offering training programmes (Commerce Academy, Successful entrepreneurship, agreements between organisations about entrepreneurial spirit); guidance towards and acceleration of growth for innovative companies with considerable growth potential (farming); the transfer and closure of companies; the takeover of companies (funding instrument Transfund, training to suit) and support of 'second chance entrepreneurship'. To enhance synergies and create a truly general access portal, the government of the Brussels Capital Region has decided to bundle all the organisations authorised for trade, enterprise and innovation in the "maison de l'entrepreneuriat". This general port of access will simplify the administrative steps to be taken by the important group of start-ups and enhance the multidisciplinary guidance for Brussels companies all the way through to their internationalisation. At a federal level, the government continued the implementation of its 'reform plan' and its component 'SME plan'. In addition, on 24 January 2014 the Council of Ministers approved a preliminary draft of an Act concerning a "Pact for Competitiveness, Employment and Recovery". The 'Policy Memorandum on SMEs' of 13 November 2013 also announces several measures, as described under points 3.2 and 3.4.1 (reducing the wage differences compared to neighbouring countries and reducing the social contributions). Finally, on 01 January 2014 the Regulation Impact Analysis (RIA) came into effect. It entails a prior evaluation of the possible consequences of draft legislation at an economic, ecological and societal level and at the level of the government.

5.3. Structure funds and investment funds

The resources available in the structure funds for the period covering 2007-2013 were used up almost completely and within all the goals and themes.

The preparatory activities for the 2014-2020 programmes are underway (consultation with the partners; evaluations ex ante, informal consultation with the Committee, etc.) and the official submission of the Belgian programme documents (cooperation agreement and operational programmes) is foreseen for the month of April. The conditions for application are being prepared to ensure that the projects can start without delay.

Four Walloon provinces qualify as transition regions, while the Flemish and Brussels regions as well as the Walloon-Brabant region fall in the category of most developed regions. The three regions will participate in the same programmes for cross-border and transnational cooperation as is currently the case. The provinces of Liège and Hainaut as well as the Brussels Region also qualify for the initiative 'jobs for young people'. Belgium enjoys European co-funding of more than EUR 2.3 billion (actual prices).

The partnership agreement defines the strategy to be followed as well as the priorities and conditions for application required to meet the European guidelines, and lessons learnt from the 2007-2013 programme are implemented. The chosen priorities are closely linked to the goals of the Europe Strategy 2020 and will complement the regional policies defined in scope thereof, particularly in line with the recommendations of the Council. The most important goals that will be pursued throughout the different programmes include: improving the competitive capacity of SMEs; fostering scientific research and innovation; offering training in support of productivity; harmonising the training policies and employment policies; giving new impetus to the urban poles; increasing social cohesion and firing up the fight against poverty; efficient use of resources and stimulating the reduction of greenhouse gases.

Annex 1: Reporting table for the assessment of CSRs and key macro-structural reforms: description of the measures

| Table 1. Description of the measures taken and information on their qualitative impact | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| | | | Information on planned and already enacted measures | | | | | | | | Foreseen impacts |
| CSR number (1) | CSR sub-categories (2) | Number and short title of the measure (3) | Description of main measures of direct relevance to address the CSRs | | | | | Europe 2020 targets | Challenges/ Risks | Budgetary implications | Qualitative elements |
| | | | Main policy objectives and relevance for CSR (4) | Description of the measure (5) | Legal/ Administrative instruments (6) | Timetable on progress achieved in the last 12 months (7) | Timetable on upcoming steps (8) | Estimated contribution to Europe 2020 targets (9) | Specific challenges/ risks in implementing the measures (10) | Overall and yearly change in government revenue and expenditure (reported in mln. national currency) Contribution of EU funds (source and amounts) (11) | Qualitative description of foreseen impacts and their timing (12) |
| CSR 2 | Older workers employment | Reform of the Pension bonus | To reinforce employment of older workers and improve the sustainability of the pension system | Implementation of the reform of the bonus system by which older workers enjoy an increased state pension | Program law of 28 June 2013 (Loi-programme du 28 juin 2013) | Fully implemented, entry into force on 1st January 2014 | Fully implemented | | The behaviour of older workers might differ from assumptions. | Positive budget impact of 0,6 % of GDP in 2060 | Later exit from the labour market, increased participation rate of older workers |
| | Older workers employment | Survivor pension system reform | To remove disincentives to work | The current survivor pension which is subject to strict labour income limits, is replaced for persons under the age of 45 | Various draft laws (one by pension system). | All draft laws adopted entirely by the Chamber of Representatives on 26 March 2014, subject to review by Senate | Expected entry into force from 1 st January 2015, subject to transitional measures until 2025 regarding age | | | | Later exit from the labour market, increased participation rate of older workers |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|---|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| | | | (rising to 50 by 2025- by a transition allocation, granted for a maximum period of two years, without labour income limits. | | | | | | | |
| Older workers employment | Taking into account the last months of work in calculating the pension | To stimulate elderly people to continue to work after 1 January of the year when the pension is first paid | To take into account, in calculating the pension, the last months of the professional career that fall in the year when the pension is first paid | Draft law modifying Royal Decree 50 of 24 October 1967 relative to retirees and survivors pensions of salaried workers (projet de loi modifiant l'arrêté royal n°50 du 24 octobre 1967 relatif à la pension de retraite et de survie des travailleurs salariés) | Draft law to be voted by the Chamber on 26 March 2014; possibility of evocation by the Senate; promulgation and publication before the elections of 25 May 2014 | Expected entry into force from 1st January 2015 | | | | Later exit from the labour market, increased participation rate of older workers |
| CSR 3 | Real wage freeze | The real wage freeze should contribute to a limited wage evolution and to restore the link between wages and productivity | The wage norm for 2013-2014 was set at 0% real wage growth: apart from the automatic indexation and increases induced by agreed pay scales, no wage increases will be allowed. | Royal Decree 28 April 2013 | Fully implemented | Fully implemented | | The freeze as such is no guarantee for a zero real ULC growth, due to different forms of wage drift. | / | The real wage freeze should help Belgium to achieve the aim to close the wage cost gap Belgium has accumulated since 1996 with respect to the neighbouring countries in a six year time frame. Its effect will be evaluated through the yearly reports of the Central Economic Council. |

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| | Adaptations to the price index calculation | Through the indexation mechanism, the adaptations to the price index should contribute to moderate real wage growth. | Several adaptations have been made to the national consumer price index in order to better reflect the consumer behaviour, in particular in a competitive environment, and measure more precisely the evolution of prices paid . | | | | | | | An assessment of the VAT reduction will be made in September 2015 at the latest before deciding on a possible extension. |
| | Reduction of VAT rate on electricity for households | The aim is to increase purchasing power and to foster competitiveness. This reduction will subsequently result in accelerating lower indexation of wages in the course of 2014 and thereby reduce labour costs. According to FPB estimates this VAT reduction will lower total labour costs by EUR 650 million. It would also contribute to the creation of over 8,000 jobs. | VAT on electricity is lowered from 21 to 6% for private consumers. | Pact for Competitiveness and Employment – Federal Measures (November 2013) | Entering into force on April 1, 2014 and valid until the end of 2015. | | | | | |

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| CSR 4 Competition in the services sector and network industries | | FED Code of Business and Economic Law | The aim is to compile a whole series of different laws, definitions and sanctions under a single Code, which will improve both transparency and efficiency. Moreover, a clear and permanent legal framework as well as an instrument to stimulate economic growth and activity will be created. There are 18 books in total. | Insertion in the Code of Business and Economic Law: Book VI: Market Practices and Consumer Protection. Corresponding definitions on market practices and consumer protection can be found in Book I and the provisions of law enforcement in Book XV. | Act of December 21, 2013 | | Enter into force on May 31, 2014 | | | | |
| | Energy prices | Wallonia Reform of support mechanisms to photovoltaic | Limitation of the effects of the support to development of photovoltaic energy on the consumer's bill | New support mechanism for low power photovoltaic, phasing out of the old system, system of close envelop for high power photovoltaic and new exoneration schemes | Decree | Adoption in January 2014 Exonerations adopted in december 2013 | | | | | |
| CSR 5 | Reduction of labour-related taxes and contributions | Various reductions (structural reduction, tax exemption for shift workers, etc.) | To increase growth and competitiveness | To reduce employer taxes and contributions on labour, as well as employee taxes and contributions, in particular for low wage workers | Draft law implementing the competitiveness, employment and stimulus Pact and draft royal execution decrees (Projet de loi portant exé- | Draft law taken on 21 March 2014, sent to Parliament and expected to be voted during April 2014 | Entry into force expected from April 2014 to 2019 | | | Cumulative reduction in labour taxes and contributions of 2 billion EUR during the period 2015-2019 | Increased employment through stronger incentives to work and higher competitiveness |

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| | | | | | cution du Pacte de compétitivité, d'emploi et de relance et projets d'arrêtés royaux d'exécution) | | | | | | |
| Tax shift towards other tax bases | VAT on lawyers | Harmonise VAT practices and compensate other measures | Services of lawyers do no longer benefit from a general VAT exemption, the applicable rate becomes the general rate, i.e. 21% | Various measures law of 30 July 2013, articles 60-61 (loi du 30 juillet 2013 portant des dispositions diverses) | Fully implemented, in force since 1 st January 2014 | Fully implemented | | | | 89 million EUR | |
| Tax shift towards other tax bases | Increased capital income and capital gains taxes | Compensate other measures | Various rates of taxation on capital income or capital gains are harmonised towards the general 25% rate, i.e. the rates on: capital gains on mutual funds without European passport and companies liquidation, income of commercial activities of intermunicipal corporations | Various measures law of 30 July 2013, articles 52-55 (loi du 30 juillet 2013 portant des dispositions diverses) and program law of 28 June 2013 for liquidations | Fully implemented, except for liquidations | Entry into force on 1 st October 2014 for liquidations | | | | 120 million EUR without liquidations | |

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| Tax shift towards other tax bases | Increased bank tax | Compensate other measures | In exchange for the state guarantee on savings deposits, banks pay an increased tax on such deposits. | Various measures law of 30 July 2013, articles 70-74 (loi du 30 juillet 2013 portant des dispositions diverses) | Fully implemented | Fully implemented | | | 171 million EUR | |
| Tax shift towards other tax bases | Limitation of the tax reduction on service vouchers | Compensate other measures | | Various measures law of 30 July 2013, articles 38-42 (loi du 30 juillet 2013 portant des dispositions diverses) | Fully implemented, entered into force in July 2013 | Fully implemented | | | 29,5 million EUR | |
| Tax shift towards other tax bases | Limitation Higher accisesof product taxes | Compensate other measures | | Various measures law of 30 July 2013, articles 62-69 (loi du 30 juillet 2013 portant des dispositions diverses) | Staggered entry into force from July 2013, fully implemented | Fully implemented | | | 182,5 million EUR | |
| Tax shift towards other tax bases | Fairness tax | Compensate other measures and limit fiscal optimisation | Big companies will be required to pay an alternative tax of 5% of dividends corresponding to tax-optimised corporate revenue | Various measures law of 30 July 2013, articles 52-55 (loi du 30 juillet 2013 portant des dispositions diverses) | Fully implemented, entered into force in 2014 | Fully implemented | | | 165 million EUR net of measures geared towards SMEs | |

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| CSR 6 | Personalised job search assistance | All entities Cooperation agreement on accompanying and active follow-up of jobseekers | Reinforced and quicker active follow-up of jobseekers | Enlargement of the target audience, specific paths, quicker accompanying by the regions (4 th month for <25 , 9 th month for others) and follow-up by the ONEM (1 st assessment after 7 th month). | Cooperation agreement | Adopted end 2013 | | Raise of the employment rate | | | |
| | Extend existing activation efforts to all age groups. | Flanders The guidance model for the elderly, the so-called systematic approach, will be extended towards inflowing jobseekers of up to 60 years old. | Jobseekers over 50 years old are activated through unemployment guidance adapted to their specific needs. | Since March 2009 people between 50-52 years old are obligated to participate in unemployment guidance. In subsequent steps, this age group was expanded to 55 and later to 57. Starting in April 2014, the approach will include people up to the age of 60 as well. | Decision of the Flemish Government | In 2013, 93.6% of the target group were reached within 6 months of becoming unemployed. By then, 26.2% had found new employment. | The target group will include 58-60 year-olds starting April 1 st 2014. | The activation of the elderly is crucial in the attainment of the overall Flemish employment rate target of 76%. | The guidance of the elderly has to result in more outflow to work. Especially workers who have been the victim of collective redundancies will have to be reoriented towards new career perspective. | | The employment rate for people over 55 amounted to 42.5% in 2013. If the current trend can be continued the employment rate target of 50% could be reached in 2020. |
| | Extend existing activation efforts | Brussels Individualized support plan for all jobseekers | Extension of the systematic, high-quality, formalised and customised support offered to the under-25s looking for work to all jobseekers | Actiris is committed to implement a specific individualized support plan, with an intensity of greater monitoring for certain target groups taking into account the degree of | Management contract between Actiris and the Government of the Brussels Capital Region 2013-2017 | In 2013, nearly 44.000 jobseekers were accompanied by employment counsellors and coaches | Continuity | Increase of the Brussels/Belgian employment rate | The measure depends on the success of other strategic plans related to interregional mobility, matching between supply and demand... | | Better integration on the labour market of the different target groups (under-30s, over 50s, underqualified...), enhanced social cohesion |

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| | | | autonomy and competence of job seekers | | | | | | |
| Develop comprehensive social-inclusion strategies for people with a migrant background. | Flanders | The Integration policy responds to the situations and dynamics related to the consequences of migration, with a view to realizing independent and proportional participation, accessibility of all facilities, active and shared citizenship for all, and social cohesion. | The Flemish integration policy is an inclusive and horizontal policy | new decree of the 7th of June 2013 | | | Raise the employment rate of people with a migrant background | | <p>Flanders will work on training in order to increase employment, such as integration courses and language tuition, as well as on support to stimulate the access to public services.</p> <p>Flanders will mobilize resources in the policy domains where the backlog of (non-EU) third country nationals (and their children) are the highest. Promoting the access to the labour market, addressing and insuring the right reference flow, and the prevention of unqualified outflow in education and segregation in certain cities, are the highest priority. Finally, Flanders makes the activation of youngsters a priority as well.</p> |
| Migrants | Wallonia Integration path for migrants | Facilitation of the inclusion of migrants in the society and on the labour market. | Obligation for newcomers to follow an integration path. (Reception in a welcome office with a personalised counselling (mandatory), | Decree | Adopted in March 2014 | Full implementation for 2017 | Raise of the employment rate, decrease of poverty | | |

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| | | | Language training, Citizenship training, Career orientation). | | | | | | | |
| Coherence in employment, education, training, and labour policies | Wallonia / Wallonia-Brussels Federation Cooperation between qualifying education and vocational training within living areas | Coherence of training supply with socio-economic needs within living areas. Addressing skills mismatches. | Common analysis of needs and development of the education and learning supply in adequation with the needs of the areas. 10 living areas will be created. | Cooperation agreement | Adoption 2nd reading in January 2014 | | Raise of the employment rate, decrease of the early schools leaving, development of skills | | | |
| Interregional mobility | Wallonia Language Plan | Languages learning to foster mobility | Several measures in favour of languages learning (Dutch/English mainly) | New Decree | Adopted early 2014 | | Raise of the employment rate and employability | | 6 | Interregional mobility |
| | Brussels Single file for jobseekers and screening of skills | Enhanced exchange of information between employment and training agencies, better matching between supply and demand | The single file will provide competent services all data related to the course of the job seeker (former professional experiences, trainings, internships...) while the screening of skills will identify effective skills through | Management contracts of Actiris and Bruxelles Formation | | First pilot testings for the screening of skills related to the trades of storekeeper, road worker and IT technician – adaptation of databases for single file | Raise of the employment rate, enhanced efficiency of public services, contribution to inclusive growth | | | |

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| | | | | testings. | | | | | | |
| | To boost inter-regional labour mobility | All entities Strengthened cooperation between the regional PES | In the field of interregional mobility the cooperation between the Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB) with Forem (Walloon Region) and Actiris (Brussels Capital Region) has been continued and intensified. | As far as the cooperation with the Walloon counterpart is concerned, three mixed VDAB-Le Forem teams are responsible for the active management of 5000 validated job vacancies. Active mediation of validated vacancies takes place between the 3 regional PES. | Cooperation agreement between the regional PES to boost mobility. | In 2013, vacancies for 5.740 jobs in Flanders were exchanged with le Forem, and 1.104 with Actiris. 1.961 Walloon jobseekers and 1.204 jobseekers from Brussels found employment in Flanders. | | Raise the Belgian employment rate to the target of 73.2%. | Language difficulties are an important impediment to greater inter-regional mobility. Additionally, all regions are faced with similar bottleneck occupations, so inter-regional mobility will not solve many of the existing shortages. | The cooperation between the PES should lead to more mobility between regions and strengthen the supply side of the labour market (for example in the Flemish neighbourhood around Brussels). Special attention will be paid to filling in job vacancies for bottleneck professions. |
| CSR7 | GHG emission reduction in the building sector | 'Combi-premie' for energy renovation in Flanders | Reduction of CO2 emissions from buildings | Funding of combined renovation work in buildings. These combined renovations deliver more energy savings at lower costs than single measures or consecutive renovations. | Flemish Climate Fund, set up by the Flemish Government in 2012 (VR 2012 1307 DEC.0089) | The measure has been in place since January 2014. | | Emission reductions within the period 2013-2020 were estimated to: 283.8 kton CO2-eq. | | The measure is financed by the Flemish Climate Fund for a total amount of 3.744.000 EUR.. |

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| GHG emission reduction from transport | Mobility Plan Flanders | Reduction of GHG emissions from transport | The Plan has been provisionally adopted by the Flemish government on 25 October 2013; the formal adoption of the Mobility Plan Flanders still has to take place (for more information see http://www.mobiliteitsplanvlaanderen.be) | Decision of the Flemish Government | The public consultation on the draft Mobility Plan ended on January 12 2014 and the different strategic advisory councils formulated their advice | | Reducing harm to the environment, independently of transport demand, is one of the 5 strategic targets of the Mobility Plan. | | | |
| GHG emission reduction from transport | All entities Road pricing for trucks | Reduction of road freight traffic and emissions | Setting-up of a road pricing system for trucks (> 3,5T) | Cooperation agreement | Adoption in January 2014 | Implementation foreseen in 2016 | GHG emission reduction | | | |
| GHG emission reduction | Brussels Air climate and energy code | GHG emission reductions | Definition of ambitious standards concerning energy performance, climate change and air quality | Edict | Edict adopted by the Brussels Council in may 2013 | Preparation of an integrated air climate and energy operational plan | GHG emissions reduction, reduction of co ² emissions in the city | | | |
| GHG emission reduction | Climate Decree in Wallonia | GHG emission reductions (ETS and non-ETS) | Definition of a GHG reduction trajectory, with "emissions budgets"; Preparation of the Air-Climate-Energy Plan 2013-2020. | Decree | Decree adopted in February 2014 1 st Air-Climate-Energy Plan adopted (1 st reading) in January 2014 | Implementation in 2014; the public consultation of the Plan will be launched in June 2014. | GHG emission reduction | | | |

Annex 2: Reporting table for the assessment of CSRs and key macro-structural reforms: quantitative assessment

In the context of the Pact on Competitiveness and Jobs, the federal Government decided to reduce employers' social security contributions in 2015, 2017 and 2019 with the aim to increase employment and the external competitiveness of Belgian enterprises (see paragraph 3.2). This measure is included in the macroeconomic projection that is presented in chapter 2. The impact of this measure is analysed and described by the Federal Planning Bureau³⁰.

This measure comes on top of the reduction of the VAT-rate on electricity for households (see paragraph 3.3.2). The Federal Planning Bureau has calculated the impact of this reduction in October 2013³¹. Table A1 synthesises the results of this simulation

Table A1: Impact of reduction of VAT-rate on electricity for households (difference w.r.t. a scenario not taking these measures into account) in % unless mentioned differently

| | 2016 | 2018 |
|--|-------|-------|
| GDP (volume) | 0.09 | 0.11 |
| National price index | -0.40 | -0.40 |
| Employment (thousands) | 6.01 | 7.68 |
| Employment rate 20-64 (percentage points) | 0.09 | 0.11 |
| Nominal hourly labour cost | -0.42 | -0.41 |
| Current account balance (national accounts definition, % of GDP) | -0.03 | -0.03 |
| Government net financing requirement (% of GDP) | -0.07 | -0.07 |

The details of the reduction of social security contributions are not yet known. But on the basis of the government decision, the following measure is simulated: (1) wage subsidies for night and team work are increased; (2) the social Maribel subsidy is increased; (3) the social security contributions are decreased in a general way and (4) the social security contributions for low wages are also further decreased. The overall ex ante cost is three times 450 million euro (in 2015 euros).

The simulation is carried out using two different hypotheses on the wage evolution. In a first hypothesis, gross wages before indexation are not changed w.r.t. the base run – they are controlled. The full reduction of the contributions benefits employers. In a second hypothesis, wages can increase w.r.t. the base run, as the reduction of the social security contributions is shared by the employers and the employees. These two hypotheses can be seen as two extreme cases.

In both cases the labour cost is reduced so that employers have an incentive to use more labour. In the first hypothesis, the labour cost reduction has a positive impact on employment, gradually leading to an extra 18,000 jobs. These job creations have a positive impact on the purchasing power of consumers. External competitiveness is also improved leading to higher exports. All in all GDP growth should be higher over the whole period and the GDP level should be 0.18% higher in 2020. Without any feedback effect, the cost of the social contributions is estimated at 1350 million euro in 2020. Higher economic activity reduces this cost to 660 million euro, or 0.14% of GDP in 2020.

The results for the simulation with freed wages go in a similar direction, but the impact is smaller. The benefits of the reduction in social security contributions are shared by employers and employees. The labour cost

³⁰ The detailed results and the model used are described in Federal Planning Bureau, Perspectives économiques 2014-2019, Economische vooruitzichten 2014-2019, 24 maart 2014.

³¹ Federal Planning Bureau, Variantes de baisse du taux de TVA sur électricité: impact macroéconomiques, novembre 2013.

reduction is therefore smaller than under the first hypothesis. The employment creation and the improvement in external competitiveness are less pronounced, but still clearly positive.

Table A2: Impact of reductions of social security contributions
(difference w.r.t. a scenario not taking these measures into account)
in % unless mentioned differently

| | Controlled wages | | | Freed wages | | |
|--|------------------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|
| | 2016 | 2018 | 2020 | 2016 | 2018 | 2020 |
| GDP (volume) | 0.06 | 0.12 | 0.18 | 0.05 | 0.08 | 0.11 |
| National price index | -0.05 | -0.11 | -0.18 | -0.03 | -0.04 | -0.04 |
| Employment (thousands) | 4.77 | 11.19 | 18.02 | 2.77 | 4.58 | 6.31 |
| Employment rate 20-64 (percentage points) | 0.07 | 0.16 | 0.27 | 0.04 | 0.07 | 0.09 |
| Nominal hourly labour cost | -0.38 | -0.76 | -1.10 | -0.17 | -0.17 | -0.19 |
| Current account balance (national accounts definition, % of GDP) | -0.02 | -0.04 | -0.05 | -0.02 | -0.05 | -0.08 |
| Government net financing requirement (% of GDP) | -0.06 | -0.10 | -0.14 | -0.05 | -0.08 | -0.12 |

Annex 3: Reporting table on national Europe 2020 targets and other key commitments

| Table 3. Description of the measures taken and information on their qualitative impact | | |
|---|--|---|
| Progress on implementation List of measures and their state of play that were implemented | List of measures and their state of play that were implemented in response to the commitment | The estimated impacts of the measures (qualitative and/or quantitative ¹) |
| | National 2020 headline targets | |
| National 2020 employment target | Flanders Introduction of career vouchers to promote participation in career guidance. | Flanders So far, interest in career guidance has doubled when compared to the period before the introduction of the measure. By taking more control over their career, people are expected to transition into the jobs they are most suited to more easily. This should increase job satisfaction, productivity and ultimately lead to a reduction in early retirement. |
| | Wallonia Young Guarantee Initiative Action Plan , with enhanced efforts of dual education (new cooperation agreement adopted in January 2014), development of internships, fight against school leaving Implementation mainly in 2014-2015, with the support of the Initiative for YEI, and further support from the ESF. | Wallonia Reduction of early school leaving, better matching of skills on the labor market, reduction of young people unemployment |
| | Brussels Young Guarantee Action Plan, implemented through 6 strategic axes , with a new dedicated department inside the regional employment agency, an enhanced cooperation framework between employment, education & vocational training institutions and a cumulative budget of 20 million EUR. | Brussels Improved guidance and support for young job seekers, increasing the employment rate of less than 25 years, better matching of supply and demand on the labor market |
| National 2020 R&D target and innovation | Flanders The extra Flemish public budget for R&D&I for 2014 is composed of: + 45 million EUR (competitiveness pact); + 18.9 million EUR (integration of higher education) and + 10 million EUR for SOFI (spin-off fund for research results from the 4 Flemish PROs). | Flanders The 2014 additional public funding will contribute to the objective of Flanders allocating 3% of its GDP to research and development by 2020. |
| | Wallonia Wallonia pursues the Implementation of the research strategy 2011-2015 through mainly the decree on fundamental research funds (104 mio/year), the creation of an institute for sustainable development (5 mio/year), the financing of the institute for life science (6 mio/year), the themes, the modification of the RDA decree, the introduction of new mobility mechanisms and investment in infrastructures. launch of several calls (for SMEs, social innovation, projects in priority | Wallonia The objectives of the Wallonia's strategy are: step up the R&D efforts, promote scientific excellence, strengthen R&D capacity and R&D valorisation |

¹ Cross references with column 9 of Table 1

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| | <p>Wallonia Adoption of a roadmap for large wind turbines and solar photovoltaic Adoption of a decree setting a map for wind turbines.</p> | <p>Wallonia The objective is to produce 3 800 GWh electricity from large wind turbines and 1 250 GWh from solar PV in 2020 and to contribute to the objective of 8 000 GWh of green energy produced in Wallonia in 2020.</p> |
| National energy efficiency target | <p>Flanders Elaboration of the third Flemish energy efficiency action plan Energy performance standards for new buildings, action plan for nearly zero energy buildings The Energy Renovation Programme 2020 for existing houses Energy policy agreements with the energy intensive industry</p> | <p>Flanders Within this third energy efficiency action plan, the measures of the second action plan (2011) will be evaluated. By April 30, 2014 it will be submitted to the EC (as part of the national action plan). On 21 June 2012, the Government of Flanders took note of the action plan for nearly zero-buildings, stipulating that at the latest on 1 January 2021, the EPB requirements for all new buildings correspond to the EPB requirements for nearly zero energy buildings and that as of 2019 new public buildings be nearly zero energy buildings. Meanwhile the energy renovation programme 2020 for existing houses will be further implemented. To improve the energy efficiency of industry, new energy policy agreements with the energy intensive industry will replace the existing benchmark and audit covenants (in 2014).</p> |
| | <p>Wallonia Implementation of the 1st Alliance Employment-Environment concerning sustainable buildings. This include e.g. the modification of rules regarding the energy performance of buildings, the prolongation of support for energy efficiency in private buildings (households), the support of energy efficiency in public buildings and investment programmes in social housing. Adoption of new (2nd generation) voluntary agreements with industry in December 2013</p> | <p>Wallonia The housing quality and energy performance of buildings were improved. Transition towards more sustainable approaches and increase in employment rate in the construction sector. 158 sites from 13 industrial federations are involved on a voluntary basis. This measure aims to reduce further energy consumption (and therefore GHG emissions) as well as electricity costs.</p> |
| | <p>Brussels Energy performance of buildings: "Alliance habitat" This project aims at reach high energy efficiency standards for the construction of public housing and the renovation of existing social housing.</p> | <p>Brussels In terms of energy performance, all new public housing buildings will be built according to the "standard passive" (total budget 600 million EURO), while renovation of existing social housing will respect the "standard low-energy" (300 million). In addition, 100 housing units out of the 6720 planned will be built according to the standard "0 carbon" by 2017.</p> |
| National early school leaving target | <p>Flanders On 12th July 2013 the Parliamentary Act on the reinforcement of higher vocational education was approved. This act will contribute to reaching the target of people having a tertiary education degree.</p> | <p>Flanders It comprises a set of measures which address higher vocational education in Flanders. These measures are designed to strengthen the cooperation between providers of higher vocational training programmes, to expand the range of adult education, and to facilitate the transformation, development, quality management and funding of higher vocational training programmes. This will contribute to the Flemish target for tertiary education: at least 47,8% of all people aged 30-34 years having completed higher education by 2020.</p> |

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| | <p>Wallonia New decrees (sectoral and cross-sectoral) for school attachment, violence prevention and support to guidance adopted in November 2013.</p> | <p>Wallonia Reducing early school leaving through a coordinated approach through all involved services</p> |
| | <p>Project of <i>Decree reforming the 1st level of education</i> adopted in December 2013 (1st reading)</p> | <p>Reducing early school leaving through new support tools (collective action plans, individualized learning plans) and reinforcing pluridisciplinary approach in the 1st level, and support mechanisms for schools with high failure or absenteeism rates.</p> |
| | <p>Brussels Increase of the budget allocated to the Brussels action plan against early school leaving (1,8 million EUR) decided in september 2013.</p> | <p>Brussels Actions promote inclusion of schools in the neighborhoods, help teachers boosting educational team and providing coaching mission. They are implemented thanks to partnership with municipalities and the associative sector. They will contribute to the reduction of early school leavers</p> |
| National target for tertiary education | <p>Decree on the "landscape of higher education" adopted in November 2013</p> | <p>Optimize resources and raise the performance of the sector: research excellence, consistency of supply, quality of education, accessibility and promoting success.</p> |
| National poverty target | <p>FED Structural mechanism for adapting social security and social assistance benefits to the development of the general standard of living</p> | <p>FED Supporting the income of the lowest income categories through an increase of (selected) social assistance and social security benefits on top of the adjustment to the consumer price index. In the framework of the 'interfederal' pact for competitiveness, employment and support to the economic recovery, the federal government has decided (November 2013) that the financial resources, as determined in the law of 23/12/2005, will be used for the adaptation of social benefits to the development of the general standard of living.</p> |
| | <p>Flanders Embedding poverty test in the drafting of new regulations</p> <p>Additional efforts to foster the employment of people with an immigrant background.</p> | <p>Flanders In March 2014, the Flemish government approved the poverty test. Henceforth policies are pre-tested for their impact on the poverty situation. Measures that let the gap between rich and poor grow, must then be adjusted based on the poverty test. With this Flanders wants to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of poverty reduction policies significantly.</p> <p>The Government of Flanders invests in the guidance of underprivileged groups to employment. These also include people with an immigrant background who often have limited Dutch knowledge. Shortly after having registered, each newly registered jobseeker is screened for his or her Dutch knowledge. If the jobseeker's knowledge appears to be insufficient, he or she is referred to a Dutch Language House where his or her knowledge is tested in order to determine his or her level. After that, the jobseeker who does not master the Dutch language is given an adjusted training programme, called 'Dutch as a second language', as part of a pathway to employment. The result of this approach is evident from the figures. After six months, 27% of jobseekers with limited knowledge of Dutch has found work. The 2014 budget was in the context of the integration - and integration policy also 4 million additional registered with the Education and Training policy.</p> |

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| | The Flemish government annually provides grants to local governments that are conducting a local children's poverty reduction policy | For the year 2014 an amount of 4,5 million EURO is available. The municipalities where child poverty rates are the highest may rely on these resources. The selected municipalities must appoint a coordinator. The coordinators can appeal to a learning network for exchange, coaching and support. |
| | Wallonia New decree allowing the official recognition of and support to a network for fighting against poverty adopted early 2014 | Wallonia Reinforcing effectiveness of policies fighting against poverty through a better and structured dialogue |
| | Brussels The Brussels council approved in September 2013 the programme of the new "Alliance habitat", aiming at enhance access to housing, in particular for vulnerable people.(pluriannual budget of 953 million EUR). | Brussels Poverty in Brussels being often linked to housing because of a substantial rising of real estate prices and the lack of public housing, the construction of new public housing buildings and the renovation of existing social housing (more than 6000/year) will contribute to the fight against poverty. |
| Euro-plus pact commitments (if relevant) | | |
| Euro Plus Pact commitment on ... | | |
| Other | | |
| Main measures related to implementation of the Flagship Initiatives | | |
| Main (new or updated) commitments in the NRP for the next 12 months | | |
| (Related to AGS priorities, Euro Plus Pact commitments, commitments in relation to 2020 targets, to National Job Plans, to other key bottlenecks identified in the NRPs, commitments in relation to flagship initiatives) | Foreseen main measures | The estimated impacts of the measures (qualitative and/or quantitative)² |
| Industrial Policy | Wallonia Implementation of an integrated industrial policy, based on the smart specialisation principles, through clustering policy . 9 th call for projects : 20 projects financed (65 mio), 10 th call was launched end 2013. Development of innovation platforms, creation of an agro-food incubator, support to internationalisation. Evaluation completed in February 2014. | Consolidate Walloon industrial basis on key markets, by constituting a critical mass, a high level of competitiveness in selected specialisation areas. |
| | Flanders New industrial policy | Considering the New Industrial Policy (NIB), the Flemish Government decided to apply a more focussed approach with respect to the subsidies than can be granted to companies. As a result, the existing strategic investment and training support scheme aiming at these companies was adapted into a strategic transformation support (STS) scheme. The new system took effect as of 1 October 2013 and supports investments and training projects that considerably strengthen the Flemish economy, more specifically: investments into strategic clusters and leadplants in Flanders, investments into the international extension of innovation-oriented SME's in Flanders, or transformative investments that ensure a sustainable anchoring of major employment in Flanders. The annual budget is 40 million EURO. The support system is more easily accessible for SME's and mutual cooperating companies may also jointly introduce a project (by at least three business- |

² Cross references with column 9 of the standard reporting table (Annex 2)

| | | |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Small Business Act | <p>Implementation of the Walloon SBA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New support programme for entrepreneurship (2014-2020) adopted - New start-ups and spin-offs supports - Support to bank credits for SME, partnerships with private equity funds - New retail platform for transmission of enterprises - New innovation diagnosis tool <p>Priorities for 2013: entrepreneurship in higher education, support to export outside EU, support to non technological innovation, creation of living labs, innovation in SMEs, matching between different types of investors and entrepreneurs/enterprises</p> <p>Administrative simplification: reducing payment delays, reducing permits delivering delays, unique and centralised collect of data, rationalising administrations. Enhanced and simplified procedures of implantations (new code for territorial development adopted in January 2013, new Decree on commercial implantations- 1st reading, dematerialization of environment permit underway)</p> | <p>es that do not belong to the same entrepreneurial grouping).</p> <p>The Walloon SBA aims at 4 priorities : facilitating access to financing, promoting entrepreneurship, developing innovation and internationalizing of SMEs.</p> |
| | <p>Flanders:</p> <p>Various measures aimed specifically at stimulating entrepreneurship, SME's , and access to finance. The new and recent initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New call for bridging projects "Economy-Education" - Parenthood projects aimed at female and at 50+ entrepreneurs - Call for starters and young entrepreneurs - KMO Portefeuille 2.0: the renewed SME wallet now includes a new pillar on coaching, and its strategic advice part has been expanded - SME funds from the 4 main banks are partly guaranteed through Gigarant (Bankenplan scheme) in order to facilitate the LT financing on 5-12y towards SME's - New support measure for incubators aimed at spin-off companies and start-up businesses with an R&D profile <p>Administrative simplification: the environmental license and planning permission have been integrated into a single permission, the Omgevingsvergunning.</p> | |
| Resource efficiency | <p>Wallonia</p> <p>Stable base for the circular economy support mechanism (NEXT) and creation of a reference center for shorts circuits and circular economy</p> | <p>Wallonia</p> <p>Promoting resource efficiency in industry through circular economy projects and exploiting reduction of operational cost potentials for SMEs</p> |

Annex 4 of the Flemish Region

1. Governance of the Flemish Europe 2020 Strategy

On 1 April 2011, 30 March 2012 and 29 March 2013 respectively, the Government of Flanders (GF) took note of the Flemish reform programmes within the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The Pact 2020 and Flanders in Action (FiA) together constitute the (Flemish) reference framework for the realization of the structural reforms in Flanders. The drawing up of its own reform programme illustrates the ambition of the GF, with regard to the Europe 2020 Strategy, to assume the necessary *ownership*.

With the *Flemish Reform Programme (FRP) 2014*, of which the GF took note on 28 March 2014, the GF outlines the necessary measures to further achieve the realization of its Europe 2020 objectives. In addition, with regard to the Flemish competences, it provides a response to the country-specific recommendations (CSR) that were directed to Belgium in 2013. In the FRP 2014, links are established with the sixth state reform where possible. It will be the next GF's task to flesh out the transferred competences in terms of content and, in doing so, to respond to the further implementation of the structural reforms and the country-specific recommendations for 2014.

The GF attaches great importance to reinforcing the *support* for the Europe 2020 Strategy. Like in previous years, the *social partners* (through the VESOC) were also associated with the coming about of the FRP 2014 this year. With regard to numerous measures, there will be cooperation with the (*supra*)*local authorities*. This year as well, a contribution by the *Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSG)* and the *Association of the Flemish Provinces (VVP)* was included, in which a certain number of good examples and practices of (*supra*)*local authorities* with regard to the realization of the Europa 2020 Strategy are outlined.

The FRP is also at the basis of the input by the Flemish authorities for the *national reform programme (NRP) 2014*. Moreover, it is also the starting point for the Flemish contribution to the activities of the Europe 2020 platform of the Committee of the Regions.

On the web page <http://www.vlaandereninactie.be/over/eu-2020> all relevant information with regard to the FRP is made available to the public at large

2. Implementation of the country-specific recommendations in Flanders

In July 2013, the ECOFIN Council directed 7 country-specific recommendations¹ to Belgium. These recommendations relate to the sustainability of the public finances, social security for the elderly, cost competitiveness and wage formation, competition in the network sectors and service sector, the reduction of taxes on labour, the labour market, greenhouse gas emissions. In each of these areas, Flanders is taking the necessary measures and thus implementing structural reforms.

2.1. Sustainability of the public finances (CSR 1)

As in previous years, the GF will continue to focus on a *balanced budget without surpluses* in 2014. By analogy with the previous years, a certain number of structural cuts have been implemented in 2014. The GF has for instance expedited the efficiency pathway which it set out for its services and which has to result in a reduction by 6.5% of the number of Flemish administration public servants by the end of the term of office (instead of by 6%, anticipated up to now). Through this increased staff reduc-

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2013:217:FULL:NL:PDF>

tion, wage credit savings will increase by 5 million euros in 2014 and will amount to a total of 25 million euros. Various measures in ministries and institutions will yield 60 million euros in recurrent savings and will allow for new policy incentives to be initiated. Following the internal state reform, the allowance granted to the provincial fund is no longer adjusted by 3.5% a year through Flemish Parliament Act, but the allocation of resources is spread permanently and finally, a reduction of the allowance by 20 million euros is also implemented. In addition to the implementation of the additional policy incentives that are already anticipated within the framework of constant policy, nearly 500 million euros have also been earmarked for new policy incentives, of which 177 million euros will be paid in 2014. In support of the recovery of the economy, a competitiveness provision has been set aside. It includes 166 million euros of policy credits and 83 million euros of payment credits that are earmarked to meet the commitments that were entered into.

Thanks to the good budgetary result in the year 2013 and the reimbursement by KBC of a first instalment of the support which was granted to them for an amount of 1.75 billion euros, the Flemish authorities managed to reduce its *direct debt* in 2013 by 2 billion euros to 4.4 billion euros. The cash result, also called the net balance to be financed (NFS), was positive for the third year in a row. Excluding the first KBC reimbursement, the net balance to be financed amounted to 287 million euros in 2013. The direct debt of the Flemish authorities is expected to decrease further from 4.4 billion euros at the end of 2013 to 4.1 billion euros by the end of 2014.

On 21 December 2012, Flanders ratified the *Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance (TSCG)*. On 13 December 2013, the Federal Authorities, the Communities, the Regions and the Community Commissions signed a *cooperation agreement* regarding the implementation of article 3, §1, of the TSCG and the necessary steps were taken so that the Flemish ratification act can be published in the Belgian Official Gazette. With regard to the *transposition of directive 2011/85 EU on requirements for budgetary frameworks of the Member States*, apart from the further elaboration of a certain number of practical agreements between the different entities (e.g. the elaboration of a methodological framework regarding the drawing up of a multi-annual budget for the joint authorities), no further actions need to be taken to meet this directive as far as Flanders and its local administrations are concerned.

2.2. Social security for the elderly (CSR 2)

The GF has taken, as was indicated in the FRP 2013, a series of measures in the past years to increase the *effective retirement age for government personnel*. On 26 April 2013, the GF approved the preliminary draft of the Flemish Parliament Act on the withdrawal of article 158 of the New Municipal Act. The objective is to allow the permanently appointed tenured staff employed by municipalities, provinces and public centres for social welfare to keep working after the age of 65. The preliminary draft of the Flemish Parliament Act has been submitted to the Flemish Parliament, after the necessary opinions had been sought.

2.3. Cost competitiveness and wage formation (CSR 3)

Spurred by the GF, a *competitiveness pact* was concluded by the end of 2013 in which the federal authorities and the federal states join forces to reinforce the competitiveness. In this context, the GF focuses on the following pillars:

a. The competitiveness provision is used primarily to reduce the financial burden

It has been decided in the competitiveness pact that, as of the last quarter of 2014, the Flemish authorities will allocate an additional *125 million euros* per year to *wage cost reduction* within the framework of the new competences. In this context, reductions for young persons (-30 years) or for older workers (+55 years) are being considered, for instance. First of all, however, the existing target group

measures that will be transferred will be evaluated, as well as the federal reduction in the financial burden that is planned within the framework of the competitiveness pact, so that the allocation of the resources can take place as purposeful as possible.

b. Aim to reduce energy costs

The GF already decided in 2012 to pursue the *energy policy agreements* for the energy-intensive companies. Companies that conclude such an agreement with the authorities commit themselves to realize a certain degree of energy efficiency and will therefore have lower energy costs. This regulation is currently in the notification procedure of the EC.

In 2012, the *support mechanism for renewable energy and cogeneration (CHP)* was reviewed. The support that is granted since 2013 is much more cost effective and, consequently, results in lower costs on the energy bill. Furthermore, the energy-intensive industry was given up to 98% of exemptions for these costs. These exemptions result in a reduction of at least 161.5 million euros in 2013 in the energy costs for the companies. That is 127.5 million euros more than before the adjustment. The indirect CO₂ costs in the price of electricity expose certain business sectors to a risk of delocalization (indirect carbon leakage). That is why the EC allows that a compensation is provided to companies from these business sectors. On 29 November 2013, the GF decided in principle to provide the maximum allowed support to all eligible companies. For the consumer year 2013, the GF will thus relieve the energy costs for the industry by 60 million euros.

It was agreed with the operator ELIA that, in its new tariff proposals to the CREG, the industry will be maximally protected. The clients who are connected to the local transport network and who will possibly have to pay a charge for the renewable energy will receive similar exemptions, as provided in the Energy Parliament Act.

With the approval of the *SME energy efficiency plan (KEEP)*, the GF has decided to take a series of measures to promote energy efficiency among SMEs. This includes an extension in the field of support for advice and support for energy investments. Furthermore, attention will also be paid to purposeful awareness raising and information provision.

c. Support research & development and innovation.

Flanders commits itself to a growth path towards 3% of the GDP for total R&D expenditure. In 2011, Flanders reached a (record) share of 2.4%. With respect to the figures for 2006 (1.96%), this amounts to the realization of a substantial growth path. The total expenditure for R&D and innovation by the Flemish authorities in 2013 amounts to nearly 2 billion euros. On an annual basis, this budget exceeds the 2008 budget by almost 200 million euros. The expenditure for R&D in 2013 amounted to about 1.3 billion euros, which is 150 million euros more on an annual basis than in 2008. In the light of the needs for competitiveness, the GF will set aside an additional 45 million euros in 2014 for R&D projects. These resources will be spent to promote research and innovation in the business world, such as research aimed at research projects with industrial valorisation, at reinforcing the scientific infrastructure where companies and research institutions can carry out projects together, at high-technology support of SMEs, and for the benefit of industrial R&D projects. This additional budget will also reinforce the establishment of the new strategic research centre in the manufacturing industry.

Flanders also strongly focuses on measures to accelerate the marketing of innovation. For this, the *TINA fund* can invest up to 200 million euros in projects by clusters of companies and project resources are allocated from the *New Industrial Policy (NIP)* amounting to at least 10 million euros per year.

d. Support investments by companies

The Flemish Region has an efficient set of instruments in support of investments by companies. This is done through subsidies, capital or loans of a capital character, the support and facilitation of external bank and other financing and an adapted tax system. This involves annual measures amounting to about 240 million euros. At the same time, more than 1.5 billion euros in additional financing is made possible. With regard to the subsidies or support of external financing, the GF, recently and within the framework of the 2014 budget, took the following measures regarding recurrent expenditure: (i) protecting the subsidies for strategic transformation, ecology support investments and development of industrial sites (115 million euros), (ii) guaranteeing up to 350 million euros, covered by loss financing (24 million euros).

Through its "*Bank plan*", the GF decided to take several additional measures in support of external financing (i) 1.1 billion euros of long-term credits from the banks can be classified in funds that are partly guaranteed by Gigarant, (ii) The ceiling for the win-win loan was raised to 200,000 euros so that SMEs can maximize the fiscal benefits in the personal income tax.

The PMV set of instruments for investments in companies is optimized permanently. In 2013, this led to the creation of a second fund, among other things, aimed at spin-offs of colleges of higher education and associations (SOFI2) for an amount of 10 million euros.

Within the framework of *SALK*², the GF decided to carry out a capital increase of the LRM for an amount of 100 million euros, for subordinated loans to SMEs, among other things.

Within the framework of the tax system, the GF decided in the fall of 2013 to proceed to an accelerated reduction (during the next 3 years) of the taxable rateable value regarding material and equipment in case of new company investments. At cruising speed, this measure will require an additional compensation of 45 million euros for municipalities.

To support the transformation of SMEs, the GF wants to reduce the wage costs for strategic function through recruitment premiums for export and knowledge managers in SMEs. The companies receive a premium amounting to 50% of the gross income, limited to 20,000 euros for one year. This instrument is an addition to the SME wallet, for which 40 million euros are available in 2014. Another 10 million euros will be earmarked for this.

e. Investments in human capital.

Investments in human capital in function of competitiveness and employment are an absolute priority for the GF. In 2014, an amount of 1.597 billion euros in policy credits has been charged to the budget. Flanders wants to increase the employment rate so that as many people as possible are employed. The GF has invested in the target groups and turning points where the employment rate can still be increased (labour reserve). In this context, it is essential to anticipate the career of people and, preferably, as preventive as possible.

The GF has a *modernized system of career guidance* (12 million euros on an annual basis) for the guidance of workers who want to re-orientate their career. The *guidance approach for 50+* will be refined and

² SALK (Strategisch Actieplan Limburg in het Kwadraat ("strategic action plan Limburg square")) proposes an overall vision for the Limburg province. It includes actions to create sustainable and inclusive employment, and to strengthen the economic tissue within the Limburg province. SALK was delivered by a group of experts on 1 February 2013, at the demand of the Flemish Government following the announcement of the closure of the Ford Genk plant by end 2014. The overall budget originates from various authority levels, including the specific European envelope of 66.5 million euros. Since the Summer of 2013, the actions are formally being approved and gradually implemented.

will be extended as of 1 April to 60 years. The target group premium for 50+ has been made more efficient and is increasingly successful. With regard to *young people*, an action plan was approved to prevent the unqualified outflow, including initiatives to aid the transition from education to the labour market, among other things. A decision has also been taken regarding a structural reform of secondary education. Additional measures have also been taken for young people who leave school without qualifications, among other things through Taste of Work programmes in the central cities and entry-level work placements (in cooperation with the federal authorities) for all young people without a diploma.

The GF will also fully focus on the more efficient functioning of the labour market in Flanders: vocational training complemented by workplace learning; a reform of the matching system in function of competencies (instead of diplomas), the relaxing of the IBO measure and the fact that the VDAB will also orient itself more in function of the needs of the companies ("everybody's employment officer").

f. Support public investments

The GF remains an investment government. In 2013, the horizontal programme for investments amounted to 3.611 billion euros. The GF commits itself to keep up the investments (in the fields of school infrastructure, care sector, council housing, mobility) and to reinforce them if possible. The investments will further increase in 2014, by 340 million euros. Special efforts are made in the field of educational buildings (+80 million euros), care infrastructure (+20 million euros) and public works (+40 million euros). And this does not yet include the investments through PPP and capital investments.

g. Horizontal budgets for recovery and competitiveness:

Within the framework of *SALK*, the GF invests 81 million euros for the recovery and transformation of the economy in Limburg. Within the Hermes fund, 25 million euros have been earmarked for recovery measures. Within the applying objectives of the EC, the Flemish authorities will, in the period 2014-2020, also maximally orient the resources from the European cohesion funds in function of the sustainable reinforcement of the economy and employment. This concerns a total envelope of about 650 million euros.

2.4. Competition in the network sectors and service sector (CSR 4)

Guaranteeing effective competition at retail level (i.e. at the distribution level of electricity and gas) is a regional competence. In this respect, highly positive figures for 2012 can be noted. The switching rate has never been higher and the market share of the incumbent continues to drop. The HHI index with regard to provision is strongly evolving in the right direction.

The technical regulation of the distribution of electricity and gas is a regional competence, whereas the tariff regulation of the distribution system is a federal competence. Within the framework of the sixth state reform, the competence regarding the tariffs of the gas and electricity distribution will be transferred from the federal authorities to the regions on 1 July. As a result, the tariff regulation of the distribution system will be in the hands of the same party (VREG) that is responsible for the technical and qualitative regulation of the distribution system. This entails a clear bonus: the party responsible for the regulation is also confronted with its price tag. With regard to supervision and reports, this modification also brings about major advantages for the regulator and regulated. On 20 December 2013, the GF adopted four amendments to the draft Flemish Parliament Act modifying the Energy Parliament Act of 8 May 2009. It concerns the necessary transition measures regarding the distribution system tariffs, thus ensuring a stable transition period.

2.5. Reduce taxes on labour (CSR 5)

Given the fact that the regions only have limited tax competences with respect to taxes on labour, the present recommendation will have to be *realized partly* through measures originating from the *federal authorities*. The Flemish authorities currently examine *different options* regarding the *shift from taxes on labour to less growth-distorting taxes, including also the greening* of the Flemish tax system.

The Flemish Region takes, within its competences, different actions within the framework of the pilot project *Mobility budget* that are intended to make the commuter traffic more sustainable. The mobility budget is an alternative for, or an addition to, the company car and allows the worker to choose his/her own means of transport that suit his or her needs within a budget that has been set by the employer. This has to incite people to make less frequent use of their (company) car for their commuter traffic. Over the past years, different public-private *pilot projects* have been set up in the Flemish Region that are intended to facilitate the introduction of a mobility budget:

- Project “*Mobility Budget Works!*” (<http://www.mobimix.be/thema/mobiliteitsbudget>)
 - This pilot project (2012) tested which elements must be included in a mobility budget in order to be successful. On 12 March 2013, the results of the project were presented in the Flemish Parliament, as well as the recommendations formulated for the policy and companies that are willing to work with the mobility budget.
- Project “*I-mobility budget*” (<http://www.vim.be/projects/smart-mobility-budget>).
 - This pilot project examines the most important operational and organizational bottlenecks that are related to a person-related mobility budget. Guidance is given to 25 companies, in their transition to an “intelligent mobility budget”. The project was launched by the end of January 2014 and in March 2014, the first companies will start the effective testing of the tools. The project will run until mid-2016.

A *kilometre charge* can contribute to the realization of different policy goals, such as making the tax and transport system more environment-friendly and fighting against congestion. Concretely, reference can be made in this context to the *Viapass Project* (<http://www.viapass.be>), the project for road pricing of the Flemish, Brussels-Capital and Walloon Region. First of all, the project has been embedded in the mobility policy of the Flemish Region. For the necessary control over the number of car and freight kilometres by road, the focus is put on a very large package of measures, of which Viapass constitutes an important structural final step. The goal of this project is twofold: set up a system of road pricing (1) for lorries with a Maximum Authorised Mass of more than 3.5 tonnes, based on the infrastructure and environment costs per travelled kilometre, using satellite technology, and (2) for all vehicles of 3.5 tonnes or less, using an electronic road vignette.

The tender procedure to allocate the DBFMO contract to a *single service provider* is running. The objectives of the kilometre charge include, among other things, (i) to have the freight transport contribute to the costs for the investments in, and the maintenance of, the roads in a fair manner, (ii) to improve the mobility on the Belgian territory by inciting transport companies to make use of their freight capacity more efficiently, (iii) to contribute to the improvement of the environmental performance of the transport system.

According to the current *planning*, the system for lorries would be introduced in 2016. Viapass for private cars (vignette) will be introduced in 2016 at the earliest. In this way, every road user will contribute to the improvement of the mobility system and the reduction of the impact of road traffic on the environment in a fair manner. The Viapass project also fits in with the planned *reform of the road*

tax. The revenues will in principle be reinvested in the improvement of the road infrastructure and of the mobility in general, among other things.

A pilot project regarding a kilometre charge for private cars will be set up, the results of which will be available in the first half of 2014. The goal of this pilot project is to examine what could be the effects on the behaviour of motorists of the introduction of a kilometre charge for light vehicles in the REN zone: the suburban zone around Brussels where the Regional Express Network (REN) for fast suburban public transport is currently developed. The goal of the pilot project is to measure the changes in the behaviour of citizens and does not imply a decision by the regions regarding the introduction of a kilometre charge for private cars in the short or medium term. The introduction of a kilometre charge for private cars is not provided in the Political Agreement and is thus not connected to the introduction of the road vignette for private cars and the kilometre charge for lorries.

2.6. Labour market (CSR 6)

The *sixth state reform* has to result in more homogeneous sets of competences, among other things with regard to labour market policy. By extending the existing competences of the Regions (for instance in the field of employment services and vocational training) with competences regarding target group policy, monitoring of the availability of unemployed people, etc., more competences are placed in the hands of one single authority, which allows Flanders to provide a more customised service and to further enhance the effectiveness of Flemish policy.

The GF takes numerous measures that aim to implement the country-specific recommendation that suggests, among other things, to "*further reduce disincentives to work, through effective enforcement of the obligation to find employment and by making sure that all unemployed persons receive personalized assistance to help them find employment*". The most important measures are:

- the focus on an effectively activating labour market policy (ALMP) through a customised target group policy and specific measures for underprivileged groups;
- the obligation to accept guidance in the search for employment was gradually extended to older age groups in recent years. The GF decided to extend this obligation to 60 years (planned starting date is 1 April 2014);
- At the end of 2013, a cooperation agreement was concluded between the federal state, the regions and the communities, regarding the active guidance and activation of unemployed persons. The monitoring of unemployed persons by the National Employment Office (NEO) is extended to 55-year-olds and, as of 2016, to 58-year-olds. In addition, the status of part-time unemployed persons and unemployed persons with a work-limiting disability will be checked. Furthermore, there will be more exchange of information between VDAB (public employment service of Flanders) and NEO to avoid that checks by the NEO interfere with VDAB guidance;
- In 2013, an additional 5 million euros were allocated to tackle youth unemployment. The GF took specific measures with a view to the introduction of a youth guarantee and the reduction of unemployment among young people. Flanders realizes the youth guarantee in the fight against youth unemployment. More opportunities to improve their skills are offered, in particular for early school leavers. Through learning-on-the-job, entry-level work placements (see earlier) and adapted work experience pathways in the cities, the GF wants these young people to re-connect with the labour market. Furthermore, 2,500 additional places are provided for the intensive guidance of young people, plus 500 additional places for young people with a disability. For young people who do not register with the employment service, there is cooperation with local community organisations so that they can be reached nevertheless and guided towards the VDAB;

- The GF invests in the guidance of underprivileged groups to employment, which includes *people with an immigrant background* who often have limited knowledge of the Dutch language. Every newly registered job-seeker is screened for his or her knowledge of the Dutch language shortly after registration. If it turns out that the job-seeker's knowledge is insufficient, he/she is referred to a Dutch Language House for testing or level determination. Thereupon, the job-seeker who does not master the Dutch language will receive an adapted training in Dutch as a second language (NT2), as a component of a pathway to work. Within the framework of the integration policy, an additional 6 million euros were also entered on the 2014 budget.
- In addition, the GF takes measures that relate to increasing the employment rate among underprivileged groups. In 2013, the tender activation care and the project 'labour care flow' were continued and the number of pathways for persons living in poverty were extended. In addition, the realization of 800 C-IBO pathways (curative Individual vocational training) is projected in 2014;
- After the sixth state reform, target group policy will become a Flemish competence. The Flemish Region will be able to grant a reduction of social contributions to employers for the employment of persons from certain target groups. Both the determination of the height of the reduction and the choice of the target groups will become a Flemish competence. This will make it possible to lower the wage cost for certain groups of workers, so that their opportunities to find employment are improved. After the state reform, the Flemish Region will also be responsible for the *activation of unemployment benefits and for the labour market guidance of persons on social security and PWA (local employment agencies)*. This provides opportunities to better harmonize the guidance of these target groups - long-term unemployed persons in particular - to the Flemish activation policy. The Flemish Region also becomes responsible for the monitoring and possible imposition of sanctions on unemployed persons. Finally, Flanders also becomes responsible for the *service voucher system*. In the past years, this system has helped a growing group of low-skilled unemployed persons, among others, find work, including a strong representation of immigrant women.

In the field of *interregional mobility*, the cooperation with the Brussels and Walloon employment services in 2013 paid off. In 2013, vacancies for 5,740 jobs were exchanged with Le Forem and 1,104 jobs with Actiris while 1,961 Walloon and 1,204 Brussels job-seekers found employment in Flanders. In 2013, the cooperation between VDAB, Forem and Actiris was even reinforced, among other things through the joint creation of the airport house. Up to now, the VDAB only provided vacancies in the Brussels Periphery to Actiris, hoping to fill them with unemployed persons from Brussels. In 2013, this work area was extended from the Brussels Periphery to Aalst, Leuven and Mechelen.

The GF also tries to respond to the challenge included in the CSR "*Simplify and reinforce coherence between employment incentives, activation policies, labour matching, education, lifelong learning and vocational training policies for older people and youth.*" and takes the following measures for that purpose:

- The *VESOC career agreement* (17 February 2012) remains the principal initiative to gear the education and training policy to the employment policy. The transition of the initial learning career to the first job or from learning to working constitutes a core objective in this;
- The Flemish Parliament Act on the reinforcement of higher vocational education (HBO5) in Flanders was ratified by the Flemish Parliament on 12 July 2013;
- On 4 June 2013, the GF approved the Master plan for the reform of secondary education. One of the objectives of this reform is the revaluing of technical and vocational education as well as the realization of a better gearing of education to the needs of the labour market and the required competencies in higher education.

- Within the framework of lifelong learning, an overall future vision on adult education in Flanders is being developed. In the spring of 2014, a vision text will be presented, formulating the guidelines for the development of adult education in Flanders. This text will serve as input for the next GF (2014-2019);
- There will be a further development of the regulatory framework for the recognition of competencies (RAC) and for the integrated quality assurance framework. In addition to the implementing order for vocational qualifications in execution of the Flemish Parliament Act on the Flemish qualifications system, the implementing order for educational qualifications ranging from levels 1 to 4 has been definitively adopted, as a result of which the procedure and criteria for defining these educational qualifications have been laid down;
- In implementation of employment agreements with the social partners, a growth trajectory is being defined for the *individual in-company vocational training* (IBO). The objective is 17,000 IBOs in 2014. In 2013, the *Flemish career vouchers* were also introduced: a system allowing workers to purchase advantageous career guidance on the private market. This encourages workers to think about their career and to actively invest in skill development. The instrument of the training vouchers also continues to account for a large number of participants in labour market-oriented training in Flanders: in 2013, almost 108,000 training vouchers were issued. With the social partners, Flanders reinforces the training provision that is aimed at employment in shortage occupations and future-oriented jobs. In 2013, the automatic matching was improved through the launch of a database (Competent) which contains professional skill profiles and on the basis of which the VDAB will embed its services.
- The cooperation between training and education actors reinforced through the further development of the 'Excellent partnerships' with a view to filling vacancies for shortage occupations. Through a European project for predictive labour market research, sectors will be stimulated to reach a shared vision on competency and training needs;
- In addition, there will be further investments in the STEM3 action plan, the sectoral agreements, the action plan entrepreneurial education, etc.;
- Within the framework of the state reform, Flanders will be responsible for the paid educational leave and the exemption of the availability of unemployed persons for studies and vocational training. Thanks to this, workers and unemployed persons can be offered the opportunity to follow trainings for positions that the Flemish labour market needs the most, and that give them a better chance of finding employment. Furthermore, Flanders will be responsible for different aspects of the learning and working system after the sixth state reform: the industrial apprenticeship scheme, work experience agreement and the start and work placement bonus.

The GF will also outline all-inclusive strategies with a view to the social inclusion and integration in the labour market of people with an immigrant background. On 7 June 2013, a *new Flemish Parliament Act on Civic Integration and Integration* has been approved. This Flemish Parliament Act realizes the following objectives: the integration of the implementing actors of the integration policy; a better harmonization between the different actors in the integration process; an increase in efficiency and effectiveness and clear profiling aimed at the end user and the optimization of the existing regulation in the field of integration and civic integration. Through the new Flemish Parliament Act, the Flemish authorities choose to provide the services in support of the integration process in the field and the implementation of the integration policy as integrated as possible. This is translated in a unique gateway, namely the *Externally Autonomous Agency (EAA) Civic Integration and Integration*, for the dif-

³ Science – Technology – Engineering – Mathematics .

ferent instruments of the integration policy: civic integration pathways, social interpreting and translation, provision of advice and practical support,... Through the new Flemish Parliament Act, the following 5 tools are put forward in order to increase the accessibility of regular facilities for all citizens, thus also for the special target groups.

2.7. Greenhouse gas emissions (CSR 7)

Necessary preparations are being taken within the National Climate commission to lay down the division of tasks between the federal and regional authorities in a cooperation agreement.

On 28 June 2013, the GF approved the *2013-2020 Flemish Climate Policy Plan (FCPP)*. It includes a Flemish Mitigation Plan (FMP), to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and a Flemish Adaptation Plan (FAP), to moderate the effects of the climate change in Flanders. The FMP lays out concrete measures at the Flemish level for the non-ETS sectors in the 2013-2020 period. In this context, particular attention has been devoted to the *transport and buildings sectors*, which are responsible for the largest share in the Flemish non-ETS greenhouse gas emissions. In the longer term (2015-2020), a new financing mechanism will be introduced to support projects or measures through the Flemish Climate Fund, in function of their achieved greenhouse gas reductions and cost efficiency.

Within the framework of the FCPP, the large cost-effective reduction potential in the *Flemish buildings* will be addressed. Through financial instruments, energy savings in residential and tertiary buildings will be stimulated even more. This way, nearly 8 million euros are invested in thorough energy renovation of social housing. In addition, the Climate Fund will reinforce the premiums for energy renovations in houses and buildings and grant a subsidy for telemetrics systems in school groups to prevent standby consumption and to faster detect anomalies in consumption patterns.

The *energy efficiency directive* must be fully transposed by 5 June 2014 at the latest. For this purpose, Flanders has taken the following initiatives in the past year, a number of which directly relate to the sector of buildings:

- Article 4 of the directive stipulates that, by 30 April 2014, Member States must determine a first version of a *long-term strategy to thoroughly renovate the building park*. Stakeholder consultation regarding the long-term renovation strategy of the building park has been conducted on 11 June 2013 and was followed by an information session on 23 September 2013. The building inventory requested by the EC is drawn up;
- Article 5 of the directive imposes a *renovation obligation for public buildings* on the Member States. A memorandum to the GF has been prepared. The GF has approved a memorandum, regarding scope and notification of the alternative approach, on 13 December 2013.

The (reviewed) *energy performance of buildings directive* stipulates that, as of 2021, *all new buildings must be nearly zero-energy buildings (NZEB)*. Within the framework of a pioneering role, this obligation already applies to the authorities as of 2019 (in particular for new buildings housing public bodies who own these buildings). On 21 June 2012, the *Flemish action plan nearly zero-energy buildings (NZEB)* was communicated to the GF. The action plan is aimed at both the construction of new buildings and renovations requiring a permit, and was elaborated in close consultation with all stakeholders.

On 1 January 2014, the obligation to *integrate* a system of *renewable energy generation* became effective for all new houses, offices and schools.

In 2013, the regulatory process was started for the completion of the full transposition of the European energy performance of buildings directive. The modified Decree on Energy and the draft amend-

ment Act were definitively approved by the GF on 29 November 2013. The draft amendment Act must still be approved by the Flemish Parliament. The modified regulatory framework stipulates the following:

- The *definition of nearly zero-energy new buildings* has been elaborated, within the framework of the 2013 EPIC evaluation, on the basis of the cost-optimal level of the energy performance of typical buildings. An E30 level is aimed at as the nearly zero-energy target for newly built houses in 2021. E40 will become the nearly zero-energy target for office and school buildings. For public buildings, the standard is set a bit higher;
- The *interim refining steps* of the EPIC requirements setting out for NZEB building in 2021 (and 2019 for public buildings) have been laid down. The E-level requirements will be lowered systematically, and also the insulation requirements for the different parts of the construction such as outer walls, roofs, windows, floors, etc. will be refined;
- Additional *system requirements* will be imposed on technical building systems that are newly installed, replaced or improved in existing buildings;
- An *E-level requirement* will be introduced for *fundamental energetic renovations*.

In the meantime, the *Energy Renovation Programme 2020* for existing houses will also be implemented in full. Meanwhile, the *energy premium regulation* has been streamlined by the GF on 29 November 2013. Thereby, a clear focus lies on the priorities of the Energy Renovation Programme 2020. One of the modifications is the *introduction of the combined premium* to encourage the *thorough energy renovation of houses*. Persons who, as of 2014, set to work on their walls and windows in one go, will receive a premium that is four times higher for replacing the windows. Furthermore, the target group of the different other premiums is extended and the importance of certain premiums has been adapted. In addition, the GF has also earmarked a budget to make *1,500 social houses extra energy-efficient*. During this term, the GF invested twice as much in the *renovation of social houses* as in the previous term.

The *recognition regulation of the energy experts* was streamlined further. In order to make owners, tenants and buyers more aware of the importance of energy-efficient living, the monitoring of the *quality of the energy performance certificate* was reinforced. As of 2013, there will be a compulsory *central examination*. Preparations are made to extend the scope of the energy performance certificate to the non-residential buildings.

For the post-insulation of cavity walls, a *quality system* was launched that has brought about a strong market dynamics in the short term. Gradually, roof insulation in houses will become compulsory. Through the introduction of the *Flemish roof insulation standard* as of 2015, a first modest step is taken in that direction. For the target group of households and building professionals, new *energy consultant projects* have been set up.

In order to *reduce emissions in the transport sector*, investments are made, among other things, in controlling the number of kilometres (cf. kilometre charge/road vignette, see earlier) and improving the environmental characteristics of the means of transport and their fuels. The elaboration of the *Mobility Plan for Flanders* included the *climate objectives* from the 2013-2020 Flemish Climate Policy Plan and the European White Paper on Transport. More concretely, the Flemish Region wants to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of the transport sector by 16% by 2030 compared to 2005, meet the imposed emission ceilings for PM, NO_x, VOC en SO₂ and increase the share of renewable energy in transport fuels.

The draft Mobility Plan for Flanders has been laid down provisionally by the GF and submitted to a public consultation. The Flemish Parliament will determine its point of view in 2014, after which a next GF can proceed to the definitive laying down of the plan.

In order to reduce the environmental impact of the transport sector, different courses are taken. The STOP principle is used for the passenger traffic – first walking and cycling, then public transport and finally private transport (in Dutch: Stappen, Trappen, Openbaar vervoer, Privé vervoer = STOP) – whereas, in particular for the transport of goods, priority will be given to build on green and sustainable logistics on the basis of co-modal solutions. Specific measures that bring about a reduction of the greenhouse gas emissions through transport relate to the following modes:

- *Pedals (Dutch: Trappers)*: the Flemish Region has an integrated bicycle investment programme (IFI 2013-2015): a rolling multi-annual programme that further develops the supra-local functional bicycle route network (BFF). In 2014, an adjusted IFI 2014-2016 will be drawn up and implemented;
- *Public transport*: A master plan for environment-friendly transport is further implemented with a view to the improvement of the fleet vehicles and their fuels. When awarding exploitation contracts by the Flemish Public Transport Company (VVM) De Lijn, the environmental friendliness of the bus fleet will be maximally taken into account. A new contract for the procurement of transport services was approved in 2013. In 2014, many contracts will be awarded once again according to this new standard contract. In 2013, the decision was taken to purchase 123 hybrid (city) buses, which will further extend the existing hybrid fleet. In addition, with a view to the longer term, a project has been prepared for 3 electrical buses (Bruges) and 5 hydrogen buses (Antwerp City-North). These projects will start in 2014 and have to result in the necessary knowledge and arguments for the further greening of the fleet of vehicles;
- *Private cars*: in addition to the pilot project regarding a kilometre charge for private cars, the private market will be further encouraged in 2014 to build publicly accessible recharging stations for electric vehicles. For that reason, the one-off registration tax for electric (and hybrid) cars is 0. Today, in addition to the private recharging stations, there are more than 600 public recharging stations available in Flanders. In 2014, the private market will be further encouraged to build such recharging stations;
- *Transport of goods and logistics*: In addition to the Viapass project for lorries, the FiA actions for more environment-friendly logistics will be further implemented in 2014. The Flanders Logistics consultants took up their duties in May 2013. Inland navigation will be encouraged on the basis of the 3E covenant. A concrete roadmap for the introduction of emission reducing technologies will be drawn up in 2014 and shore power structures will be developed. In shipping, special attention will be devoted to the further development of LNG fuel (bunkering and infrastructure) in the sea-ports;
- *Shore power* (<http://www.walstroomplatform.be>). One of the measures from the FCPP is the further development of shore power infrastructure. The shore power platform mapped the existing shore power installations and systems in 2013 and also launched a shore power website. At the request of the waterway managers, the decision was taken to extend this website in 2014 to an "environmental services platform". Within the framework of a TEN-T project, a study into the uniform provision of shore power was carried out in 2013. Following on this, a pilot study will be carried out in 2014, linked to the implementation of the best techniques for a certain number of shore power structures, in the port of Antwerp, the Ring canal around Ghent and on the Albert Canal, among others.

3. Progress in the realisation of the Flemish Europe 2020 objectives

3.1. General state of affairs with regard to the realization of the Flemish Europe 2020 objectives and European comparison

In the FRP 2011, Flanders laid down its targets for the 5 main objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy. By 2020, Flanders wants to achieve an employment rate (20-64-years-old) of over 76%, spend 3% of the GDP on R&D expenditure, reduce early school-leaving to 5.2%, bring the share of the 30-34-years-old with a diploma of tertiary/higher education to 47.8%, reduce poverty and social exclusion by 30% and child poverty by 50%. For the climate and energy package (20-20-20-objectives), further negotiations are required within the framework of an internal Belgian burden sharing. The evolution with regard to the Flemish Europe 2020 objectives and the European objectives set in 2011 can be found in the table below. With regard to the climate and energy objectives, progress has been made since the beginning of the present term. The efforts by the GF to earmark more resources for R&D have been worthwhile: the percentage of 2.12 (2009) became a percentage of 2.40 in 2011, which is the highest figure ever and an improvement of almost 15% compared to 2009. For the objectives with regard to employment, we remain under the pre-crisis level of 2008. With regard to education, Flanders is situated within the European objectives, but the progress since the beginning of the present term can be called reasonably modest. For poverty or social exclusion, the poverty figures have been rising since the beginning of the crisis, but Flanders is still doing very well in the EU context.

Table : General overview of the progress made with regard to the Europe 2020 objectives in Flanders

| | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | compared to (reference year) | 2020 target standard | distance |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|------------------------------|--|----------|
| Gross domestic expenditure for R&D (%) | 2.06 | 2.12 | 2.29 | 2.40 | | | +0,28pp↑ (2009) | 3 | 0.60 pp |
| Early school leavers (%) | 8.6 | 8.6 | 9.6 | 9.6 | 8.7 | 8* | -0,6pp↓ (2008) | 5.2 | 2.8 pp |
| 30 to 34-year-olds with higher education diploma (%) | 43.6 | 43.1 | 45 | 42.3 | 45.3 | 44.4* | +0.8 pp ↑ (2008) | 47.8 | 3.4 pp |
| Employment rate population (20 to 64-year-olds) (%) | 72.3 | 71.5 | 72.1 | 71.8 | 71.5 | 71.9* | -0,2pp↓ (2010) | over 76 | 4.1 pp |
| Greenhouse gases non-ETS according to ETS scope 13-20 (ktonnes) | 46,307 | 45,724 | 47,908 | 43,575 | 44,079 | | -4.1%↓ (2005) | Effort sharing between regions is necessary 39,689** | |
| Gross domestic energy consumption (PJ) | 1626 | 1543 | 1687 | 1580 | 1556 | | | *** | |
| Renewable energy in final energy consumption (%) | 2.9 | 3.8 | 4.4 | 4.5 | 5.6 | | | Effort sharing between regions is necessary**** | |
| Composite indicator (% people in poverty or social exclusion) | 15.2 | 14.6 | 14.8 | 15 | 16.3 | | +1.1 pp ↑ (2008) | 10.5% (= -30% persons compared to 2008) | 5.8 pp |
| % children with a standardised available household income below the poverty risk threshold after social transfers | 9.9 | 9.8 | 11 | 10.4 | 11.5 | | +1.6 pp↑ (2008) | 5.0% (= -50% Children compared to 2008) | 6.5 pp |

* Is an average of quarter 4/2012 through quarter 3/2013

** indicative non-ETS objective (source: draft Flemish Mitigation Plan 2013-2020)

*** The GF aims to save at least 9% of energy in 2016 on the basis of the average final energy consumption (2001-2005), in accordance with the objective of the energy efficiency directive

**** Flanders has set itself an objective of 20.5% by 2020 for the gross share of green power in the electricity supplies that are subject to certification. This corresponds to 11% of the electricity consumption. The total objective is calculated on the final energy consumption (including transport and heat).

4.2. Principal policy measures with regard to the realization of the Europe 2020 objectives

4.2.1. Employment

The measures taken by the GF in implementation of the country-specific recommendations with regard to the labour market and the increase of the employment rate (with special focus on underprivileged groups) have been discussed above. Summarizing, these measures mainly relate to: the prevention of the early exit of people over 50 from the labour market, where the age regarding the systematic approach will be brought to 60 years as of April 2014, an effectively activating labour market policy (ALMP) through a customised target group policy and focus on underprivileged groups and the in-

roduction of a youth work guarantee and the reduction of unemployment among young people where a threefold approach to work experience for unqualified young people is highlighted.

4.2.2. Education

With regard to reducing early school leaving, it can be mentioned that the GF took note on 27 September 2013 of the new “*Action plan on early school leaving*”. The action plan includes a new, all-inclusive strategy to drastically reduce the number of young people that leave school early. One of the objectives of the *reform of secondary education* is the reduction of early school leaving, the important impact of social origin on choice of school and studies, school fatigue, wrong study choices, and the alleviation of the transition from primary education to secondary education, which is too abrupt.

The *new Flemish Parliament Act on the reinforcement of higher vocational education* will contribute to the objective of helping more people obtain a diploma of higher education. Work continues on a *reform of the financing of higher education*, with a view to promoting the participation in higher education and guaranteeing equal opportunities. In addition, the integration of the academic bachelor and master programmes of the colleges of higher education in universities makes the supply of higher education clearer and will facilitate the access to scientific research.

4.2.3. Research and development

The Flemish authorities keep up the strategy for research and development and innovation that is aimed at achieving the objective of 3% R&D expenditure / GDP by 2020. After an increase of 60 million euros in 2012, there was an increase in 2013 of 62.5 million euros in resources for R&D and innovation. The resources of R&D&I for 2014 increase by 45 million euros as a result of an agreement on the competitiveness pact by the end of December 2013. In addition, 18.9 million euros have been earmarked for the integration of the higher education of the Flemish Community. Early in 2014, another additional 10 million euros were earmarked for SOFI within the PMV.

With a view to the *completion of the European Research Area (ERA)*, different measures can be mentioned for Flanders:

- the *mobility of researchers*: the support initiatives are managed within the FSR which, in addition to many bilateral agreements, has also programmes to stimulate mobility such as Odysseus and Pegasus (since 2012). The FSR also focuses actively on the participation of Flemish research groups to ERA-Net, JPI and FET;
- Flanders especially keeps abreast of the evolutions regarding the Joint Programming, the Key Enabling Technologies (or KETs), the Future and Emerging Technology Flagships (FET Flagships) and ESFRI;
- In the autumn of 2012, the Flemish Supercomputer (VSC) was put into use, for which the GF approved a Flemish Parliament Act in 2013 on a structural regulation for high performance computing infrastructure for research and innovation. Currently, the Hercules Foundation is rounding off the preparation of a proposal for a rolling multi-annual financing plan for the development of local and regional computing capacity infrastructure in Flanders.

4.2.4. Climate and energy

In order to *reduce the emission of non-ETS greenhouse gases*, reference must first of all be made to the *2013-2020 Flemish Climate Policy Plan (FCPP)*, definitively approved by the GF on 28 June 2013, that includes an umbrella part and two sub-plans: the *Flemish Mitigation Plan (FMP)*, to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, and the *Flemish Adaptation Plan*, to moderate the effects of the climate

change in Flanders. The package of FMP measures includes existing measures that prove their efficiency and new measures that the GF already has decided on. These already planned and already approved new internal policy measures are financed by the policy areas involved and reduce the reduction gap to about 10 Mtonnes CO₂-eq over the 2013-2020 period. About 1.2 billion euros have been earmarked for this planned and decided internal climate policy. Priority measures financed by resources from the Climate fund are also planned in the short term. A sum of 11.5 million euros has been made available for the financing of a first set of priority and cost-effective measures aimed at short-term (2013-2014) greenhouse gas reductions in Flanders. The policy areas involved have proposed 33 additional internal mitigation measures for possible co-financing from the Flemish Climate fund in the next two years and these proposals have been tested against four main criteria: additionality, sustainability, implementation pathway and cost efficiency. The GF earmarks climate fund financing for the highest ranked proposals. Through all these additional measures, the reduction gap is brought back to about 9 Mtonnes CO₂-eq.

In order to *improve the energy efficiency* reference can be made to the third energy efficiency action plan (and transpositions of the European energy efficiency directive) with the elaborated long-term vision thorough renovation, the renovation obligation of 3% of the total floor area for public buildings and the compulsory energy audit for non SMEs. Other measures that have been taken include the improvement of the quality and the broadening of the action range of the energy experts and energy certification of existing buildings, the elaboration of quality systems for energy investments, the 2020 Energy Renovation Programme and its financial support measures, the putting at the disposal of energy consultants in support of energy saving in different sectors, the stricter energy standards that have to result in nearly zero-energy buildings in 2021, the action plan nearly zero-energy buildings and in particular for the companies, the renewal of the energy policy agreements with the energy-intensive industry, the implementation of the SME energy efficiency action plan and financial support measures for companies such as the green guarantee, the Ecology premium Plus and strategic ecology support, the spatial optimization of energy networks, etc.

In order to *increase the share of renewable energy and cogeneration in the final energy consumption*: Here as well, reference is made to the third energy efficiency action plan (and transposition of the European energy efficiency directive) with the additional measures for the development of cogeneration and heat nets. Other measures that have been taken include the thoroughly renewed, actualized support policy for green power and cogeneration, a pilot programme for micro-cogeneration in social housing, a new support programme for green heat or residual heat recovery projects, the preparation of a new comprehensive Action Plan on Renewable Energy 2020/2050, the preparation of the Heat Plan for Flanders, the compulsory integration of renewable energy in the construction of new buildings, the training certification of fitters, small-scale renewable energy, etc.

4.2.5. *Poverty and social exclusion*

The evaluation of the first projects regarding *local child poverty reduction* revealed that local administrations play a key role because they are the best placed administration level to organize the fight against child poverty, close to the citizen. Within this framework, the Flemish Parliament Act on poverty was modified in the past year. It stipulates that the GF annually grants subsidies to local administrations to pursue a local child poverty reduction policy. For 2014, 4.5 million euros have been made available. At the same time, the *Child poverty fund* was created. In addition to the necessary structural work of diverse authorities, the fund wants to gather the necessary resources to be able to support innovating projects for underprivileged families with children between 0 and 3 years. The projects with good results can then be embedded in the structural poverty reduction policy of the local, Flemish and federal authorities. The *integral and accessible family support* projects were for the third time supported financially by the GF. Given the positive evaluation and the necessity of these projects, the switch towards structural embedding will be made. On 20 November 2013, the Flemish Parliament

approved the Flemish Parliament Act regarding the organisation of preventive family support. It is the intention, through the Flemish Parliament Act, to create a regulatory framework for local forms of cooperation that will be recognized as *Houses of the Child*, as well as to embed a certain number of Preventive Family Support projects and sectors, that are already subsidized by Child & Family, within a broader regulatory framework.

Efforts were also put into an adapted regulation for the *Social rental offices* through incentives for the further professionalization of the organisation and activities, and the extension - both of the number of houses managed and with regard to scope - of the supply and services. In 2013, the *rent guarantee fund* was also approved by the GF. Owners that join the fund take out insurance against non-payment. By late 2013, the GF approved the Flemish Government Decree on social public service obligations for the Flemish water companies. This Flemish Government Decree lays down the procedures for turning off the water supply and provides measures to protect vulnerable target groups. Finally, within this framework, the *fund to reduce evictions* was created and the social housing regulation was adapted. It provided that the linking between a rental agreement and a guidance agreement is possible. On 14 March 2014, the GF took the decision regarding the implementation of the poverty test within the GF. This will make it possible to test relevant Flemish Parliament Acts and Flemish Parliament Decrees on the possible impact that the proposal will have on poverty, on people in poverty or on inequality that can lead to poverty. This test will be integrated in the existing regulatory impact analysis.

In addition to the levers that the public centres for social welfare (OCMW) and centres for general welfare work (CAW) have at their disposal to take their responsibility within the framework of the increasing *debt issue*, the GF provides subsidies since 2012 that regional forms of cooperation of recognized structures for debt mediation can call on. As of 1 January 2014, this subsidization is embedded structurally in the regulation.

4. Additional reform measures and the use of the structural funds

The GF further invests in the *stimulation of R&D and innovation*. In a certain number of innovation steering groups (IRG), strategies have been developed to give direction to the future policy of the themes transformation through innovation, care innovation, eco-innovation, sustainable energy, sustainable mobility and logistics and social innovation.

In 2013, the GF decided to create a Strategic Research Centre (SRC) for the *Manufacturing industry*. Within the theme of social innovation, there are three pillars: workplace innovation, social entrepreneurship and the broadly supporting innovation. Workplace innovation (pillar 1) has been elaborated by Flanders' Synergy, a so-called "Light Structure" or innovation platform. The *Social Innovation Factory* (SIF), the second pillar, was launched officially in October 2013, after its recognition as an innovation platform in December 2012. For the third pillar, broadly supporting innovation, an open call for social innovation pathways in Flanders was launched in 2013. Within the *Innovation hub Care innovation* a project call was opened by late 2012 for participation to the living lab Care innovation space Flanders, focusing on care for the elderly. In the summer of 2013, the GF approved four platforms of this living lab (one per theme), for which 10 million euros were provided. Also within the theme of care innovation, 10 million euros were earmarked in 2013 for subsidies for projects in the new programme regarding transformational medical research (TGO).

As of 2013, the "*Sprint projects*" were initiated, a new channel within the framework of the innovative company support. They aim at larger companies (non SMEs) and a development project of a rather limited size, allowing the company to develop or to gather new knowledge (technological and/or non-technological) and to apply it intelligently, with a view to an important innovation. In 2013, 19 SPRINT projects were approved for a total amount of support of 3.2 million euros. In October 2013,

the official kick-off was given for the large-scale project “ikinnoveer” (I innovate), that wants to increase the *innovation capacity of the Flemish SME*.

The GF takes many measures that contribute to the *stimulation of a business-friendly climate*.

The *Flemish “Bank plan”* has measures within 4 categories that should reinforce the provision of credit to companies and to Flemish SMEs in particular. The necessary actions are taken to make sure that there is sufficient financing to keep up investments in Flanders. A care pathway has for instance been elaborated by the banks for families in financial difficulties as a result of the closures of companies, the win-win loan and green guarantee have been evaluated and adapted, and the possibilities to apply the *Gigarant* regulation (for SMEs or large companies that need credit guarantees over 1.5 million euros) have been adapted. In implementation of the “Bank plan”, the maximum amount that may be granted within the framework of the win-win loan per borrower has been doubled to 200,000 euros and the number of win-win loans continues to increase since the extension of the regulation to all SMEs (5,302 registered win-win loans for a total amount of 145 million euros).

Early in July 2013, Flanders has been selected as *European Entrepreneurial Region (EER)* of the year 2014 and awarded with the EER label. Within this framework, it will organize numerous events in 2014.

The *SME wallet*, the subsidy measure for Flemish SMEs, was adjusted in 2013 with a view to using it more specifically for certain policy challenges, such as succession and taking-over of SMEs and the greening of the Flemish economy. A pillar coaching has been added, for instance, and the pillar strategic advice is extended. In addition, a new recognition regulation will also be introduced for the service providers of the SME portfolio. The ERDF project “Strategic Enterprise” and the Gazelle Leap project have also been integrated in the SME wallet. For this, 38 million euros were available in 2013.

Mid-2013, the GF approved the conversion of the Strategic Investment and Training Support (SIOS) in *Strategic Transformation Support (STS)*. It supports important investment and training projects where the subsidies for companies are used more specifically in implementation of the *New Industrial Policy (NIP)* and the reinforcement of the clusters such as described in FiA. The new support system was launched in October 2013 and is much more accessible for SMEs through lower entry thresholds and adapted evaluations customised to the company. The total maximum support project is 1.25 million euros and the GF annually provides a total of 40 million euros.

The **NIP** wants to transform the Flemish economy into a knowledge and innovation-driven economic tissue based on cluster formation with smart specialization as its central theme. Sectors and innovative companies that can play an important part in this story of cluster formation can be supported through the instruments of an integrated industrial policy. By mid-2014, the NIP action plan will be completed and after the start-up phase will come the transition to a process-based approach for a policy at cruising speed. Different steps in that direction were taken in 2013: (i) launch of four calls, (ii) the NIP and the New Industrial Entrepreneurship (NIE) were brought to the fore, (iii) test pathways for a targeted cluster policy (sustainable chemistry, additive manufacturing, critical metals), (iv) European industrial policy (with, launched by Flanders, the *Vanguard Initiative for New Growth through Smart Specialisation*).

In order to help more people find work and keep them at work, the GF also invests in *improving the workability*. Sectors are stimulated to set up actions that are aimed at increasing the workability of jobs for people over 50 (sectoral action plans as addenda to sectoral covenants 2013-2014), the launch of the ESF call on workability of 1 July 2013, the investments in child care (with the Flemish Parliament Act on the organisation of babies and pre-schoolers entering into effect on 1 April 2014). In 2013, the incentive premium was adapted so as to support the fourth month of parental leave as well, and the entry age for landing jobs – following the federal reforms – was raised.

The GF made optimal use of the resources of the *EU structural funds* (ERDF and ESF) in the 2007-2013 period to live up to the Europe 2020 strategy. The absorption rate of the resources is nearly complete and many projects resulted in an effective added value for a competitive and sustainable economy and the promotion of employment. Regarding territorial cooperation (Interreg), Flanders is one of the leading European regions with regard to project participation. 2014-2020 marks the new period for the EU structural funds. In 2012, the GF set out a certain number of benchmarks for the next programme period. In 2013, they served as guidelines in the development of the different operational programmes and the partnership agreement. The purpose is to finalize this process during the first half of 2014. The programmes that are developed in the meantime will be aimed at sustainable growth and jobs, and at the same time subscribe to the Europe 2020 objectives and the Flemish vision for the future, FiA. The following operational programmes will be developed in Flanders: (i) ERDF programme (European Regional Development Fund), (ii) ESF programme (European Social Fund), (iii) EAFRD programme (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development), (iv) the EMFF (European Maritime and Fisheries Fund) and (v) Interreg programmes.

Annex 5 of Wallonia and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation

1. Introduction

The Walloon Governments and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation are increasing their efforts to implement the main reform projects identified in the previous PNRs. An emphasis is placed on the completion of the Marshall 2.green Plan, support to reflation, competitiveness and economy durability, including via R&D, innovation, and responsibility development. Various Marshall 2.green Plan *assessment* projects were also completed in 2014.

In addition, in advance of the implementation of the 6th State reform, a lot of preparation work has been conducted. Specifically, the *2022 Marshall Plan* was passed in 2nd session in December 2013. It sets the path for Wallonia to be in a position to meet the challenges that it has to face, in terms of competitiveness, of environmental and budget durability, in terms of demography and health, as well as in connection with responsibility transfers. Although it is a long term deliberation, first actions have already been initiated. That thought was conducted in partnership with all stakeholders.

In addition Governments have fully included in this reform process and in their action the need to address the recommendations issued by the Council in the framework of the European semester. As a result, the close dialogue maintained with the Commission throughout the whole process, which has been reinforced in the past years, has proved very useful and constructive.

In line with the path set last year, special attention has been paid in 2013 and in the first quarter of 2014 to policy efficiency, through the continuation of the structure rationalisation and simplification work, as well as the preparation work for welcoming new responsibilities. In addition, the synergies between Wallonia and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation as well as the cooperation with the other federated entities have been increased based on reinforced coordination terms.

6th State reform

The Walloon and Wallonia-Brussels Federation Governments passed in February 2012 a *welcome and methodology strategy* for transferred responsibilities. That methodology, among other things, set up 9 groups of thematic work based on the subjects that will be transferred (job market, Mobility and road safety, Economic and industrial policy, Energy, Environment and climate, Agriculture, City Planning, Housing and territory development, Local administration, health, aid to persons and family allowances) and 6 cross-functional work groups (Locations and logistics, TIC, Civil Service, administrative Configuration, Legal, Budget and Tax).

A first report was handed in in June 2013, containing a list of existing structures and of subjects to be retransferred, and the second progress report in late December 2013. The latter shows the progress status of the preparation of the reception of new Walloon responsibilities. On that basis, the Government has already determined the administrative departments that will have to manage numerous responsibilities, upon their effective transfer. The third report is scheduled for the 1st quarter of 2014. Simultaneously, the protocols organising, during the transition period, the exchange and cooperation terms for the various transferred subjects are being elaborated within year inter-federal task force; the purpose is to finish before the end of the legislature.

The priority has been placed in that process on the administrative reception of the responsibilities and service continuity, in order to avoid any legal gap. In addition, the *thought on the use of the new levers* provided to the Region has been initiated *with a view to increasing the regional growth strategy*, including in the framework of the 2022 Marshall Plan process. First orientations have been materialised (com-

mercial establishments, Contribution fund), and that deliberation will need to be completed in the framework of the 2014-2019 legislature.

Beyond the federal reform, the management of some responsibilities is the purpose of agreements specific to Walloons and French speaking Brusselians. A *special commission on the State reform* has additionally been set up within the Walloon Parliament in January 2014.

In addition, the preparation of the reception of the new responsibilities is organised in agreement with the social partners. The *Group of Walloon social partners* (GPS-W) set up on 5 December 2013 is aimed at reinforcing the negotiation and dialogue role of the Walloon social partners and developing a constructive social environment furthering socio-economic growth in Wallonia. The priority themes, though not exclusive, will cover the responsibility transfers related to the 6^{ème} State reform.

The new financing Act and the responsibility transfers will be effective July 1, 2014, with a transition period scheduled until January 1, 2015, on which date the collection of the means related to the transferred subjects will be exercised by the Regions.

2. Reply to recommendations

2.1 Recommendation n° 1: Public finance cleansing

Back in 2009, the Walloon Government and the Government of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation made a firm commitment to re-establishing the budget balance of the two Entities by 2015. That commitment is fully in line with the overall budget ne submitted by Belgium in April 2012 in its 2012-2015 stability Programme (which brings the deficit under the bar of 3% of GDP in 2012 and plans on budget balance in 2015).

From 2009 to 2013, the savings achieved reached more than 2 billion €.

Based on the agreement that took place in July 2013 on the 2014 budget objectives of Belgium, in line with the expectations of the European Union, the efforts made for that year will be more significant than planned by the budget line (-169 million €), to reach a deficit limited to 6 million € for both entities (+86 million € for Wallonia and -92 million € for the Wallonia-Brussels Federation).

The measures decided to reach those objectives cover infrastructure valorisation, the slowing of some investments regarding all sectors (85 million € savings), primary expense reduction in an amount of 80 million € (civil service, optional credits, dynamic debt management, OIP), increase in some proceeds via better perception, in an amount of 75 million € (traffic tax and release tax, registration duties, axle tax), and the introduction of a tax on GSM masts and wind masts (26 million €).

In addition, in December 2013, both entities passed the transposition Acts for the Treaty on stability, coordination and governance within the UEM. They set the *budget effort sharing terms* between power levels, as well as the cooperation systems and, in the event of Wallonia and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, also insist in the significance of reaching the social and environmental objectives of the UE2020 strategy. Each entity is responsible for local powers in the exercising of their supervision and jurisdiction. The duties arising from the Treaty have thus been transposed in the budget circulars sent by Wallonia to cities in 2013.

Lastly, the Walloon Government set up in July 2013 a *Council for Taxation and Finances*. It has technical responsibility for deliberating, studying and advising on the taxation, finances and proceeds of Wallonia. Its setting up is in line with the framework of the growing autonomy of the Region in tax and financial areas.

2.2 Recommendation n° 2 : Sustainable public finances

Following the change in the special financing Act, the Government of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation plans on the gradual payment of the *pensions* of its civil servants and the necessary budget; this mainly concerns teachers.

Regarding the transfer of responsibilities relating to *health, people aid and family allowances*, there has been an agreement at French-speaking level completing that transfer to the regions; the transfer orders and the ratification of the cooperation agreement are in the process of being passed, with the goal of finishing before the end of the legislature. The Government has already confirmed the principle of the setting up of a Walloon public interest organisation.

Regarding the political line in terms of health care and person id, the deliberation was initiated in the framework of the 2022 Marshall Plan, with a view to stimulating innovation, optimising health care management and developing alternate forms of dependence management.

A prospective study was initiated in September in order to analyse the potential effects ON Wallonia of the demographic transition, the trends in terms of elderly person growth, the healthy life expectancy, disabled person ageing, the increase in the number of persons in a great dependence situation. The goal will be to identify necessary and priority reinforcements with a view to a concerted investment policy.

A « Great dependence plan » has been put forward in last May in order to reinforce and diversify the service offer in favour of people with a disability. An amount of 4.5 million € was released in September 2013.

Regarding senior people, the Walloon Government passed (1st reading) in early 2014 an order relating to senior people accommodation and reception establishments aimed at the creation of homes-social services. They have to be set up on the site of a rest house or rest and care house, and comply with the rules of social housing in terms of home granting and price setting. The purpose is to diversify the offer and facilitate access for elderly persons with low or precarious income.

The Walloon Government has recently passed the Walloon plan for hospital care quality, which is aimed at improving care quality through a multiple aspect approach. The investment lines in the hospital area will be passed shortly in the framework of the new 2015-2021 work schedule.

Lastly, the Walloon Government passed in 1st reading the Order relating to the Walloon health network, which is aimed at setting up an electronic exchange platform between care providers.

2.3 Recommendation n° 3: Competitiveness

With the levers available on regional and community levels, Governments can act on non salary competitiveness-cost as well as non cost competitiveness.

Regarding the first aspect, in the framework of the development of its actions in the area of industrial ecology, the Government has developed programmes to promote **efficiency in the use of resources**. Thus it decided in July 2013 to ensure long term viability to the **NEXT** system dedicated to circular economy, via Behat will.Fin (a subsidiary of the SRIW). At company level, the NEXT programme is aimed at the setting up of businesses and jobs covering all areas of the circular economy (including raw materials, substitution, recycling, reuse, circular design, reverse logistics, new economic models – including the sale of the use rather than of the product) and the operation of saving areas in the current operational costs of SMEs. In addition, the Government has decided to set up, within the Agence pour l'Entreprise et l'Innovation (AEI), a *Reference centre for short circuits and circular economy*, that will

raise awareness and offer support services and scholarships to the SMEs that are involved in the process; the goal is to reduce the dependence of the Walloon industry to raw materials and develop secondary material recycling. In addition, various projects have been initiated with a view to developing new innovative areas for waste treatment, as well as several R&D projects aimed at improving the energy efficiency of industrial processes and the development of low greenhouse effect gas emission technologies.

In addition, the signing of the agreements relating to the *2nd generation branch agreements* took place in December 2013; membership is on a voluntary basis. 158 sites of 13 federations continue the process with new goals suited to the specific requirements of each area (technological industry, graphic industries, chemistry, paper pulp, steel, glass, lime). In addition to a decrease in their energy bill resulting from the measures taken, companies receive grants and electrical price discounts. The new agreements encourage companies to review the opportunities to use sustainable energies (solar panels, bio combustible cogeneration, waste recycling). They also encourage companies to have in-depth knowledge of the energy flows on their production sites as well as a carbon balance of their business.

Lastly, the test project « *Smart parks* » will be extended in 2014 to all of Wallonia. Its goal is to help companies control their electrical consumption and develop communication and analysis tools for the data provided by smart meters. Meeting company managers helps show improvement areas, or even possible anomalies and especially, direct them towards technical or organisation solutions facilitating smart management of electrical energy. The project is based on a public-private partnership between the intercity authorities and the ORES and TECTEO companies. Currently, 200 companies are taking an active part in the project and have achieved significant gains reaching 25 % of the annual electrical bill.

Regarding the second aspect, the competitiveness stimulation and activity and job creation goals are at the centre of the Marshall 2.green Plan. It constitutes the general framework of a *consistent and integrated industrial and innovation policy that is at the core of the regional approach to smart specialisation*. The competitiveness and clustering centre policy is the backbone of that policy, on which are based measures in the area of SME financing and support, R&D&I stimulation, responsibility development, investor attraction and exportation support, infrastructure development, TIC, administrative simplification,... The research strategy continued to bear fruits through international programmes, call for bids launching and closing, investments in major research organisation, inter alia. Recent projects are described in sections 3 and 4.

2.4 Recommendation n° 4: Competition in the area of services and network the industries

The *Commercial Growth Plan* was passed in August 2013 by the Walloon Government. It is an informational framework whose aim is to organise the commercial landscape based on objective criteria compatible with the European service directive (consumer protection, protection of city environment, social policy objectives and contribution to more sustainable mobility). Those criteria have been translated in the form of an order on *commercial establishments* (passed in 1st reading on 9 January 2014), that also sets the administrative organisation. It will be the new regulatory basis upon the responsibility transfer on July 1, 2014.

The text will allow to control the establishment of commercial businesses, give decision-making bodies modern information tools, and incorporate in the decision-making process the impacts on mobility. Cities will be responsible for using commercial establishment permits for surface areas ranging from 400 and 4 000 m². Beyond that, the Walloon Region will be responsible. The order also sets up « *Coty commercial development plants* » and simplified procedures for applicants: one stop office, integrated permit,... in connection with the provisions of the future « *Territorial Development Code* ».

Regarding *access to the trade*, it is specified that Regions exercise that responsibility as from January 1, 2015. The company desks retain responsibility for reviewing entrepreneurial responsibilities following registration with the Banque-Carrefour des Entreprises as commercial or craft company. The responsibility will be handled in line with current provisions, harmoniously between the regions (principle of mutual acknowledgement).

An order setting the principles and methodologies of *Gradual, solidarity-based and family pricing* for electricity was passed in January 2014. That system introduces progressivity and more fairness in prices including by linking further the price per kWh to electrical consumption. It will become effective after January 1, 2015.

Another *photovoltaic support* system for low power (up to 10 kWc, Quali watt) was passed in January 2014. It will offer citizens, through a simplified bonus system granted by the managers of the distribution network, guarantees of prompt reimbursement of future systems and an advantageous, yet non speculative profitability rate, in order to achieve a controlled impact on the consumer's bill. In addition, an agreement has been found in the Government on the management of the photovoltaic support system (Sol watt) with a view to controlling its impact on each consumer's energy bill.

In addition Parliament passed, in December 2013, a set of provisions aimed at setting up in the order relating to electricity market organisation an exemption system for a number of economic and social activities in order to protect their competitiveness (for the year 2013) and a system for keeping the green certificates submitted to the electricity transport grid manager in the framework of its public service duty relating to the purchase of green certificates at a minimum guaranteed price. Legal work is being conducted in order to extend the exemptions beyond 2013. Greater power photovoltaic (exceeding 10 kWc) will still be supported, like other sustainable source electricity production areas, through the green certificate system through an annual closed budget, in order to control the cost to the population.

In the area of distribution, the Government passed on January 16, 2014, a draft order relating to **price provisions in terms of gas and electricity distribution**. The CWaPE will be in charge of defining the price methodology and approving the prices of the distribution grid managers as from January 1, 2015. It is an order allowing the management of the responsibility on a transitory basis and with no legal gap, before the passing of a rate order by the Walloon Parliament.

In addition, the Walloon Government passed in 3rd reading in March 2014, a draft order containing a set of provisions aimed at improving the *operation of the electricity market*, specifically regarding social measures, professional closed grids and private grids, the introduction of smart management principles and the reinforcement of the controller's independence. The passing of the text is scheduled for early 2014. A similar text was passed in 1st reading for the *gas market* in December 2013. They will allow to comply with the requirements of the directives of the third energy package passed in 2009.

Let us also mention the setting up of the energy controller exchange Forum in order to further dialogue, specifically in the areas of shared responsibilities. In addition, the CREG has made its expertise available to regional operators.

2.5 Recommendation n° 5: Taxation and green taxation

Since January 1, 2014, the environmental penalty system has been extended to vehicles registered by companies, according to the same schedule as the one applicable to individuals. In addition, a better collection of the various taxes will be ensured (traffic tax and release tax, registration duties, axle tax).

In addition, the *real estate taxation* on houses considered as modest has been amended. The application of the reduced registration duty rate now only applies to a limited bracket of the value of the property, in order to prevent the rate from applying to false modest houses.

In addition, the « *Board for taxation and finances in Wallonia* » set up in 2013 will suggest the Government, based on responsibility transfers, areas and recommendations with a view to possible changes to the tax system in Wallonia.

2.6 Recommendation n° 6: Job market, education and training policies

h. Active job seeker support policies

The draft cooperation agreement *on the support to, and active follow up on, job seekers* was approved in dialogue committee in November 2013, it is in the signing process with various entities. It renews the 2004 agreement relating to the job-seeker support Plan, and introduces some modifications:

- Broader audience: support to people under 55 (as opposed to 50 currently), people under 58 after 2016, part time job-seekers and job-seekers with recognised work disability exceeding 33 %;
- Specific process for some job-seekers with a combination of psycho-medical-social factors. It is the regions' responsibility to define that category and to support the respective persons;
- Support and prompter payments by the Regions : 4th months for people under 25 and 9th months for the others;
- Prompter follow up at ONEM level: 1st assessment after the 7th months until the 12th months depending on the category of the public.

The responsibility transfer in the area of job-seeker availability control will take place on July 1, 2014, with a possible transition period until late 2015.

The *individual job-seeker support process* of the FOREM is now entirely rolled out and operational, and constitutes the implementation system for the job-seeker support and active follow up system agreement. In 2013, there were 100 807 new supports, 230 231 individual interviews (review and follow up, vs. 220 877 in 2012) and 418 602 individual interviews and remote follow up services performed in the framework of individual support. Those services applied to 179 910 different people.

Other measures also contribute to the job market drive and to job seeker support. The SESAM plan allows to grant aid to companies under 50 employees hiring job seekers with a complement in favour of low-qualification job seekers and the first three recruitments. The Airbag plan grants a EUR 12 500 subsidiary over two years for persons who wish to start a free-lance career. The access paths of the subsidiary are: passing from a secondary business to a main business, prior support in a Self-employed Job Creation Support Centre, a company manager training course, a higher economy or trade training course or a minimum age of 50 for people with experience in the proposed area of business.

i. Interregional mobility

The interregional mobility stimulation policy for job seekers is continued based on the 2005 cooperation agreement, which allowed to set up various tools: information exchange system, setting up of joint VDAB/FOREM teams with a view to ensuring the active management of the work stations, job dating events,... In 2014, activities in the area of mobility will be gradually incorporated in the regional departments.

In 2013, the FOREM received 117 344 job offers from other Public Employment Services (SPE) and sent the other SPEs 36 243 job offers. 22 859 people are currently taken back in the mobile reserve, which means that they agree to work in a company in Flanders. 5 740 work positions were managed by the joint VDAB/FOREM teams and 1 191 people found a job in Flanders thanks to that joint team.

The « Employment permit » system set up in 2013 allows the granting of a EUR 1 000 cheque (i.e. 20 hours of driving lessons) to job seekers who want to get their driver's license in the framework of a professional plan. 740 people have already benefitted by it.

Through the Language Plan financed by the Marshall 2.green Plan , the Walloon Government puts an emphasis on *language learning* (national and English) as a factor of worker mobility and of Wallonia opening. The main target publics are job seekers, workers and young people. In order to ensure the durability of that policy, an order formalising all of the measures of the plan was passed in early 2014. This will ensure a lasting frame for the Wallangues centre as well as for all the language learning measures such as the linguistic immersion scholarships, BRIC scholarships as well as aid measures intended for job seekers. The Wallangues centre numbers over 265 000 members. In addition, the Government has decided to set up a Language Centre in Louvain-the-Neuve.

In 2013, 317 343 hours of intensive language training were achieved for the benefit of job seekers; 749 scholarships were also granted to the job seekers. 116 BRIC scholarships were also granted to young people coming from higher or university education. 585 young people were granted a scholarship to start a second rhéto abroad, Lastly, 73 559 training vouchers were granted to workers in the framework of language learning.

According to the latest figures published by the IWEPS, interregional worker mobility is going up; in 2012, 238 284 Walloons work outside the territory, vs. 230 170 in 2010 (+3.5 %), including 57 % in Brussels, 21 % in Flanders and 21.5 % abroad. Mobility towards Flanders went up by more than 25 % since 2010 (50 000 in 2012 vs. 40 400 in 2010), whereas towards Brussels the increase is moderate (+3 %).

Compared with 2010, the number of Brusselian commuters entering Wallonia went up too (21 224 in 2012, i.e. a 15 % increase).

j. Consistency between policies, including in favour of young people

The governments have continued the reform projects allowing to better plan education, training and employment areas, in connection with the needs of the job market, including in the areas of work-study, of qualifying education and of training throughout life. A consistent approach towards the young people has also been developed in the framework of the youth guarantee.

The Action Plan relating to the *Youth Guarantee* was filed with the Commission in December 2013. It is based on the following actions:

1. Acquire tools to better understand and better support young people : public survey ;
2. Adjust the support process to employment and training: a « young people » drive in terms of support will be rolled out, and the implementation of a tutor system with volunteer experienced workers will be tested. In addition, a personalised training course will be favoured;
3. Prevent young people from dropping out of training : preparation training, support programmes, follow and help programmes, alternating job seeker training, transition internships, issuing of partial and/or full certifications, skill validation,...;

4. Develop responsibility identification : development of general assessment and guidance tools;
5. Intensifying the links with companies : transition internships, alternating job seeker training and work-study training;
6. Develop links with schools in terms of professional guidance : information programmes;
7. Help job transition : collective or individual programmes in partnership with professional sectors, partnership agreement between the Forem and the respective players;
8. Develop programmes aimed at NEETS staying in, and returning to, the job market;
9. Develop the entrepreneurial spirit.

The FOREM will steer the implementation with the respective operators (Training Forem, Skill Centres, IFAPME, education, CPAS, AWIPH, PMS Centres,...). The single contact point at the Belgian level has been entrusted with Synerjob⁴. The implementation of the action Plan will start in January 2014, with a specific focus on 2014 and 2015. The means granted in the framework of the Young People Employment Initiative will be dedicated to it. The actions will additionally be included in the FSE programmes in order to achieve the continuity thereof over the period. Thus a cross functional intended for young people will be developed ; one of the propose will be to further cooperation between education establishments and to encourage the learning culture throughout life, including by investing in second chance school as well as in professional projects for young people in the framework of an overall policy intended to prevent school dropping.

Regarding *transition internships*, a cooperation agreement with the federal government was signed in December 2013. A new order by the Walloon Government was also published in August 2013. Young Walloons job seekers will be able, as from the seventh months of their enrolment in the FOREM, benefit by that new integration and professional training system with an internship, from 3 to 6 months, with an employer and a training cycle.

In terms of *work and study*, a cooperation agreement on work and study training between Wallonia, the FWB and the COCOF was passed in 2nd reading in January 2014; it provides for the harmonisation of the by-laws of trainee operators, a single contract, a work and study training process, and the creation of the Office Francophone de la Formation en Alternance (OFFA). That system allows to achieve an integration rate exceeding 85 %. In addition the order on job seeker sandwich training was passed in February 2014. It will target young job seekers (18-25), as well as job seekers in retraining session and will allow maximum 18 months training (including 3 to 6 months under the transition internship system), with a target on high demand areas. It will be organised jointly by the FOREM and the IFAPME.

The draft cooperation Agreement relating to the implementation of *Qualifying education – Training – Employment Living Areas* was approved in 2nd reading in January 2014. That system is aimed at furthering cooperation between all players in the world of qualifying education (secondary, higher and social promotion), of the vocational training and of employment in order to achieve qualifying education and vocational training offers that are truly consistent one with the other and meeting socio-economic needs found in each living area. 10 living areas are set up, each one will be headed by a steering body. In order to meet the socio-economic needs of the living area in an optimal manner, the various operators will think about their qualifying education and vocational training offer based on a common analysis of the existing offer and of needs. The Governments additionally in January 2014

⁴ Synerjob is the Belgian Federation of Public Employment and Training Services, and was set up in 2007 with a view to reinforcing cooperation between the Regions and Communities.

the draft cooperation agreement between the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, the Walloon Region and the French Community Commission regarding the creation and the management of a *French-speaking framework for education and training certifications throughout life* (CFC).

A new *frame for qualifying education internships* was approved on 4 December 2013 by the Parliament of the Wallonia Brussels Federation. Internships become mandatory in all « certification by unit » (CPU) options as they develop in the 3rd degree, in all qualifying 7th grades as at 1 September 2014, and gradually in other training courses in 5th and 6th grade. Schools retain the option to include the internships in their educational project (and are encouraged to do so) in the optional courses of the 3rd grade where internships are not mandatory and in the 2nd grade.

In addition, the Government decided in November 2013 to award 30 million € to the financing of the infrastructures of the *Trade Centres in Charleroi*, and to release a first fraction of 9 million € (on a total budget of 25 million) for the *Trade Centres of Liège* (1st actions scheduled in 2014) as well as for the *Trade Centre in Namur*. The purpose of those projects is to enhance the image of the building and industry areas, and to allow for better professional guidance for all publics, based on broad cooperation between all players (various areas and various education, training, employment, industry, networks, world of associations). Sharing resources allows to provide students with high performance equipment and cutting edge training areas. The projects are focused on promoting trades for the economic growth of the respective area. In addition, the Governments approved in January 2014, the candidature of the city of Charleroi for hosting the *Worldskills* in 2019.

The *job testing system* rolled out in 2011, mainly for young people and dismissed workers, allowed to complete 5 263 job tests between 2011 and 2013, including 2 162 in green occupations.

Regarding the *centres of responsibilities*, which are central in the training system throughout life, a draft order passed in 1st reading by the Walloon Government in November offers them a new legal framework allowing to revalorise them and to confirm their excellence role ; a structural financial of 3 million € is awarded to them. In 2013, 751 285 training hours were delivered in the 25 skill centres. Between 2010 and 2013, 196 219 200 000 beneficiaries accessed those centres, including 30 566 teachers and 165 653 students.

In addition, the renewal in February 2014 of the cooperation agreement on collaboration between qualifying education, skill centres and advanced technology centres supports existing synergies by increasing the available hours for the school world in skill centres (1 000 000 hours) and gradually increasing the hourly financing up to 15 euros.

A new « *training cheque* » system that allows to reinforce the link with the professional activity of the beneficiary and the needs of the market, was passed in early 2014. In 2013, 73 559 training cheques were granted to workers in the framework of language learning. For the same purpose, a revision of the order relating to the TIC mobilising plan was passed in 2nd reading in November 2013, in order to better take into account society and technology changes and better meet the requirements of the job market. The Forem additionally published in September 2013, a prospective study on *high demand jobs*, which will help guide policies in the area.

Lastly, 2013 the Forem set up in the web Formapass centre, which regroups the whole training and integration offer in Wallonia.

k. Seniors

Various systems have been passed in order to better take into account the public over 50. Thus, the Government decided in November 2013 to make the *Professional Transition Programme* more attractive

to the over 50 population, through an increased subsidy of 300 € (full time). In addition, the *Airbag system aimed at supporting independent activity* is extended to the over 50 with 3 years' professional experience; the order was passed in February 2014. Lastly, as specified above, the target public of the **individual support** process for job seekers is extended to the over 50 population.

I. Inclusion of migrants

The order relating to the integration of foreign persons or persons with a foreign origin was passed in late March 2014 by the Walloon Parliament.

It sets up, inter alia, for the intended public, a reception and integration process whose purpose is the emancipation of first time arrivals. It is an integrated strategy for their inclusion. It should be fully operational by 2017.

The reception process will apply to any foreign person staying in Belgium since less than three years and with a more than three months' residency permit, except for citizens from an EU, EEE member country and from Switzerland and members of their families. At first 8 regional integration centres or reception offices will be set up. The process provides for several lines:

- A personalised reception module (mandatory);
- French language course;
- Citizenship training;
- Socio-professional guidance.

In addition, a new *first arrival reception site* was launched in December 2013. The site provides basic information on how our society works in order to help with the first steps of new-arrivals. The site also points to useful information places offering support. It is available in 6 languages and allows self-sufficient use by the persons themselves or the field players in charge of their guidance in Brussels and in Wallonia.

The systems will also help achieve a more structured use of the various existing systems, for instance in terms of alphabetisation or education (first arrival student reception and schooling system, DASPA).

In the framework of the 2014-2020 programme of the *Structural Funds*, the initiatives developed in a cross-functional manner by the FSE intended for young people will particularly aim the young people out of school with an immigrant background, and will include prevention, early involvement and compensation measures.

As is already the case in Wallonia since 2012, the order dated 20 June 2013 relating to the removal of the citizenship condition for exercising recruitment and selection positions in education organised or subsidised by the French Community allows to *open the civil service to foreigners for personnel in the French speaking education area*.

The Walloon Government additionally passed in first reading on 23 January 2014, the draft order relating to the acknowledgement of a *Mediation centre for the Traveller community*. The missions of the Centre are to further and support the management of temporary stays, support the development of spaces adapted for Traveller families, develop with social, educational and administrative parties, the training and information about the sociocultural reality of the Traveller Community, help regional and transnational sharing of experience between associations and services, help citizen participation,

fight negative stereotypes through population, public institution and media awareness actions and lastly help the social integration of the Traveller Community by developing, in partnership, social, economic, cultural, educational, socio-professional and environmental projects.

Lastly, year *Interfederal Centre for Equal Chances and Racism and discrimination prevention* is being set up. That independent organisation will be managed by an interfederal board of directors and will be made up of several linguistic chambers. Those chambers will analyse cases of possible discriminations that can arise based on national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, present or future health condition, age, philosophical or religious beliefs. The cooperation agreement increases the legal safety of the anti-discrimination means should a case within the responsibilities of the federated entities go to court.

The contribution of Wallonia and of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation is increased to 48 % of the total financing of the Centre in 2015. The Centre's offices will be organised in a decentralised base within the 11 Wallonia spaces.

2.7 Recommendation n° 7: Greenhouse effect gas emission reduction

Talks are underway in the framework of the « *burden sharing* » with the other entities in order to determine the objectives to be reached by everyone in terms of renewable energy and greenhouse effect gas emission reduction.

The Order relating to the *Walloon strategy for sustainable growth* was published on 9 July 2013. It makes its mandatory for the next governments to pass a Walloon strategy for sustainable growth, as well as a sectorial Environment – Employment Alliance within the year of their taking office. The first sustainable growth strategy was passed in 1st reading in June 2013.

In that framework, the Government has also decided to set up a *Sustainable Growth Opinion Group* (order published in the *Moniteur belge* on 24/10/2013). Its role is to promote the taking into account of sustainable growth in all public policies by stating, upstream from the governmental decision, opinions based on a «sustainable growth» review.

In addition, the Walloon Parliament passed, in February 2014, the « *Climate Order* ». That order should allow Wallonia to meet its greenhouse effect gas emission reduction (GES) commitments by 30 % by 2020 and by 80 to 95 % by 2050 compared with the 1990 emissions. Concretely, the order marks the path for greenhouse effect gas emission reduction through the emission budget system, that the Government will be in charge of setting for a 5 year period. In addition, an « *Energy – Climate – Air plan* » will list the concrete measures allowing the government to meet its emission budget line; it was approved in 1st reading on January 2014 and will be submitted to a public survey in June 2014.

In terms of strategy, the Walloon Government passed, in November 2013, the draft *Regional Space Development Plan (SDER)*. It offers a vision for the Walloon territory by 2040 with a view to meeting the demographic, social, economic, energy and climate challenges, and includes objectives in terms of habitat and sustainable mobility.

In addition, the *Territorial Growth Code* passed in January 2014 (passing in parliament scheduled for March 2014) reforms the permit issuing procedures for structuring and public interest projects; the purpose is specifically to legally secure major infrastructure projects. Provisions are also made to increase the density of the habitat in rural or urban centres and slow periurbanisation.

In the area of *building*, the Government's action focuses on the implementation of the multiple year Plan of the *1st Environment - Employment Alliance*, initiated in 2011 and that numbers some fifty actions. It is aimed at improving the quality of buildings and their energy efficiency, while promoting

the transition of the building sector towards a more sustainable approach. That policy is in line with the implementation of the European Directives in the area of energy performance of buildings and energy efficiency. An overall assessment of the policy is underway.

In that framework, several decisions have been made, including a change in the provisions relating to building energy efficiency with the goal of improving the PEB calculation method and of making it more even between the 3 regions (order published in December 2013), the extension in 2014 of the 0 % rate loan pour the financing of the energy savings work in homes (*écopack*, more than 7 000 loans have already been granted as at late 2013), the passing of orders relating to subsidies in the area of energy renovation of school buildings, of the association and city sector (UREBA and exceptional UREBA), the launch of a call for exemplary projects in the area of sustainable building and renovation (BATEX) in June 2013, the passing of a new bonus for the rehabilitation of homes that cannot be considered as housing in the meaning of the housing and sustainable habitat Code (long term caravanning type in permanent habitat areas), as well as administrative simplification of rehabilitation and double glazing bonuses (1st reading in November 2013). The implementation of the PIVERT programme aimed at the energy renovation of 10 000 public homes (400 million € budget) is being continued; the 2nd phase of the programme targets homes whose consumption is the highest. In addition, the investing in the buildings of the regional administration is being continued at various levels: photovoltaic equipment (2 million € invested in 2012 and 2013), renovation of boiler rooms (6 completed with an investment in the region of 480 000 €, 3 planned in 2014), roofing renovations (4 completed, with an investment of 180 000 €), installation of cogeneration sites (3 completed, one planned in 2014), equipment of car parks with LED lighting (3 completed).

In addition, the Government of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation passed in February 2014, new physical and financial standards governing the building of school buildings, adapted to eco-construction. In November 2013, the Government also agreed to use mechanisms allowing to achieve the volume of energy savings required by the 2012/27/CE directive relating to energy efficiency.

In terms of policy consistency, a *transfer of responsibilities in the area of housing and energy from the Provinces to the Region* was decided in 3rd reading by the Government in January 2014, with the goal of achieving greater efficiency and more consistency in those policies. In order to support the transfer, an amount of 4 million € will be deducted from the Province Fund as from 1 January 2015 and transferred to Wallonia.

In the area of *transport*, the work is continuing with a view to the implementation of a *mile payment system for trucks* in the territory of the three regions. Thus, a cooperation Agreement was approved by the 3 regional governments in January 2014. It establishes the common principles that will govern the introduction and the management in the 3 Regions of a mile toll for goods transport vehicles with a maximum authorised weight of over 3.5 tonnes. The cooperation agreement also provides for the creation of the inter-regional Viapass institute. That institute will ensure the cooperation, coordination and dialogue between regions in the management of the system, and as a result will be in charge of monitoring the proper performance of the contract that will be awarded to the service provider with a view to the implementation and operation of the mile toll system. According to the current schedule, the Viapass system for trucks will be operational in 2016.

As indicated above, the environmental *penalty* system has been extended since January 1, 2014 to vehicles registered by companies, according to the same schedule as the one applicable to individuals.

In addition, in order to help the modal shift, the Walloon Government is continuing its investments in the area of multimodality. Specifically, the Government handed in, in November 2013, its opinion on Walloon *rail investment priorities* for the 2013-2025 period, and has decided to co-finance, according to a profit set by the federal Government, the regional project budget in an amount of 180 million € over

the period, and to anticipate in an amount of 100 million € the next priority investment programme priorities. This allows to find a total amount of 948 million € for Walloon priority projects by 2025.

The priorities are as follows : Connection and Station at Gosselies Airport, acceleration of current work, including the completion of the RER sites and the modernisation of the Brussels-Luxembourg road, development of goods transport by rail (modernisation of marshalling yards, inclusion of Wallonia in European east-west and north-south freight corridors, connection of the future Liège-Carex terminal), improvement of the quality of traveller service through an increase in the capacity of some lines that are near to saturation, and through the application of the principle of correspondence knots on the Walloon backbone, development of the express Liege network, improvement of the access by Walloon cities to Brussels.

In addition, the site of the multimodal centre of Liège Triligiport started in June 2013; it should be operational in the second half of 2015.

Lastly, the improvement of the carbon balance will be a cross functional priority of the 2014-2020 programming of the *Structural Funds* in Wallonia. In the framework of the urban redynamisation actions, actions will be conducted in terms of sustainable building rehabilitation, energy efficiency and sustainable energy promotion and sustainable transport development.

3. Objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy

3.1 Employment

The main reforms and measures passed in the area of employment are detailed in section 2.

Regarding specifically *collective retraining*, in addition to the order on sandwich training of job seekers passed in February 2014 that targets job seekers in retraining units (see section 1.6), the « Passeur de métiers » initiative was initiated in the fall of 2013 by the Forem in partnership with the players of training, socio-professional insertion and education; they allow participants to engage in educational type training with a view to aiming at a career in education or training. Three new sessions are scheduled in 2014.

It should be noted that in terms of training service efficiency, following the signing of the new IFAPME management contract in February 2012, it was necessary to revise the *Order setting up the IFAPME*; it was passed in May 2013 and became effective on 1 June 2013. The following main changes cover the optimisation of the training areas and the implementation of the new coordination training and supervision courses intended for senior executives within companies, except for company managers, the option to reinforce the partnerships (for instance FOREM, education,...), the structuring of the Network (reinforcement of the consistency and of the cooperation between the Institute and the Centres and reinforcement of the centre checks by the Institute), the reinforcement and organisation of internal auditing, and the setting up of a centralised Complaint Processing department. The FOREM placed an emphasis in 2013 on trainer training, via the FormaForm initiative and the new centre located in Louvain-the-Neuve.

In addition, in the area of private life / professional life balance, the Government of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation passed, in June 2013 the 2008-2013 management contract of the Office des Naissances et de l'Enfance including the *Cigogne 3 Plan*. The purpose of the plan is to open new spots for small children accommodation, in order to address the consequences of demographic changes. 2 049 places will be created in 2014 and, then, an average of 1 600 spots a year. In order to support that Cigogne 3 plan, Wallonia will make employment aids available to the Federation for supervision per-

sonnel within the reception structures and will apply funds to set up new infrastructures for accommodating small children.

3.2 R&D and innovation

The two Governments are continuing the efforts to intensify investments in R&D and in innovation, and reinforce policy efficiency, in connection with European guidelines, including the key initiative « Union for innovation ». The goal is firstly to support the excellence of scientific research and to materialise the active participation of Wallonia in the European Research Space. Also, an emphasis is placed on the circulation and the enhancement of the results of research and innovation in the broad meaning within the economic fabric, as well as on the improvement of the operation of the regional innovation system in all its aspects. With that in view, the implementation of the 2011-2015 integrated Research Strategy and of the « Creative Wallonia » plan has been continued.

In the framework of the implementation of the *2011-2015 research Strategy*, various initiatives were initiated in 2013 in the area of support to the RDI, including towards SMEs, including a call for projects « Cwality » aimed at furthering the acquisition of new responsibilities via a better association of SMEs and research organisations, and the transfer of knowledge to the SMEs (started in September 2013, 10 million € budget), a call « Green momentum fund for young innovative companies » involving industrial research or experimental development (launched in May 2013, informational budget of 5 million €), a « collective research » call aimed at reinforcing the expertise and the knowhow of approved research centres in the area of activities useful to the highest number of Walloon SMEs, and a « Germaine Tillion » call for social innovation (launched in May 2013). In addition, a mobilising programme on electrical energy storage (ENERGINSERE, informational budget of 10 million €) was initiated in October 2013, as well as a Public-Private Partnership call aimed at meeting the requirements of a technological break in a specific area of business (budget of 5 million €). Lastly, following the mobilising programmes initiated in 2013 (WB Health and IT for Green), the Government has decided to finance respectively 17 projects with a budget of 21 million € and 10 projects with a budget of 9 million €. It is also planned to entrust the LIEU network (company – university interfaces) with a task to follow up on the mobilising programmes with a view to enhancement and marketing.

In the framework of the call relating to the financing of research infrastructures, two interuniversity projects will be financed in an amount of 2.4 million € in the areas of 3D object printing based on metal and proteins, and the participation of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation in two ESFRI projects will be continued with a total funding of about 600 000 € (SHARE and LifeWatch). A team and infrastructure mapping is underway.

Wallonia additionally confirmed in November its participation in EUROSTARS II in an amount of 1.54 million / year, as well as AAL (with a budget per call of 300 000 €).

In terms of mobility, new « BEWARE Fellowships » systems were initiated in January, aimed at funding the accommodation by companies or university, of foreign researchers, in Wallonia / the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. BEWARE Fellowships Industry will allow to grant 57 agencies over 5 years, the purpose of which agencies is to allow an SME or an approved research centre to benefit by the expertise of foreign researchers (or expatriate Belgian researchers) that are highly qualified, in order to encourage the innovation process within the Walloon host. BEWARE Fellowships Academia is focused on technological transfers ; it will also spread over 5 years and plans a total amount of 80 agencies for researchers in mobility situation in order to attract them to a University, in partnership with a Walloon company. In addition, the calls for First 2014 projects, that will allow the researcher mobility between the academic world and the industrial world, ended in January 2014 with the filing of 51 files including 9 First International, 18 First Haute Ecole and 24 First Spin-off.

A change in the order relating to support to research and innovation in Wallonia was passed by the Parliament commission in February 2014. Among the great changes, it should be noted the introduction of new subsidies for the acquisition of exceptional equipment as well as maturation funds, the regrouping of approved research centres into research institutes, or the opening of innovation partnerships to non-technological innovation and to international partners in research consortiums.

In terms of basic research funding, the passing in July 2013 of the new FNRS order allows to guarantee, after 2015, its financing in an indexed amount of 103.8 million €/year. In addition, the funding of the Strategic Basic Research Fund, accommodated within the FNRS, is made durable in its two strategic lines: WISD (five million €/year for research in sustainable growth) and WELBIO (six million €/year for research in life science). In the framework of the excellence programme covering industrial redeployment in Wallonia with a view to an environmental transition initiated in 2013, 3 projects were chosen with a budget of over 14 million €.

In the framework of the implementation of the *Wallonia Creative Plan*, several actions in the area of training were initiated in 2013-2014 : an Executive Master in Innovation Management, an Executive Master in Innovation Co-creation (completion of innovative projects), and a creativity and innovation Master class. In addition, creativity laboratories are initiated within 6 High Educational Schools (4 new projects in 2014, based on 2 tests initiated in 2013), the purpose being to materialise a specific training programme within a creative laboratory specially equipped for allowing future teachers to acquire, test and integrate in their future educational practices the creativity and innovation process awakening techniques.

In terms of support to innovative projects and practices, the « Living labs » call for projects was initiated in November 2013; the latter provides for the support of two test projects in the e-Health and Open Domain themes. In addition, the bonus for creative economy counsels is now operational. The Maker's lab, tested during the creativity week, will be continued in all of Wallonia in 2014; it is a travelling laboratory allowing the greater number to try new idea and prompt prototyping production techniques. The start-up accelerator Nest'up will hold its 4th session in the spring of 2014; the project will be complemented by the creation of a building (CreativeSpark, allowing to accommodate a dozen start-ups, collaborative spaces, a research lab,...), a « Lean fund » gathering some fifteen private and institutional investors, and a « lean reactor » that will allow to continue the support to the start-ups for 9 months after the exit from the acceleration programme. Lastly, a 2014-2016 pluriannual agreement has been entered into with the ASBL Wallonia Design, with the goal of promoting design, completing specific actions intended for companies and designers and ensuring the coordination of actions in that area ; the budget granted for 2014 is 250 000 €.

For the « TIC » section, the Government decided in July 2013 to grant 1 million € in order to support the « Digital cities » programme, that is aimed at creating a robust , reliable and secure Wifi infrastructure within Walloon cities. 6 cities will be covered at first. In addition, in the framework of the 2nd « Digital School » call with a budget of 1 million €, 72 projects have been chosen (vs. 28 for the 1st call in 2011), that will allow selected establishments to buy information system equipment, both for mandatory education and social promotion and in the educational categories of Hautes Ecoles. In addition, « digital school » counsellors as well as 15 new assistants for information system maintenance of schools are assigned to the support of project sponsors in terms of logistics, technology and education. A « Wallonia Big data » service centre should be initiated in 2014, towards the competitiveness centres.

Lastly, a call for « creative hub » projects was initiated in January 2014. The purpose is to help the structuring of physical multiple subject territorial centres aimed at stimulating the emergence and consolidation of the creative economy through a multiple subject programme of actions and events.

That test phase is aimed at preparing the action that will be developed in the framework of the structural funds.

The first review of the Plan completed in later 2013 allows to show the following achievements : over 2 600 people trained, 330 innovative products or services created or supported, over 250 creative entrepreneurs supported, over 830 companies involved, 124 actions abroad and over 200 international partners. An overall assessment of the Plan is underway, in the framework of the « Wallonia, European Creative District » project, that is in its implementation phase.

The support to R&D and to innovation will constitute an essential part of the next *Structural Funds* programming in Wallonia. The actions that will be developed will be aimed at advancing the smart specialisation strategy of the Region.

3.3 Education and training

a. Fight against school dropping out

Several important decision have been made in the framework of the prevention of school dropping out, allowing to reinforce and set up a real integrated strategy in that area. The initiatives described below are also complemented by the efforts that are being continued in terms of *sandwich training and qualifying education reinforcement*, allowing a better education-training-job market connection, and that are described in the previous section.

In December 2013, the cooperation agreement between the Walloon Government, the Governments of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, of the Brussels Capital Region, of the Cocof and of the German speaking Community aimed at organising the implementation of a map of education and post-education curricula was approved in 2nd reading. The purpose is to set up *a school and post-school curriculum analysis tool* for students that did all or part of their studies in the education system of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. The tool will therefore help improve the steering of policies conducted in terms of education and training as well as the links between those various policies.

In addition, *two intersectorial and sectorial orders relating to school success, violence prevention and guidance process support* were passed in November 2013. They are aimed at connection mandatory education policies and young people aid policies in the area of young people well-being, school success, violence prevention and guidance process support.

The Order relating to specialised education has also been changed and an order relating to *School Structures for Aiding Socialisation (SSAS)* was passed; it officialises the SSAS in specialised primary and secondary education. These structures offer young people with structural behavioural and/or personality disorders, whatever the type of specialised education they are in, a structure allowing them reintegration in a leaning structure.

In addition, the Government approved in December 2013 (1st reading) the preliminary draft order relating to the adjustments and improvements of the *first grade reform*. The purpose is to gradually generalise several test experiments that were successfully test, including the Collective Action Plan (PAC) for the class or use of an Individual Learning Plan (PIA) per student. The text also provides for the reinforcement of the multiple subject nature of the training in the first grade through the gradual removal of the first complementary year (1S) and the implementation of a possible additional year after the grade (2S). Lastly, support to schools that have a high rate of failure, absenteeism...is planned.

The Government of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation also approved in 2nd reading in February 2014 the order *reforming titles and responsibilities in education*. Its aim is to create an even system harmonising several thousand titles and positions and several hundred schedules existing in education while giving priority to required titles on sufficient titles. The order also sets up a shortage title system.

In terms of coordination between federated entities, the ministers for Education of the three Communities signed, in January 2014, a cooperation protocol with a view to setting up an *interministerial convention grouping the Ministers in charge of education*. Its purpose will be to allow the dialogue and cooperation between the Communities in the files that concern them jointly in the area of education and to allow information exchanges between Communities on policies conducted or being deliberated in the area of education. Among the items that will be on the agenda of the next interministerial conventions, there will be: native speaker exchanges, reforms considered in the area of secondary education, including for the qualifying, the acknowledgement of diplomas between Communities, the school requirement age, the issue of the relevance of school duty checks in the territory of the Brussels-Capital Region, the cooperation between the inspection departments, the stake of demographic pressure in Brussels,...

In order to address demographic changes in Brussels and in Wallonia, the Government of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation had initiated in 2010 an exceptional plan to renovate and *set up new places in school buildings* in an amount of 600 million €, funded in partnership with the BEI, and banks. It allowed to initiate many projects that will allow, by 2017, to create 15 700 places in Brussels, and 7 800 in Wallonia. As a result, investments launched during a legislature reached the record high amount of 1.2 billion € (i.e. three times more than between 2004 and 2009). However, such infrastructural projects take time. As a result, in November last, in order to address the emergency, the Government launched a new plan to create places via modular homes and limited renovation, with a goal to create 13 500 places in all of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, with a budget of 55 million €.

b. Higher education

The order reforming the **higher education system** was passed in November 2013. The purpose of the order is to reinforce the consistency of student curricula, promote success and put higher education establishments in collaboration and cooperation systems (Universities, Hautes Ecoles, Higher Art Schools and Higher Social Promotion Education Schools). The institutions are gathered within a single educational district (ARES: research and higher 'education educational district), that was set up on 1 January 2014. As partners within the 5 geographical centres, they can develop an education offer and local services for the benefit of all students. A 75 000 € subsidiary has been granted to each centre to build and determine its strategic plan.

In that framework, the Governments initiated in November 2013 the concept of *collective higher education structures* that will allow to set up centres providing high quality infrastructures and educational equipment to all higher education establishments and vocational training operators in targeted areas where offer is low.

In addition, the Government approved in 1st reading in January 2014 the draft order transferring the *financing of higher education establishments* to the new study organisation. That draft order thus includes success aid and individual curriculum concepts while aiming at granting a financial increase of 120 percent to establishments materialising the synergies.

A revision of the *initial teacher training* has additionally been initiated. It is aimed at reinforcing the current training of all teachers, redefining the purposes and contents thereof, in order to reorganise the structure thereof in the long run.

Lastly, the Government approved in last reading in December 2013 a draft order relating to *inclusive higher education*, allowing access to higher education with no discrimination for students in a disability situation.

3.4 Social cohesion and social action

The main lines of the regional policy in the area of social cohesion and inclusion involve education, training and insertion in the job market, including via employment support and social economy development measures. In the area of socioprofessional insertion, the policy conducted in Wallonia is general but specific efforts are being made to support some categories of job seekers, including the farther persons from the job market. Wallonia has also developed an effective housing access policy, and implements an integrated great poverty prevention approach, and an overindebtedness prevention approach.

In that area, it supports the three main lines identified by the Belgian centre against poverty UE 2020: active inclusion for persons excluded from the job market, homeless and precarious housing situation prevention, child poverty prevention.

a. Active inclusion

In the framework of the support policy for publics that are far from the job market, a new Order on *socio-professional insertion centres* was passed in August 2013; the orders are being prepared. In addition, in order to support the efforts in the area of *alphabetisation*, the Government approved in January 2014 a draft 3 year pluri-annual agreement, with an annual subsidy of 65 000 €, allowing to make durable the Walloon network of public writers.

New measures have been decided by the Government in order to support the inclusion of *persons in a disability situation*. Thus in addition to the order relating to inclusive higher education mentioned above, the Government passed, in 1st reading in January 2014, a draft order changing some provisions relating to training and adapted socioprofessional insertion centres. Its aim is generalisation to the whole sector of review and guidance missions, in order to harmonise the service offer. The text sets up an automatic post-training follow up except of the intern waives it, if the follow up is borne by another operator or in the event of force majeure. The purpose of the text is also to simplify procedures, both for persons in a disability situation and for the centres and for the AWIPH. The project introduces a financial involvement in the day care costs to allow mothers and fathers to access the training more easily.

In addition, the Government decided in May 2013 to ensure the financing of transformation and improvement work in reception and accommodation infrastructures for disabled people. A budget of 30 million € has been released to allow the launching of 6 calls for projects (1st call initiated in October 2013).

Lastly, the Government approved in May 2013 two new measures to support the economic development of Adapted Work Companies (ETA). Firstly, a multiple-year agreement is entered into with the Walloon Association of adapted work companies in order to promote the area and look for new activity area (budget of 31 000 €). Secondly, a 120 000 € support is granted to the « live well at home » centre; it offers solutions to allow persons losing their autonomy to continue to live at home in good conditions.

The various measures passed for *migrants* are described in section 2.

b. Housing

The policy to increase and improve the quality of the housing offer is continued. The purpose is to increase the number of public homes and to renovate existing homes including with a view to improving energy efficiency. Various actions have been continued in the framework of the *1st Environment – Employment Alliance*, for instance the green investment programme, the granting of housing bonuses and energy bonuses in private homes (see section 2).

Regarding the handling of the *dependence of, and aid to the elderly, as well as disabled people*, a number of measures have been passed, please refer to section 2.2 in that area.

The Walloon Government passed in May 2013 the mapping of the sites covered by the *permanent habitat plan* (HP). The purpose of the mapping is intended to be a reference for cities, permanent habitat area managers and solicitors. In addition, another bonus for the improvement of houses that cannot be considered as housing in the meaning of the Walloon Code of housing and sustainable habitat, such as long term caravanning in permanent habitat areas, has been set up. The installation allowance granted to persons relocated to a decent home has been increased in some cases.

The Walloon Government decided in May 2013 to broaden the « *Energy Tutor* » system, whose task is to give practical advice and plan concrete actions with precarious households, to reduce energy costs, to 60 tutors and to increase the subsidiary to 600 000 € (i.e. 150.000 € more). They will be set up via the CPAS; currently 41 CPAS implement the measure and almost 5 300 households benefit every year of work by an energy tutor.

In addition, the Walloon Government had decided to grant additional time to organisations working in *co-housing* to allow them to extend their test experiments and increase the social support to people. The purpose is to allow specific publics live in an affordable habitat while weaving links and solidarity with other types of publics. It is, for instance, homeless people, women facing household violence, ex-convicts ...

Since 2013, owners of homes covered by an inhabitation order or of housing that was not the subject of the issuing of a rental permit are subjected to administrative fines.

The regulation on the awarding of *low cost housing* was additionally passed in order to help the relocation of families under-occupying their homes to award them to larger families. In addition, since 2013, the Walloon Government finances the hiring of social referents (74 ETP) within public housing companies to ensure an interface with local social players. An order was passed in February 2014 (3rd reading) aimed at making that position durable, through the granting of an annual grant to the Public Service Housing Companies (about 2.2 million € in 2014).

Lastly the Walloon Government passed, in 3rd reading, an order relating to the granting of *relocation, rent and moving allowances*, that are accessible to persons leaving a home found to be inhabitable or over-populated to rent a clean house, to families with one member suffering from a disability and that leave an unsuitable home to rent an adapted and clean home, and to the homeless that become renters of a clean home. The order allows three new things for tenants: aid intended for tenants who leave a home early to enter low cost housing, aid for families leaving an under-occupied public home to rent a home in the private sector and aid for relocation, revised upwards, for persons leaving a home that they own located in phase 1 of the Permanent Habitat plan (flood areas).

c. Poverty and overindebtedness prevention

The Walloon Government had decided to set up a regulatory framework to approve and subsidise a *poverty prevention network* in Wallonia on a lasting basis. It will allow to increase the dialogue with the

poorest people and have an organised contact person whose expertise and recommendations can be called upon to increase the efficiency of the measures implemented. The order was approved in early 2014.

The Government approved in May 2013 the assessment of the first *social cohesion plan* (PCS). The PCS currently involves almost 700 workers who network several thousand public and private partners to act in favour of greater social cohesion in the city territory. 147 cities have engaged in that system with 1 700 actions conducted, including in the area of alphabetisation, socioprofessional reinsertion, job-seeker support, home energy savings, home seeking aid, additional treatment, household violence prevention, mental health, community gardens and block house dynamisation. In addition, a call for projects with a budget of about 24 million € was initiated in the framework of the second PCS programming (2014-2019). It has since been implemented in 181 cities in Wallonia.

The Walloon and Wallonia-Brussels Federation Governments approved in November 2013 the *updating of the action plan relating to children's rights*, based on the assessment conducted in 2013 by the Childhood, Young People and Young People Aid Research Centre.

The Walloon Government approved in May 2013, *the exemption of the payment of the TV tax for all TV sets located in hospital establishments and rest homes*, in order to avoid increasing the financial burden weighing on those personnel. Lastly, the order relating to the *organisation of the electricity market* passed in March 2014 is aimed at improving the social measures: increased support to consumers in payment difficulty, reform of the budget meter system, broadening of protected client categories,...

3.5 Energy - Climate

As detailed in section 2, various reforms were initiated in the area of electricity and gas pricing, and of support to the photovoltaic industry, including with a view to ensuring the maintaining of company competitiveness. In addition, the Parliament passed the *Climate Order*, the *Plan Air-Climate-Energy order* derived from it will be subjected to consultation. Lastly, the Order relating to the *Wallonia Strategy for sustainable growth* was published in July 2013. In addition, two prospective studies on the energy transition are underway.

As a reminder Wallonia has set itself three objectives in the area of sustainable energy, y 2020: Tend towards 20 % of sustainable energy in its final consumption, reach 8 000 GWh of electricity produced in the Walloon territory from sources of sustainable energy and reduce by 30 % the greenhouse effect emissions. In order to achieve that, the Walloon Government passed a draft order aimed at improving the green certificate system as well as a draft order containing the principle of a path including closed budgets per area in order to reach the 2020 objectives in a controlled framework. The green certificate granting rate per area will be the subject of a reestimation and a setting methodology has been offered by the CWaPE.

For wind farms the objective is set to 3 800 GWh, i.e. an amount equivalent to 150 000 households, with a gradual path. For the photovoltaic industry, the objective is set to 1 250 GWh (production reaches about 500 GWh in late 2012), broken down into 875 GWh for small wind farms and 375 GWh for large wind farms. Regarding the low power photovoltaic industry (up to 10kWc), the new support system (Qualiwatt) should allow to support 12 000 new facilities per year.

In addition, the Walloon Government passed in a final manner, in February 2014, new sectorial conditions for the development of wind farms. It also passed, in 1st reading in January 2014, the draft *Order relating to the establishment of wind farms* in Wallonia. It basically revises the wind farm authorisation procedure in Wallonia, currently based on a case by case check on the « first in, first out » principle. That order organises wind farm development around a call à projects process broken down into thirty

« lots » covering the whole of the Walloon territory, which a reference producible will be linked to every time.

Still with a view to reaching the objectives in the area of sustainable energy, a « biomass » call for projects with a budget of 1.2 million € was initiated in January 2014. A call for test projects in the area of *micro-bio-methanisation* was also initiated in December 2013 (400 000 € budget). The purpose of those calls is to support the financing of economic projects. A « collective boiler room » call for projects intended for public service homes has also been initiated (4 million € budget).

4. Additional reform measures

4.1 Industrial policy

The Walloon industrial policy, a priority of the Marshall 2.green Plan, is designed as a « *smart specialisation* » strategy. It focuses on the support to competitiveness centres and clusters. Other areas of the Marshall 2.green Plan, including in terms of RDI, territory development, training, support to SMEs, to internationalisation, complement the tools making up the integrated industrial policy of the Government.

Various policy improvement areas for the *competitiveness centres* have been identified in the framework of the 2022 Marshall Plan with a view to smart specialisation, including in terms of non technological innovation, of connection to services, of SME involvement and of globalisation. The assessment of that policy, published in February 2014, will allow to feed those deliberations, in the same way as the study on the industrial value chains in Wallonia, also finalised in June 2013. The latter is being reviewed in the framework of the « Wallonia, European Creative District » project, with a view to analysing the interrelations between creative and cultural industries as well as the intensive service area in connection with the industrial sectors.

In terms of the implementation of the policy, the 9th call for projects ended in 2013, with 20 projects selected with an investment of 65 million €; they mainly concern R&D (18 projects, 61 million €). The 10th call was initiated in late 2013 and the decisions are expected in the 1st quarter of 2014. So far, the 6 centres number over 1 100 members. Since the launching of the centre policy, an outstanding amount of 258 projects with a total investment of 744 million € were supported (public budget over 430 million €).

In addition, a common programme, intended for companies, has been initiated with the Massachusetts Life Sciences Centre (MLSC). The funding of the Walloon contribution amounts to 1.5 million €. The building of a new Walloon Celle Therapy Centre has started; the total investment reaches 20 million €. The Government has also decided to set up a food processing incubator. A « Wallonia big data » site should launch in 2014, with the objective of providing member companies with innovative « Big data » service centres relying on an IT infrastructure and a set of expertise.

In addition, in terms of foreign investor attraction, a 7th Welcome Office was open in Tournai in January 2014; it is dedicated to north-American companies and to areas in the clean technology area.

In addition, the rolling out of the *industrial ecology* aspect in Walloon politics continued. Apart from extending the NEXT system, the creation of the short circuit and circular economy reference centre, the « smart parks » projects and the branch agreements detailed in section 2.3, other initiatives can be mentioned. Secondly, various projects have been initiated with a view to identifying the local potential material sources and developing new innovative waste treatment markets. They specifically concern photovoltaic panels, plasterboards, dredging sludge, electrical and electronic equipment. In addition, the « Coq vert » initiative launched in 2013 by a public-private partnership between the

GreenWin centre, the AWEX-foreign Investments and the respective professional federations (Val-Biom and Essenscia-Wallonie) aims the development of new projects essential to the growth of the bio-sourced chemistry area including plant chemistry. The initiative focuses on biomasse-material recycling methods based on non-food resources (co-produced, residues, waste, ...) and puts the second generation bio-refineries at the heart of the sustainable development of those industries in Wallonia. Lastly, a new technological guidance tool for the SMEs in terms of industrial waste recycling and of contaminated soil and site treatment has been set up (Valowall).

Let us also note that based on a circular of November 2013, new *environmental, social and ethical clauses* can be inserted in the Walloon specifications. This should allow, inter alia, to reach objectives in terms of environmental print reduction or of socioprofessional insertion, while reinforcing the competitive position of Walloon SMEs faced with public orders, and stimulating the development of the local and regional entrepreneurial fabric. Information and support tools have been provided.

4.2 SME Policy

The implementation process for a *Walloon SBA* is continued. That Walloon SBA aims at four priority principles : (1) promotion of entrepreneurship in all its forms, (2) development of measures aimed at facilitating the access to financing for SMEs, (3) development of technological and non technological innovation, and (4) SME internationalisation and access to markets, both in the domestic market and the external market. The 3rd Parliament of SMEs was held on 6 December 2013, with the central subject of SME growth. All of the proposals and findings found in the scope of the SBA Walloon will be considered by the Steering Committee; the main concerns expressed cover administrative simplification and payment terms (local authorities), the development of entrepreneurial responsibilities, entrepreneur image, the links between education and the business world. The process set up was recognised as good practice by the European Commission in 2013, and was the subject of a presentation to other member countries of the UE and to the OECD.

The main developments in connection with the 4 lines of the SBA are detailed below.

The publication in late December 2013 should also be mentioned, of the order relating to the new Agency for Business and Innovation (AEI), that will help rationalise the landscape of SME support and aid players in the area of economic, digital and innovation development.

a. Entrepreneurial Spirit and support to SMEs

The *Entrepreneuriat 3.15 programme (2014-2020)* has been approved and its implementation (by the AEI) has started. It comes in 3 points, 15 levers to help bring out enterprising generations and make Wallonia an enterprising and interprising region. It is based on the balance and assessment of the 2007-2013 programme relating to the entrepreneurial spirit implemented by the ASE. It helped reach out to 180 000 students in secondary education secondary and 4 900 teachers in 414 establishments that have developed actions; 8 educational tools have been circulated. In higher education, almost 47 000 students were impacted by the various actions. The « Global Entrepreneurship Monitor » study indicates improved results in Wallonia, since in 2011, 6.9 % of the Walloon population was involved in a company creation project, vs. 3.5 % in 2005. The 3 lines of the new programme cover support to entrepreneurial education, investment in upcoming entrepreneurs and increased materialisation. Just like the 2007-2013 period, it will be financed with the support of the Structural Funds.

It is also planned that the AEI will develop in 2014 a *mentoring* methodology in order to support company growth, based on benchmarking conducted in France.

The *start-up accelerator Nest'up* set up in the framework of Creative Wallonia continues its activities, which will be developed through the creation of new tools (an accommodation building, a « Lean fund », and a « lean reactor », those items are described in section 3.2. In addition, Activ'up, a new

start-up incubator in pre-start phase, has been launched by Meusinvest. It is a support structure for companies with growth potential. The first *women growth accelerator* – Féminin SMEs – was also initiated in 2014.

The « *independent junior* » system, which benefitted more than 1 200 young people so far, will be extended. It allows young people from 15 to 20 to perform a 10 day internship at an self-employed worker or a small company (during school holidays).

The Airbag system aimed at supporting independent business is extended to *higher education graduates* (economic, commercial or management area) and to *persons over 50* with 3 years' professional experience; the order was passed in February 2014. So far, 280 files have been accepted since the system went live in June 2012.

A new order on *Self-employment support structures* (SAACE) was passed in February 2014. It plans to adjust the support time to needs, in company take over support, the extension of the SAACE approval time. So far, 12 structures are approved and allowed to create more than 1 000 companies.

In terms of *company transmission*, the SOWACCESS has set up a new « retail » centre, which handles very small businesses. The purpose is to bring together sellers and buyers on the same web site, so as to increase the number of company transfers.

b. Internationalisation

Based on the 2012 recommendations, a « *Citizen Exporting Company* » label has been initiated, aimed at allowing SMEs and experienced exporting companies to meet one another. 12 companies were approved in 2013 and 24 companies have already been sponsored.

In addition, the AWEX held in December 2013, the first « *Boostcamp Export* » in Wallonia. The programme combines theory and practical aspects of international trading. At the end of the boostcamp, each participant can have a coach in international partnership as well as a « beginner export » package. 4 new issues are scheduled for 2014.

The AWEX additionally offers 5 days of free *coaching* to Walloon SMEs to help them globalise. 150 SMEs have already made a call. 17 coaches are approved.

Lastly, a *Toolbox in partnership for Brazil* was provided to companies throughout the year 2013. It offers SMEs a full logistic and financial services, to support their project to approach the Brazilian market (coaching in international partnership, selection of partners, organisation of BtoB and partial financing of the feasibility study and of the start-up of the partnership). 108 companies have made a call so far.

c. Innovation

Based on the 2012 recommendations, a « *Living labs* » call for projects was initiated in November 2013. 2 test projects will be selected in the e-health and Open domain subjects; the test phase will extend over 2 years.

In addition, an *Innovation Quizz* has been developed, allowing to point SMEs to the financing sources or public aids adapted to their project.

Lastly, a new *innovation survey* was initiated in the fall of 2013. It allows companies to use a special creative innovation consultant.

d. Financing

Belfius and the Wallonia Investment Fund entered into, in October 2013, a preliminary partnership agreement. They each contribute 35 million to a fund, managed by the bank, and that will grant loans to the Walloon SMEs.

In addition, the preparation of the *regionalisation of the Contribution Funds* as at 1 July 2014 is finalised, and the Sowalfin is in a position to take over the business. The AEI will additionally handle a project support mission.

The SOFIPOLE, the specialised financial tool the competitiveness centre policy, can grant funds to **spin-offs** that take part in massive fund raising. It can grant funds in an amount of 5 million € per case, with the participation of a private partner. As specified above, the Nest'up project is going to be complemented by a fund bringing together some fifteen institutional and private investors.

In addition, the funds provided to the Investis have been increased, in the same way as the means of the SRIW with a view to ensuring the participation of Wallonia in the funds or funds from private equity funds. Following the findings of the 2012 SME Parliament and of the High Level Group on Financing that was held in February 2013, the Sowalfin works on the setting up of a connecting site for companies and investors of all kinds. A work group including the banking world met on several occasions. The means of the SOGEPA have also been increased in an amount of 20 million € with a view to reinforcing companies with difficulties due to the recession.

In line with the actions currently conducted, the development of high performance financial instruments intended for SMEs, including innovative SMEs, will be supported by the FEDER during the 2014-2020 programming.

4.3 Administrative simplification

The Walloon and Wallonia-Brussels Federation Governments have continued their work to *implement their administrative simplification plans increased their cooperation*. In July 2013, the parliaments approved in a final manner the implementation of a common initiative by the two entities in terms of data sharing (effective 1 January 2014). In addition an agreement took place in July 2013 on the cooperation agreement (Wallonia/FWB/COCOF) setting up a French speaking administrative simplification policy and e-Government coordination committee. Its task will be to work on more transversality and efficiency of the administrative simplification and e-Government policies. It will also make sure to organise a good practice exchange between the various entities and may suggest the implementation of common projects.

In December 2013, the Government approved the setting up of the personnel and professional space for Wallonia, the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, and the German speaking Community to facilitate and simplify the electronic formalities of public service users (one stop electronic counter). Lastly various projects were the subject of approval in 3rd reading in February 2014: creation of the first genuine Walloon source data bank – the mapping of non merchant employment in Wallonia, and the draft order framework relating to electronic communications between users and public authorities.

The new *Territorial Development Code* passed in 3rd reading in January 2014 (vote by the Parliament scheduled for March) is aimed at ensuring consistency, practicability, understandability, stability and legal safety in terms of territory development. It will allow step and procedure simplification and set up absolute deadlines. In addition, on the Flemish model, the Walloon Government also passed, in January 2014, the order setting up the **Council of administrative disputes** that will decide on behalf of the State Council on appeals filed against city zoning, urbanisation, environment and single per-

mits. The purpose is to speed up legal proceedings as well as increase the efficiency of compliance process efficiency for deeds where unlawfulness has been found.

In terms of *payment times payment*, payments by extraordinary account at Wallonia Public Service level (which account for over 50 % of the processed amount) were performed for the first 3 quarters of 2013 on average in 25 days as from the issuing of the invoice (vs. 36 in 2012, 55 in 2010), therefore the objective is reached. The average time for invoice settlement by means of order regard higher amounts. For the first 3 quarters of 2013, those payments were performed on average in 44 days as from the issuing of the invoice facture (vs. 65 in 2012 and 148 in 2010) and are significantly down. The public contract to reduce payment terms at local authority level according to the same method as the one applied to the SPW was initiated in January 2014.

Optimisation of the management of aids granted in the area of R&D is underway, a first result phase is expected for the end of 2014, and it should be fully operational for the end of 2016. The purpose is to handle the integrated and electronic management of the technical, administrative and financial aspects of the aides to research and to competitiveness centres, allowing to ensure aid traceability. The expected budget is 3.856 million € over the 2013-2016 period. A plan to simplify the payment procedure for financial incentives to globalisation is also set up.

Lastly, the first test phase intended to assess the technical and operational feasibility of dematerialised *processes relating to the environment permit* is underway and should be completed in late 2014. After the assessment expected in late 2014, the dematerialisation will be continued for other administrative deeds: permits with plan and the single permit.

4.4 Structural and investment funds

The *2007-2013 programme* of the Structural Funds is being finished and Wallonia has a commitment rate close to 100 %. In terms of balance, let us not that almost 1 600 companies have been supported in their investment plans with over 1.5 billion in investment, leading to the creation of over 7 000 jobs. Almost 15 000 technological cheques were issued to SMEs. In addition, 140 000 people benefitted by actions co-funded by the FSE, with a total number of jobs of almost 29 000.

For the *2014-2020 programme*, 4 Walloon provinces are recognised as regions in transition (Hainaut, Liège, Namur, Luxembourg), as Walloon Brabant is in the category of the most developed regions. In addition, the provinces of Hainaut and Liège are eligible under the young people employment initiative.

The Partnership agreement and operational Programmes will be sent officially to the Commission by April 2014. The programmes was approved by the Government in 2nd reading in late February. They lead to a consultation of partners, to an environmental assessment and to an ex ante assessment. In order to anticipate the decision making process as to those programmes, the Government carries out the first steps with a view to their operational implementation ; thus, a first call for projects was initiated in March 2014 and the independent Task force in charge if selecting the projects will be set up.

The strategy defined for that new programme is in line with the previous programme, while taking into account the assessment results, as well as the European guidelines, including the necessary connection with the PNR. As a result, the use of the European funds will intensify and complement the policies conducted at Walloon level, in connection with the 2022 Marshall Plan. In order to maximise the leverage effect and avoid the dilution of limited means, concentration both in theme and in space is required, by banking on the concept of project portfolio and increasing the synergies between partners. The theme concentration will be aimed at advancing towards the completion of the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy towards smart, durable and inclusive economy. The geographical targeting

will focus on urban areas marked by industrial decline and the most affected by social exclusion and the deterioration of their urban environment as well as on cross-border urban centres.

The improvement of SMEs competitiveness, the development of research and of innovation, the rolling out of urban centres as well as resource efficiency and the improvement of the carbon balance are the expected changes owing to the contribution by the FEDER, in a more global prospect of growth and employment increase in Wallonia. The purpose will include furthering densification and diversification of the SMEs fabric and better work productivity including through investment support measures and access to financing including in terms of R&D and innovation, the development of support services and growth, innovation and creativity support, with an emphasis on research result marketing and enhancement. That strategy will be part of a will to increase the smart specialisation strategy of the Region. In addition, the transition towards a low carbon economy will be integrated in a cross functional manner in the actions.

The FSE will make an additional investment in existing strategies. Secondly, the purpose will be to contribute useful responsibilities to the development of an innovative and high performance economy with a view to training throughout life. In addition, considering the low level of qualification of a significant fraction of job-seekers, an insertion and support system will be developed for discriminated populations, underprivileged persons or persons far from the job market, with a view to social inclusion. Lastly, a cross-functional initiative in favour of young people will be developed in order to address the issue of school dropping out. The purpose is to increase cooperation between education establishments and encouraging the learning culture throughout life, including by investing in the second chance school as well as in professional initiatives for young people in the framework of a global policy aimed at preventing school dropping out. Those initiatives will also specifically be aimed at young people out of school with an immigration background, and will include prevention, early intervention and compensation measures.

Annex 6 of the Brussels Capital Region

1. Introduction

La Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, à un tournant de son histoire, est confrontée à 5 défis majeurs au centre des préoccupations de l'accord du Gouvernement 2009-2014 et du projet de Plan Régional de Développement Durable (PRDD) adopté par la Gouvernement le 12 décembre 2013 :

I. le défi de l'essor démographique qui commande une concentration des moyens pour la construction de nouveaux équipements, de logements, de places dans des crèches et des écoles accessibles à tous, une mobilité performante, le maintien de services de qualité à toute la population et une réflexion sur l'organisation des fonctions dans la ville; la croissance prévue de 14.000 habitants/an (1,3%) est plus du double de celles de la Flandre et de la Wallonie. Elle provient pour une bonne part de la croissance naturelle (8.000) et des migrations qui se caractérisent par un solde positif important des migrations externes (avec l'étranger 21.000) et un solde négatif avec le reste de la Belgique (-15.000). Les conséquences sont multiples : rajeunissement de la population (jeunes en augmentation de 30%) et croissance plus forte de la population active que de l'emploi (d'où augmentation du chômage). Les migrations externes sont composées pour 2/3 par des populations aux faibles ressources et à la faible qualification, ce qui entraîne une baisse significative du revenu moyen/habitant (à 85% du revenu moyen belge et inférieur aux revenus moyens flamand et wallon) et menace l'équilibre des recettes financières régionales;

II. le défi de l'emploi, de la formation et de l'enseignement est rendu plus important que jamais suite aux effets de la crise économique provoquée par la crise financière conjugués à l'essor démographique qui amène de plus en plus de jeunes sur le marché de l'emploi. Bruxelles est le premier bassin d'emploi du pays où un peu plus de la moitié des postes sont occupés par des navetteurs, mais connaît un taux de chômage de 19,7% (BIT), plus de 2 fois supérieur à la moyenne nationale (42,3% chez les moins de 25 ans - BIT). Le couplage croissance économique/croissance de l'emploi est particulièrement significatif à Bruxelles où les nouveaux emplois créés nécessitent de hautes qualifications, ce qui les rend inaccessibles à nombre de demandeurs d'emploi. L'économie résidentielle et de proximité ainsi que les secteurs événementiels et horeca sont susceptibles de croître avec les fonctions internationales, et de fournir de l'emploi aux peu qualifiés. Un jeune sur 4 quitte l'enseignement sans diplôme du secondaire : l'école doit fondamentalement revoir son fonctionnement et retrouver sa capacité d'intégration et de promotion sociale. C'est l'élévation du niveau de qualification de l'ensemble de la population qu'il convient de viser; ainsi que le maintien, sur le territoire bruxellois ou à proximité, des activités économiques dont les emplois sont en adéquation avec le profil de la main-d'œuvre bruxelloise. La poursuite de la lutte contre toute forme de discrimination sur le marché du travail tout en veillant à la qualité des emplois occupés est plus essentielle encore aujourd'hui.

III. le défi environnemental qui implique que Bruxelles devienne un modèle en matière de développement durable. Il y va de la protection de la qualité de vie de ses habitants (mobilité, qualité de l'air, facture énergétique,...), de la solidarité envers les générations à venir et de sa responsabilité en tant que capitale internationale amenée à montrer l'exemple (notamment en matière d'émissions de gaz à effet de serre). Il s'agit également d'une source économique majeure pour la création d'emplois, notamment peu qualifiés, et de la promotion de l'image internationale de la Région. Le Gouvernement s'est engagé à réduire la production de gaz à effet de serre de 30% d'ici 2025;

IV. le défi de la lutte contre la dualisation de la ville et la pauvreté qui nécessite la poursuite et l'intensification des politiques transversales et territorialisées dans les domaines sociaux, économiques et

culturels en ciblant les dispositifs dans les zones et les quartiers les plus fragilisés et en luttant activement contre toutes les formes de discrimination;

V. le défi de l'internationalisation qui constitue plus que jamais la vocation de Bruxelles mais qui doit réussir à mieux inclure et à profiter davantage aux habitants de la ville. Il convient de soutenir la fonction internationale de la Région, tout en s'assurant que cette dynamique bénéficie à toutes les couches de la population, en particulier les moins qualifiés et contribuer activement à lutter contre les risques de l'exclusion sociale.

2. Contexte économique bruxellois

Les indicateurs conjoncturels de l'Institut Bruxellois de Statistiques et d'Analyse montrent que l'essoufflement de *l'activité économique bruxelloise* observé sur une bonne partie de 2012 s'est prolongé en 2013, même si une légère amélioration s'est profilée en fin d'année. Le niveau de l'activité économique reste sous sa moyenne de long terme. Contrairement à 2012, où l'analyse des données relatives aux chiffres d'affaires des différentes branches d'activité a montré que les activités de services avancés à la production avaient été relativement épargnées au cours de l'année, la situation révélée par ces mêmes sources pour l'année 2013 se caractérise par une conjoncture négative dans toutes les branches d'activité avec cependant des niveaux d'intensité différents. Il semble dès lors que les mauvaises performances des branches d'activités industrielles et des services directement liés se soient étendues aux activités de services avancés à la production. Le contexte conjoncturel morose très étendu dans le temps, comme c'est le cas depuis 2011, a donc fini par voir ses effets négatifs percoler de manière significative jusque dans les services avancés. En ce qui concerne les activités moins directement liées au contexte conjoncturel bruxellois comme la construction ou les services à la personne (en particulier le commerce de détail), celles-ci ont évolué certes de manière assez négative depuis le début de l'année mais avec une ampleur bien moins importante que dans les autres branches d'activités et une reprise à partir de la fin du deuxième trimestre. Malgré ces résultats de début d'année, les signes donnés par l'indicateur synthétique ainsi que par les enquêtes auprès des entreprises suggèrent une reprise générale de l'activité à partir du mois de mai. Par ailleurs, le rétablissement progressif de la confiance sur les marchés financiers a débouché sur un regain des activités liées aux services financiers, qui ont constitué en 2013 le principal moteur de la croissance de la valeur ajoutée à Bruxelles. Sans relais manifeste du reste des branches d'activité marchande, elle demeure toutefois très faible.

Après deux années de reprise économique en 2010 et 2011 et un recul du PIB en volume de 0,3% en 2012, la reprise très lente en zone euro aura suscité une croissance timide en 2013 de l'ordre de 0,1%. En 2014, les projections tablent sur un retour à une croissance de 1,2% du PIB. A moyen terme, la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale emprunterait un chemin de croissance concordant avec la consolidation de la reprise attendue dans le Royaume, légèrement en deçà des taux de progression du PIB régional observés pendant la période avant crise (1,6 % en moyenne sur la période 2005-2008 contre une progression moyenne de l'ordre de 2 % par an entre 2000 et 2008). Cette amélioration en fin de période trouverait notamment son explication dans le retour à une contribution positive des branches industrielles, mais aussi dans la progression de l'activité des « autres services marchands ».

Dans ce contexte, on notera une augmentation de 4% des exportations bruxelloises en 2012, ce qui démontre l'ouverture grandissante de l'économie bruxelloise, la contribution essentielle des exportations à la croissance et l'importance de continuer à soutenir le développement international des entreprises de la Région.

La prolongation de la période de faible activité économique impacte également *le marché du travail bruxellois*, les signes annonciateurs d'une reprise faisant toujours défaut. Tant l'emploi salarié que l'activité intérimaire ont poursuivi leur contraction entamée en 2012 au cours du premier semestre 2013. Globalement pour 2013, on ne devrait pas être loin d'une croissance nulle de l'emploi. Dans ce

contexte morose, le chômage à Bruxelles continue à augmenter. Depuis le léger creux atteint en juin 2011, le nombre de demandeurs d'emploi inoccupés a crû d'un peu plus de 3,8 %). On reste toutefois bien en-deçà des taux de croissance que le chômage bruxellois a connus au plus fort de la crise avec plus de 24 % d'augmentation sur une période similaire. Fin février 2014, on dénombre 111.182 demandeurs d'emploi inoccupés (DEI), soit une augmentation de 3.289 personnes par rapport à l'année précédente (+3,0%). En variation mensuelle, on constate à l'inverse une diminution de 853 personnes (-0,8%).

À moyen terme, la progression de l'emploi intérieur sur le territoire de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale atteindrait 0,9% par an, soit un rythme très légèrement supérieur à celui de l'ensemble du pays. Cela correspondrait à la création d'environ 6.400 postes de travail supplémentaires chaque année entre 2015 et 2018. Bien que cette hausse de l'emploi intérieur ne suffira pas à absorber la totalité de l'accroissement de la population active résidente, elle devrait être assez dynamique pour augmenter le taux d'emploi.

En effet, Bruxelles se caractérise par une évolution démographique spécifique et particulièrement rapide qui se traduirait à moyen terme par une forte croissance de la population d'âge actif (+ 1,1% annuellement de 2015 à 2018). Du côté de l'offre de travail, l'évolution de la population active suivrait un rythme de croissance identique et donc légèrement inférieur à la progression attendue pour la population active occupée (+ 1,4% entre 2015 et 2018). Cette dernière bénéficierait de la croissance soutenue de l'emploi intérieur et de l'évolution des flux de navetteurs favorable à l'emploi des résidents bruxellois.

3. Objectifs UE 2020

3.1 Emploi et formation professionnelle

Bruxelles est le premier bassin d'emploi du pays (celui-ci représente en effet près de 16% de la totalité de l'emploi intérieur). Sur les 714.847 emplois (contre 702.824 emplois en 2011 et 714.110 emplois en 2010), 365.000 sont occupés par des navetteurs en provenance de Flandre et de Wallonie. La faible évolution de l'emploi bruxellois par rapport à 2010 est à relativiser et à mettre en perspective avec plusieurs caractéristiques de la Région, notamment le fait que l'emploi intérieur est déjà très important sur un territoire fort confiné. En outre, l'on observe une augmentation de la population active occupée bruxelloise (420.000 actifs occupés en 2012 contre 412.421 en 2011). Néanmoins, vu que Bruxelles connaît un accroissement marqué de sa population et en particulier de sa population en âge de travailler, la croissance du nombre de travailleurs bruxellois n'est pas suffisante pour réduire le taux de chômage ou accroître son taux d'emploi. Afin de soutenir l'évolution positive du nombre d'actifs occupés, la Région poursuit notamment la mise en œuvre :

- du *New Deal* (le Pacte de Croissance Urbaine Durable) qui a pour priorité l'emploi des Bruxellois à travers la synergie « Emploi-Environnement-Economie-Formation ».
- du *Plan Langues pour les Bruxellois* qui a pour objectif la promotion, l'intensification et l'amélioration des connaissances linguistiques des Bruxellois, et des demandeurs d'emploi en particulier, afin de faciliter leur insertion et leur intégration sur le marché de l'emploi.

En outre, pour atteindre les objectifs en matière d'emploi fixés par le PNR et conformément à sa Déclaration gouvernementale 2009-2014, la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, en étroite concertation avec les Communautés et Commissions communautaires, travaille en priorité sur les actions transversales suivantes qui visent à répondre à l'ensemble des objectifs de la Stratégie Europe 2020 :

3.1.1 Poursuivre le développement de l'activité économique de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale afin de continuer à créer de nouveaux emplois de manière massive, notamment pour des profils peu qualifiés, en exploitant au maximum les gisements d'emploi que constituent différents secteurs porteurs.

La Région de Bruxelles-Capitale est le premier bassin d'emploi du pays. Sur les 5 dernières années et malgré la crise économique, près de 40.000 emplois y ont été créés, principalement dans les secteurs du commerce, de l'entreposage et de l'horeca. Cette croissance de l'emploi s'observe d'abord dans les PME qui concernent près de 95% du tissu économique bruxellois. Des dispositifs tels que le New Deal, l'Alliance « Emploi-environnement », l'Economie sociale ou encore l'Economie plurielle (BRUSOC) continueront à être soutenus et les services publics d'emploi et de formation poursuivront le travail de sensibilisation auprès des employeurs de la Région au travers notamment de la signature de chartes d'engagement ou de conventions de collaborations. Par ailleurs, le Gouvernement bruxellois a réuni, en mai 2013, les partenaires sociaux au cours d'un *Sommet social extraordinaire*. Ce dernier fut l'occasion de consolider la concertation autour de 29 chantiers concrets, dont 10 prioritaires, visant à favoriser la mise à l'emploi des Bruxellois, élargir l'offre de formation et soutenir l'activité économique. Cette dynamique partenariale est entretenue au moyen de rencontres régulières en vue d'assurer le respect des échéances relatives aux actions planifiées.

3.1.2 Renforcer l'accompagnement des demandeurs d'emploi avec une attention particulière pour les jeunes, public vulnérable en RBC

I. Une Aide personnalisée à la recherche d'emploi pour tous les chômeurs

Le Contrat de Gestion d'Actiris (2013-2017) prévoit un réaménagement des modalités du suivi des demandeurs d'emploi en fixant notamment de nouveaux groupes prioritaires. En outre, Actiris mettra en œuvre un régime d'accompagnement individualisé spécifique, avec une intensité de suivi plus importante pour certains groupes-cibles en tenant compte du degré d'autonomie et de compétence des chercheurs d'emploi.

26.454 demandeurs d'emploi ont entamé un accompagnement dans le cadre de la « Construction de Projet Professionnel » en 2013. Cet accompagnement rendu initialement obligatoire pour les jeunes de moins de 25 ans, vise à présent l'ensemble des demandeurs d'emploi inoccupés inscrits auprès du service public d'emploi (SPE) régional.

II. Le dispositif bruxellois de Garantie pour la jeunesse

Si le dispositif de « Construction de Projet Professionnel » obligatoire (« CPP ») pour les jeunes demandeurs d'emploi de moins de 25 ans inscrits à Actiris avait déjà amorcé une réelle intensification du suivi de ce public prioritaire en 2011, la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale s'est dotée d'un ambitieux dispositif de garantie pour la jeunesse .. en faveur de l'intégration durable des jeunes de 15 à moins de 25 ans. Fondé sur la recommandation européenne de « Garantie pour la jeunesse », il repose à la fois sur un pilotage politique volontariste et sur un travail de coordination en étroit partenariat tant avec les Commissions communautaires française et flamande qu'avec les deux Communautés.

En effet, la situation d'une partie des jeunes Bruxellois, que ce soit en termes d'accès à l'emploi, de niveau de qualification, d'abandon scolaire précoce, de pauvreté, est de plus en plus précaire et requiert la mise en place d'un outil de pilotage transcendant l'action publique sectorielle. Vu les besoins actuels, l'action publique doit focaliser une part encore plus importante des moyens à la réduction des inégalités en matière d'intégration sur le marché de l'emploi bruxellois.

Basé sur une démarche partenariale forte, le dispositif bruxellois, coordonné par le Ministre-Président de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, est secondé par un Comité de pilotage associant les différents Ministres en charge de l'Emploi, de la Formation, de l'Enseignement et de l'inclusion sociale ainsi que les Administrations fonctionnelles. Les partenaires sociaux y sont associés via les comités de gestion des

services publics d'emploi et de formation mais aussi à travers le Comité de concertation économique et sociale élargi aux pouvoirs communautaires (éducation et formation), principalement.

S'inscrivant obligatoirement dans un ensemble de politiques intersectorielles (enseignement, emploi, information jeunesse, accrochage scolaire, classes moyennes,...) et multi-niveaux (européen, régional, communautaire, local), il vise à :

- contribuer à la lutte contre le chômage et le sous-emploi des jeunes de 15 à moins de 25 ans ;
- contribuer à l'amélioration des compétences (au sens large) des jeunes en vue de leur (r)entrée sur le marché de l'emploi.

Outre sa filiation avec les objectifs de la Stratégie Europe 2020, le dispositif inscrit son action dans les objectifs poursuivis par les outils programmatiques mis en place par la Région (Plan Régional de Développement Durable, New Deal) mais aussi par les accords de coopération conclus entre la Région et les institutions communautaires francophone et flamande relatifs aux politiques croisées emploi-formation.

Vu le contexte d'intervention bruxellois, les actions de remédiation (de type études/formation de la seconde chance, notamment) sont promues au même titre que la prévention.

Six axes thématiques opérationnalisent les grands objectifs du dispositif et ce, à travers un ensemble d'actions concrètes:

- Axe 1 : Information/Orientation (4 actions en activation précoce et en intégration) ,
- Axe 2 : Enseignement/Actions jeunesse (6 actions en activation précoce et 2 en intégration) ,
- Axe 3 : Education/Formation informelles (3 actions en activation précoce),
- Axe 4 : Formation (9 actions en activation précoce et 3 en intégration),
- Axe 5 : Stages en milieu professionnel (3 en intégration),
- Axe 6 : Emploi (2 actions en activation précoce et 6 en intégration).

Un septième axe transversal concerne le monitoring du dispositif et son inscription dans la démarche de suivi et d'évaluation mise en place au niveau des principaux outils bruxellois (New Deal, PRDD, PNR), en sus à des évaluations menées par les opérateurs.

Des moyens budgétaires ont été dégagés pour les années 2014 et 2015, entre autres en lien avec le cofinancement qui sera mis à disposition de la Région par la Commission européenne à travers l'Initiative pour l'Emploi des jeunes (IEJ), à savoir 13 millions d'€.

Ainsi, le Collège de la Commission communautaire française a dédié un budget annuel supplémentaire de 3,5 millions d'€ à cette fin.

Par ailleurs, conformément aux orientations du futur accord de partenariat de la Belgique, les programmes opérationnels FSE bruxellois prévoiront une priorité d'investissement dédiée à l'intégration durable des jeunes de moins de 25 ans sur le marché de l'emploi. Cette priorité permettra notamment d'activer l'IEJ.

Dans ce cadre, on détaillera ci-dessous 2 actions emblématiques, parmi d'autres, du dispositif bruxellois à savoir le service Youth Guarantee d'Actiris et le Pôle Tremplin jeunes de Bruxelles Formation.

Le service Youth Guarantee

Prévu par le Contrat de gestion 2013-2017 d'Actiris, un nouveau service est chargé, depuis janvier 2014, de mettre en œuvre la Garantie pour la jeunesse au sens de la recommandation européenne. Il propose aux jeunes qui ont été préparés par les conseillers emploi l'offre de services Garantie jeunes, dont, notamment, les stages de transition professionnelle. Issus d'une mesure fédérale, mise en œuvre progressivement par Actiris (prospection et pré-sélection) et par Bruxelles Formation ou le VDAB (conclusion et suivi du contrat et du programme de formation) depuis juin 2013, ces derniers offrent aux jeunes chercheurs d'emploi sortant des études en stage d'insertion professionnelle une première expérience professionnelle rémunérée (pour un coût mensuel de 200€ pour l'entreprise).

Le Pôle Tremplin jeunes

Le Pôle de formation Tremplin jeunes de Bruxelles Formation, opérationnel depuis début 2012, a permis l'accueil de 1.632 jeunes demandeurs d'emploi en 2013 (850 au sein de Bruxelles Formation et 782 au sein du Partenariat) dans des modules de formation allant du bilan pédagogique approfondi à la formation qualifiante en passant par la formation de base ou l'entrée dans un stage en entreprise. Le travail de mise en concordance des besoins et de l'offre s'est poursuivi en 2013, autour de la question de l'information et la promotion de la formation auprès des élèves en fin de scolarité et/ou en situation de décrochage scolaire ainsi que du renforcement de l'offre de places disponibles. Ainsi, Bruxelles Formation a pour objectif de déployer 3.000 places supplémentaires permettant par la même occasion une diversification de l'offre.

D'autres actions toutes aussi essentielles et relevant d'une logique similaire d'intervention partenariale « multi-niveaux » sont encouragées entre les acteurs publics afin de développer ou renforcer les offres visant à favoriser l'accrochage des jeunes (demandeurs d'emploi inscrits ou non) vers une reprise d'études ou d'une formation ou la mise en place de collaborations structurelles entre les dispositifs d'accrochage scolaire (DAS), les centres PMS bruxellois, les services d'information et d'aide à la jeunesse et les services publics d'emploi et de formation. On citera, pour 2014-2015, le Service citoyen, le renforcement de Bruxelles-J en tant que plateforme virtuelle d'information vers les jeunes, le stage de transition professionnelle, ...

3.1.3 Rapprocher l'offre et la demande de main d'œuvre

Parmi les chantiers prioritaires du Sommet social extraordinaire de mai 2013 figurent notamment ;

I. Le dossier unique des demandeurs d'emploi

Prévu dans les contrats de gestion respectifs d'Actiris et de Bruxelles Formation, ce dossier reprendra, grâce à une collaboration entre les deux organismes, l'ensemble du cursus du demandeur d'emploi professionnel, de ses formations et de ses stages. L'année 2014 est consacrée au développement de l'échange d'informations entre les deux organismes, ainsi qu'à l'adaptation et au développement des bases de données. Ce dossier permettra la mise en œuvre d'un suivi plus cohérent du parcours de recherche d'emploi.

II. Le dispositif de screening des compétences informatisé

Egalement issu d'une collaboration entre Bruxelles Formation et Actiris, l'objectif opérationnel de cet outil de screening commun est de déterminer le code professionnel des chercheurs d'emploi, de les informer de façon efficace, d'améliorer la satisfaction des offres des employeurs, d'effectuer un meilleur matching entre offre et demande d'emploi ou de formation. En 2014, des tests pilote seront organisés pour les métiers de magasinier, de technicien PC réseau et d'ouvrier de voirie.

III. L'élargissement de la concertation socio-économique

Le Comité bruxellois de concertation économique et social a été élargi aux pouvoirs communautaires (Enseignement et Formation). Cette instance tripartite vise à assurer une orientation stratégique commune des politiques des communautés et des commissions communautaires, des politiques régionales bruxelloises et des acteurs économiques de la Région afin de répondre aux besoins identifiés à Bruxelles. Il s'est réuni pour la première fois, dans sa nouvelle composition, le 11 décembre 2013. Un agenda de travail sera défini au cours du premier semestre 2014, entre autres en lien avec le dispositif bruxellois de Garantie pour la jeunesse.

IV. Emplois pour répondre aux besoins de la petite enfance

Si la création de nouvelles places d'accueil en crèches s'avère nécessaire face à l'essor démographique, elle ne peut être effective sans un soutien à ces structures requérant de nouveaux travailleurs. La Région leur a dès lors attribué 150 emplois d'agents contractuels subventionnés (ACS), sélectionnés grâce à une campagne de recrutement d'Actiris, lancée en étroite collaboration avec les services communautaires (ONE et Kind&Gezin) de la petite enfance, afin de répondre aux besoins du secteur dès la rentrée de septembre 2013.

3.1.4 Lutter contre la discrimination à l'embauche et promouvoir la diversité

I. Les plans de diversité

Les plans de diversité (de même que les outils de sensibilisation tels que la Charte et le Label diversité) continuent de représenter le dispositif central de la politique bruxelloise en matière de politique de lutte contre la discrimination à l'embauche et la promotion de la diversité. Chaque organisme public a un manager de la diversité chargé d'établir un plan de diversité.

II. Les tests de compétences comme dispositif de lutte contre les discriminations

En matière de discrimination, il faut également souligner la réforme entamée au niveau de la « Direction Employeurs » d'Actiris telle que prévue par le nouveau Contrat de Gestion d'Actiris (2013-2017). Celui-ci prévoit d'adopter une approche basée sur les compétences pour ce qui est de la rédaction des descriptifs de fonction. En travaillant en termes de compétences attendues, l'objectif visé est notamment la lutte contre la discrimination en ouvrant la porte aux chercheurs d'emploi moins qualifiés mais disposant de réelles compétences professionnelles.

III. Le Conseil de la non-discrimination et de la diversité

Notons enfin que le nouveau Contrat de gestion d'Actiris (2013-2017) entérine la constitution d'un Conseil de la non-discrimination et de la diversité qui a pour mission de mobiliser les interlocuteurs sociaux, les employeurs et les opérateurs d'emploi en vue d'une plus forte mise à l'emploi du public visé par la politique de diversité bruxelloise (entre autres les personnes d'origine étrangère, jeunes, expérimentées, handicapées, faiblement qualifiées) tout en portant une attention transversale à la thématique du genre.

Le Comité de gestion d'Actiris a approuvé, en novembre 2013, le programme cadre qui définit la « politique de non-discrimination et de diversité sur le marché de l'emploi en région bruxelloise » pour les années 2013-2017. Il fixe les axes stratégiques et oriente ainsi les futurs programmes opérationnels annuels, qui seront repris dans un plan opérationnel pour le futur Conseil de non-discrimination et de diversité.

IV. Autres initiatives bruxelloises en faveur de l'égalité des chances

Au sein de la Région, de nombreuses actions sont mises en place afin d'assurer un accès égal à l'emploi pour chacun. Dans le cadre de la promotion de l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes, notamment dans le secteur de l'emploi, plusieurs initiatives ont été prises.

L'ensemble des initiatives relevant de l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes est reprise dans le rapport Pékin, présenté tous les ans au Parlement. Ce rapport rend compte des initiatives prises dans tous les domaines d'actions du gouvernement. Les actions qui y figurent sont, entre autres, la quatrième édition du projet Top Skills développé par Selor ; les femmes du ministère ont été encouragées, par une communication ciblée, à y participer afin de tester leurs compétences managériales au cours d'une simulation de sélection pour une fonction de top management. Dans le cadre de l'ouverture des promotions lancée en 2013, une information ciblée a été transmise aux femmes afin de les encourager à s'engager dans le processus de promotion. Notons également l'existence de l'ordonnance gender mainstreaming. Depuis 2010, le Ministère a initié un projet pilote au travers duquel une des unités pilotes dans l'administration de l'économie et de l'emploi assemble des statistiques sexuées concernant les permis de travail octroyés et les contrôles du service. Une coordination des échevinats égalité des chances a également été mise en place au sein de la Région afin de favoriser les collaborations entre communes et de constituer un pôle de ressource pour les communes bruxelloises en matière d'égalité des chances et de diversité.

Par ailleurs, afin de faciliter le retour des femmes sur le marché du travail après une absence de longue durée pour assurer des charges familiales, une nouvelle plateforme ouverte pour l'emploi des « femmes rentrantes » a été créée au sein d'Actiris.

En matière d'accessibilité, la plateforme 'Accessibilité intégrale' très récemment créée a pour but de réunir différents partenaires régionaux afin de réfléchir et de proposer divers projets liés aux problématiques de l'accessibilité. La Région collabore également avec une association afin de permettre aux personnes handicapées de s'inscrire sur une liste d'offres d'emplois proposés par la Région. Ainsi, au travers des cinq domaines de l'égalité des chances, la Région tente de promouvoir le respect de chacun et la diversité.

En 2014, le Centre pour l'Egalité des chances, la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles et la Commission communautaire française, ont lancé une campagne d'information conjointe « Stop à la discrimination » à l'attention d'un large public.

3.1.5 Renforcer la mobilité des demandeurs d'emploi

L'hinterland bruxellois représente une grande quantité d'emplois accessibles aux Bruxellois moyennant une connaissance du Néerlandais, un renforcement de la mobilité et enfin une bonne collaboration entre Actiris et le VDAB en ce qui concerne la transmission des offres d'emploi. Dans le cadre de l'accord de coopération entre la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale et la Région flamande, 3.170 demandeurs d'emploi bruxellois ont été mobilisés sur les 1.104 offres transmises par le VDAB en 2013. Cette mobilisation a mené au placement de 1.204 bruxellois. Le plan d'actions pour 2013 tablait sur le placement de 1.000 demandeurs d'emploi bruxellois.

Les résultats observés confirment la hausse de la navette sortante de travailleurs bruxellois, particulièrement vers la Flandre où une augmentation de 26,3% a été constatée entre 2006 et 2012.

Par rapport aux plans d'actions précédents, le plan 2013 prévoyait l'élargissement de la communication de postes vacants disponibles dans les villes de Alost, Leuven et Mechelen du VDAB vers Actiris.

On peut également citer la collaboration bruxelloise à l'initiative 'Brussels Airport House', mise en place en 2013, qui permettra de promouvoir la mobilité des travailleurs bruxellois vers la zone aéroportuaire de Zaventem, notamment via la tenue de séances d'information à destination des chercheurs d'emploi bruxellois et l'envoi de bruxellois aux jobdatings.

Dans le cadre plus général du transfert automatique d'offres d'emploi entre les trois SPE régionaux, ce sont au total 104.935 offres qui ont été transmises à Actiris par le Forem et le VDAB.

Pour ce qui relève de la mobilité interrégionale des stagiaires en formation, 506 bruxellois ont suivi une formation professionnelle auprès du Forem Formation en Wallonie ou du VDAB en Flandre.

3.1.6 Développer et mobiliser des outils publics performants en faveur de l'emploi et de la formation

I. Actiris, nouveau Contrat de Gestion (2013-2017)

Actiris s'est doté d'un nouveau Contrat de gestion pour une durée de quatre ans (2013-2017). Celui-ci est axé sur le matching entre l'offre et la demande en valorisant les compétences et ceci notamment via la restructuration de la « Direction Employeurs ». Depuis novembre 2012, cette dernière est en phase de réorganisation de façon à cibler son offre de service par secteur d'activité : spécialisation des agents en fonction des secteurs et des métiers qui y sont liés, équipes pluridisciplinaires et sectorielles avec un accent sur cinq secteurs d'activité identifiés comme porteurs en terme d'emploi (un sixième pilier reprenant les entreprises de la périphérie), des consultants spécialisés par secteur, une collaboration accrue avec la Direction Chercheurs d'Emploi et, enfin, une approche par les compétences au niveau de l'aide à la rédaction des offres et de la sélection des candidats.

II. Concrétisation des chantiers du contrat de gestion de Bruxelles Formation

Le Contrat de gestion de Bruxelles Formation 2012-2016 précise les missions prioritaires du service public de formation à mettre en œuvre dans les 5 ans tant dans sa fonction de régisseur que dans sa tâche d'opérateur de formation professionnelle. Il définit aussi les modalités du travail en partenariat avec les autres acteurs du champ de la formation et de l'emploi et opérationnalise à travers le plan de développement 2014 les objectifs opérationnels des différentes priorités d'action.

Tant le contrat de gestion d'Actiris 2013-2017 que le contrat de gestion de Bruxelles Formation 2012-2016 consacrent une part de leur contenu aux collaborations fonctionnelles entre les 2 organismes, dans le respect des métiers de chacun qu'il s'agisse du dossier unique du chercheur d'emploi, de la veille et de l'anticipation des besoins en matière de formation et d'emploi ou encore des modalités d'accès à la formation ou de suivi au terme d'une action d'insertion ou de formation.

III. Un lieu unique pour l'emploi et la formation à Bruxelles

Dans le cadre de la relocalisation des services d'Actiris, les Comités de gestion des trois organismes publics bruxellois en charge de l'emploi et de la formation professionnelle – Actiris, Bruxelles Formation et le VDAB – ont décidé de saisir l'occasion du déménagement d'Actiris pour opérer leur rapprochement au sein du même espace, prévu fin 2015, afin de favoriser les synergies et simplifier le parcours du chercheur d'emploi.

3.1.7 Articulation Emploi-Formation : mobiliser tous les acteurs autour de la formation des demandeurs d'emploi

Globalement, Bruxelles Formation et ses partenaires (dont l'enseignement de promotion sociale, les services spécialisés pour demandeurs d'emploi ayant un handicap et les 49 organismes d'insertion agréés par la Commission Communautaire Française - COCOF) ont accueilli en formation quelque 14.000 stagiaires en 2013. Le taux de mise à l'emploi, après avoir suivi une formation qualifiante, s'élève à 70% et à 78% chez les moins de 25 ans. A noter que plus de 26% de l'offre de formation organisée par les pôles de Bruxelles Formation se réalisent avec les fonds sectoriels.

Outre l'accent spécifique porté aux demandeurs d'emploi de moins de 25 ans (voir point 3.1.2), le renforcement et la diversification de l'offre de formation s'orientent aussi vers les demandeurs d'emploi peu qualifiés et les demandeurs d'emploi éloignés du marché du travail en raison, notamment, d'un handicap, de l'origine ou de la nationalité étrangère..

La prévention de la « déqualification » suite à un manque de mise à niveau des compétences constitue aussi un axe important de la politique de formation tant à l'égard des demandeurs d'emploi de courte durée que des travailleurs actifs (estimation de 3.200 bénéficiaires en 2013). L'offre se renforce vers un ciblage plus précis des besoins sectoriels (construction durable, métiers verts, NTIC, langues, métiers du tourisme international...) en lien avec les différents chantiers du New Deal.

L'accord de coopération entre la Région et la Commission communautaire française relatif au financement de l'offre de formation à destination des demandeurs d'emploi conclu en 2012 permet de pérenniser l'octroi des moyens complémentaires à la poursuite de l'organisation de formations par Bruxelles Formation dans les secteurs prioritaires définis par le New Deal dont les chantiers de l'Alliance emploi environnement. En 2014, le budget de 2,32 millions d'€ sera renforcé par une enveloppe supplémentaire de 320.000 €.

Le transfert de nouvelles compétences aux Régions (notamment en matière de groupes-cibles) dans le cadre de la VIème Réforme de l'Etat, permettra à la Région bruxelloise d'affecter des moyens importants à la formation professionnelle pour rencontrer les besoins spécifiques des demandeurs d'emploi et des employeurs bruxellois en qualifications.

L'installation de pôles de compétences emploi-formation est un nouvel outil qui sera testé à Bruxelles dans les métiers industriels. Effectif en 2017, le pôle couvrira le champ de la qualification, de l'information/orientation à l'emploi. Son objectif est de tripler l'offre de formation dans les métiers techniques du secteur industriel à destination des demandeurs d'emploi. Le concept pourrait être étendu à d'autres secteurs d'activités (NTIC, culture et événementiel,...) sur base des évaluations du pôle pilote et en fonction des moyens disponibles.

Un premier outil de suivi longitudinal du parcours des demandeurs d'emploi en formation professionnelle sera finalisé au cours du premier semestre 2014. Cet outil, élaboré par le centre Métices de l'ULB avec la collaboration de la BCSS, l'Observatoire bruxellois de l'emploi et Bruxelles Formation et l'Administration de la COCOF, permet de connaître le devenir du stagiaire au terme de la formation et durant les 3 années suivantes. Parallèlement, il permet d'appréhender la trajectoire du stagiaire avant son entrée en formation et son profil. Cet outil s'inscrit dans les travaux du futur cadastre des parcours éducatifs et post-éducatifs (voir point 3.3.2).

Les travaux visant la simplification des procédures administratives pour les opérateurs partenaires de Bruxelles Formation, d'ACTIRIS et de la Commission communautaire française et de l'Agence FSE de la Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles en vue d'aboutir à une harmonisation de la gestion administrative et financière des actions menées par les partenaires communs à ces organismes publics se poursuivront en 2014 et devraient trouver une concrétisation importante en matière de gestion des cofinancements et des justifications des réalisations annuelles. Celle-ci concrétisation concernera tant les partenaires que les services publics eux-mêmes (Bruxelles Formation, SFPME, PHARE)..

On mentionnera aussi les collaborations structurelles entre les acteurs de la formation, de l'enseignement et de l'emploi en vue d'organiser et de rendre utilisables sur le marché de l'emploi la reconnaissance des compétences, la certification des acquis de formation ou encore les référentiels liés aux métiers et aux formations. Pour assurer des avancées concrètes et efficaces en ces matières, 2014 devrait connaître de nouveaux objectifs opérationnels, notamment en termes de simplification des procédures, de reconnaissance des compétences et de référentiels.

A noter enfin l'expérience pilote menée par Bruxelles Formation et le service PHARE de la Cocof depuis septembre 2012 de redéfinition du dispositif de formation destiné aux demandeurs d'emploi handicapés.

La VGC investit quant à elle annuellement 530.000 € afin d'élargir l'offre de formation professionnelle en néerlandais destinée essentiellement aux demandeurs d'emploi bruxellois infrascolarisés, complétant l'offre du VDAB qui reconnaît par ailleurs ces formations, ainsi que le dispositif « chèques langues » d'Actiris qui connaît depuis plusieurs années un succès grandissant auprès des demandeurs d'emploi et des employeurs (cf.infra).

I. Les Accords croisés « emploi-formation »

Les accords de coopération de politiques croisées « emploi-formation » (au cœur des réalisations du New Deal) entre d'une part, le Gouvernement de la Région bruxelloise et le Collège de la Commission Communautaire française (9 février 2012)⁵ et, d'autre part, les Gouvernements de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, de la Région flamande et de la Communauté flamande (15 juillet 2011) prévoient le développement de synergies et de collaborations dans de nombreux domaines : l'apprentissage des langues, l'élaboration du projet professionnel, l'accès à la formation, la prospection des entreprises, la concertation avec les acteurs et la simplification administrative pour les partenaires.

Ces accords de politiques croisées permettent notamment de pérenniser l'octroi des moyens complémentaires nécessaires à la poursuite de l'organisation des formations par Bruxelles Formation dans les secteurs prioritaires définis par le New Deal, dont les chantiers de l'Alliance Emploi-Environnement.

II. Le Plan Langues pour les Bruxellois

– les chèques langues

Les formations en langues restent centrales en Région bruxelloise puisqu'une offre sur deux reçues par Actiris exige des connaissances linguistiques. A cet égard, le Plan langues lancé en 2010 (RBC et COCOF) a fait l'objet d'une étude en 2012 portant notamment sur les bénéficiaires du dispositif « chèques langues » mis en œuvre par Actiris. Celle-ci a permis de mesurer l'augmentation de la probabilité de trouver un emploi pour les bénéficiaires des ces chèques langues (+ 15% que dans le cas des demandeurs d'emploi n'ayant pas bénéficié d'un chèque langue). A noter que les chances de sortie du chômage vers l'emploi augmentent pour toutes les catégories étudiées, y compris pour les demandeurs d'emploi présentant un profil plus fragile.

Entre 2004 et 2013, le budget d'Actiris pour les chèques langues a connu une augmentation de 900% pour atteindre un budget de 9 millions d'€ aujourd'hui. Le succès grandissant des aides à l'apprentissage des langues a été démontré de manière exceptionnelle au regard des résultats pour l'année 2012. Avec plus de 7000 chèques langues octroyés et plus de 15.500 tests langues effectués, la Région bruxelloise réalise ses meilleurs chiffres: une augmentation de près de 54% pour les chèques-langues et de près de 35% pour les tests par rapport à l'exercice 2011.

– *Brulingua*, la nouvelle plateforme d'apprentissage des langues, mise en ligne par Actiris depuis novembre 2013, permet à tous les demandeurs d'emploi bruxellois d'accéder gratuitement à des cours de français, néerlandais, anglais et allemand. A terme, la plateforme devrait être accessible à d'autres publics bruxellois (enseignants, étudiants, formateurs, travailleurs, ...).

– *L'offre de formation en langues orientées métiers*

⁵ Concrétisé par l'accord de collaboration conclu entre Actiris et Bruxelles Formation

Le Plan permet aussi d'amplifier l'offre de formation en langues orientées métiers. Il s'agit de modules courts et intensifs (de 6 semaines, à raison de 20 heures par semaine), principalement en néerlandais, anglais, français langue étrangère, qui permettent aux demandeurs d'emploi d'acquérir les compétences linguistiques indispensables à l'exercice spécifique de leur futur métier. 2.533 stagiaires ont été formés en 2013 (en légère diminution en termes de stagiaires), 50% d'entre eux l'ont été en néerlandais, 30% en français langue étrangère et 20% en anglais. Grâce aux moyens budgétaires complémentaires (600.000 €), Bruxelles Formation a pour objectif de former 850 demandeurs d'emploi en plus.

Les stages d'immersion linguistique en entreprise constituent une autre mesure amplifiée en 2013 comme en 2014. Ainsi, le dispositif de garantie pour la jeunesse vise à proposer 200 places sur base annuelle.

La Commission Communautaire Flamande (Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie – VGC) a mis en place un dispositif permettant aux demandeurs d'emploi d'utiliser les chèques langues, via *Het Huis van het Nederlands*, afin de bénéficier de cours dispensés par les centres d'enseignement pour adultes (*Centra voor volwassenenonderwijs*). Elle prévoit également un encadrement complémentaire en vue d'améliorer l'insertion professionnelle des groupes à risque, très éloignés du marché du travail. En collaboration avec les Maisons bruxelloises de l'emploi et l'asbl Tracé Brussel, la VGC promeut en effet l'offre bruxelloise de formations en néerlandais à travers un guide et l'organisation d'une bourse des formations. Depuis juin 2013, cette information est également disponible en ligne sur le site www.schakelsnaarwerk.be. Les établissements de l'enseignement ainsi que les centres de formation bruxellois néerlandophones bénéficient depuis le début 2014 de la possibilité de faire appel à une équipe d'assistants linguistiques issus de *het Huis van het Nederlands*. Ces derniers, actifs tant en milieu scolaire, qu'au sein des centres d'enseignement pour adultes, des établissements de l'enseignement supérieur et des centres de formation à horaire décalé visent à répondre aux faiblesses linguistiques et/ou à accompagner les jeunes dont le néerlandais n'est pas la langue maternelle.

III. Les Centres de références

Les 5 Centres de références existants dans les secteurs de la construction, des TIC, de l'horeca, du transport/logistique et des fabrications métallurgiques, ont fait l'objet d'un soutien continu. Les CDR, issus d'un partenariat public-privé, sont une forme de traduction très concrète du rapprochement entre l'emploi et la formation. En 2012, les CDR représentaient un budget total issu des fonds publics de près de 4,5 Millions €, auxquels s'ajoute un apport équivalent des fonds sectoriels sous forme d'apport en nature, principalement du matériel de pointe. Ces fonds ont ainsi permis de former plus de 4.500 chercheurs d'emploi et travailleurs, de réaliser près de 500.000 heures de formation et de sensibiliser pas loin de 7.500 élèves et étudiants. Par ailleurs, le CDR orienté vers les métiers de la ville et de la fonction publique, financé à raison de 300.000 €, a été mis sur pied et permettra de renforcer les actions des CDR au profit des Bruxellois (dont ceux en recherche d'emploi) en particulier dans les métiers visés par ces deux secteurs.

3.2 Recherche & Développement & Innovation

Dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de sa stratégie Recherche, Développement et Innovation, la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale a soutenu, en 2013, des projets pour 33 millions d'€, dans les domaines prioritaires des TIC, des sciences du vivant et du développement durable. Le budget R&D de la Région atteindra 46 millions d'€ en 2014 en crédits d'engagement.

Fin 2012, la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale a procédé à la mise à jour de son Plan Régional pour l'Innovation. Ce document engage la Région de manière plus affirmée dans une démarche de « spécialisation intelligente » et prévoit un pilotage plus intégré du système régional d'innovation.

Les actions sont regroupées en cinq objectifs stratégiques:

- Objectif 1: Mettre la spécialisation intelligente au service de l'économie et de l'emploi
- Objectif 2: Créer un environnement favorable aux entreprises innovantes
- Objectif 3: Augmenter l'attractivité de Bruxelles en tant que « plaque tournante » européenne de la connaissance
- Objectif 4: Augmenter la participation bruxelloise dans les programmes européens
- Objectif 5: Renforcer la gouvernance de l'innovation. Des mesures opérationnelles à court terme concernent par exemple un projet-pilote de mise à disposition de chèques innovation aux entreprises régionales et la création d'une unité « stratégie et monitoring » du système RDI à Bruxelles. Un tableau de bord de la Recherche et de l'Innovation régionale a été mis en place en 2012 et sera mis à jour périodiquement.

Une nouvelle plate-forme stratégique en e-health dotée d'un budget de 8,2 million € a vu le jour fin 2013 permettant le développement de solutions ICT appliquées au domaine de la santé. Complétant des dispositifs similaires dédiés à l'environnement et favorisant notamment les collaborations académiques et industrielles, elles visent à raccourcir les chemins entre la recherche et la valorisation économique.

Dans le même ordre d'idées, un programme pilote de « chèques innovation » a été initié fin 2013 afin de permettre aux PME de bénéficier de conseils stratégiques en innovation et de services de guidance technologique délivrés par les centres de recherche régionaux.

Dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de son Plan Régional pour l'Innovation, la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale a renforcé le soutien aux acteurs régionaux RDI souhaitant participer aux programmes et partenariats européens. La Région a participé au programme JPI⁶ Urban Europe, renouvelé sa participation aux programmes Eurostars II et JTI⁷ Ecsel et adhéré au programme Ambient Assisted living II. En 2014 la Région prévoit la participation dans l'ERA⁸ NET SMART CITIES and Communities.

⁶ Joint Programming Initiative

⁷ Joint Technology Initiative

⁸ European Research Area

Par ailleurs, le financement pour le Point National de Contact -NCP Brussels dont la mission principale est d'aider les entreprises régionales et les acteurs universitaires de préparer les projets européens (H2020), augmente.

Au titre du renforcement des collaborations entre Régions, Bruxelles a participé à un appel conjoint avec la Région flamande dans le cadre du programme « Zorginnovatie Ruimte Vlaanderen ». L'objectif de ce programme organisé sous la forme des *Living Labs* vise la stimulation de l'innovation dans le domaine des soins de santé pour les personnes âgées par le soutien de projets innovants portant sur l'ensemble des aspects liés à ce domaine en ce compris la prévention, la sensibilisation, le diagnostic et les soins.

En 2013, la Région a poursuivi le développement d'incubateurs dans les secteurs porteurs d'innovation, ainsi que les initiatives de sensibilisation aux carrières scientifiques et techniques.

Le Gouvernement de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale s'efforce de mettre en œuvre des mesures de soutien qui stimulent l'effet de levier vis-à-vis des financements privés et qui favorisent les circuits les plus courts entre les résultats de la recherche et leurs retombées en termes de valorisation économique et de création d'emplois.

Le soutien à la création et au développement de spin-offs et jeunes entreprises innovantes est renforcé. Un nouveau crédit a été prévu en 2013 à hauteur de 3.000.000€ pour permettre à la Région de prendre des participations en capital dans des instruments financiers pour spin-offs et jeunes entreprises innovantes, tels que les fonds de capital-risque mis en place par les universités.

3.3 Éducation et formation tout au long de la vie

3.3.1 Lutte contre le décrochage scolaire

La lutte contre le décrochage scolaire est une compétence gérée par la Communauté Française et par la Communauté Flamande. Cependant, dans le cadre de ses compétences, la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale a pris des mesures relatives à l'accrochage scolaire qui ne visent pas à venir renforcer les dispositifs existants mais bien d'effectuer les missions qui actuellement ne sont pas ou peu exercées. Ces dispositifs régionaux sont organisés en deux axes qui seront renforcés via les axes information, enseignement et éducation du dispositif bruxellois de Garantie pour la jeunesse. Ensemble, ils sont financés à hauteur de près de 20 millions d'€:

1. Axe prévention :

Le public cible concerné par ce dispositif est très jeune, en âge d'obligation scolaire ou non, scolarisé ou en décrochage. Les médiateurs scolaires actifs au sein de ce dispositif remplissent une ou plusieurs des missions suivantes dans le cadre de l'axe accrochage des plans locaux de prévention et de proximité institués dans les 19 communes bruxelloises et financés par la Région :

- réunir à des fins de diagnostic, toutes les données qualitatives et quantitatives permettant de mesurer l'absentéisme et le décrochage scolaire sur le territoire communal ;
- obtenir une vue globale et à jour (observations, besoins et attentes) de tous les dispositifs existants sur la commune et du travail de chaque acteur concerné quel que soit son identité ou le niveau de pouvoir qui le soutient ;
- développer des projets en collaboration avec les écoles ;

- en collaboration avec les services communautaires compétents, assurer un accompagnement individuel, permettant d’aborder les situations d’élèves confrontés à un absentéisme récurrent et de définir les mesures d'accompagnement adaptées ;
- dans le cadre du contrôle de l’obligation scolaire, les médiateurs scolaires en collaboration avec le service communal de la population, et avec la zone de police veilleront à identifier les jeunes en âge d’obligation scolaire qui sont non inscrits ou en décrochage complet et ce, de manière à assurer l’accès à l’enseignement à tout élève inscrit au Registre de la population.

Le montant du subside régional consacré à cet axe s’élève à 3,5 millions d’€, 88 personnes étant affectées à ces missions.

A côté du travail spécifique sur l’accrochage scolaire, les plans de proximité incluent également un axe « travail de rue » qui consiste à renforcer la présence d’agents sur le trajet domicile-école et afin d’aller à la rencontre des jeunes en décrochage et de les orienter. La subvention globale annuelle aux communes dans le cadre du Plan bruxellois de prévention s’élève à 16,5 millions d’€.

II. Axe accrochage scolaire :

La Région de Bruxelles-Capitale mène également des actions au sein même des écoles via le Dispositif d’Accrochage Scolaire (D.A.S) pour lequel le Gouvernement a approuvé un budget d’1,8 million d’€ en septembre 2013. Il finance actuellement 388 projets éducatifs qui visent à diminuer l’échec scolaire et l’absentéisme, touchant 22.000 élèves, tant dans l’enseignement fondamental que secondaire. Parmi ces initiatives, citons des ateliers visant à favoriser la confiance en soi et l’équilibre affectif via l’expérience communautaire, des expériences de tutorat, de services à la collectivité, de la remédiation ou encore du coaching scolaire. .

Par ailleurs, le développement des synergies entre les acteurs de l’éducation et de la formation sera renforcé via la mise en place du Bassin de vie bruxellois et des Pôles de synergies qui y sont liés. Ceci vise à proposer une offre d’éducation et de formation de qualité à l’ensemble des Bruxellois, en mettant un accent particulier sur les moins qualifiés. Un groupe de travail réunissant communautés et la Région bruxelloise est chargé de réaliser un inventaire de toutes les politiques menées en matière d’accrochage scolaire. L’objectif est d’améliorer l’articulation des politiques et d’en accentuer l’efficacité.

La Commission communautaire flamande (VGC) vise à encadrer qualitativement le contenu didactique des cours afin d’agir préventivement sur l’absentéisme scolaire. Le Onderwijscentrum Brussel (OCB) (enseignement primaire et humanité), l’asbl VBB (enseignement primaire), l’asbl BROSO (enseignement humanité) apportent une importante contribution . Depuis 2011, la VGC investit dans le développement des Brede Scholen (écoles ouvertes), des écoles qui accordent de l’attention au développement au sens large et aux chances d’épanouissement de tous les enfants. En 2013, 28 nouvelles Brede Scholen ont été créées à Bruxelles. Enfin, la VGC soutient le projet Time-Out Brussel, visant à éviter un décrochage scolaire prématuré d’élèves causant des difficultés à l’école ou étant fort démotivés. L’objectif de Time-out est de donner une nouvelle chance aux jeunes fréquentant les écoles secondaires néerlandophones à Bruxelles et connaissant des difficultés dans leur parcours scolaire, de trouver un nouvel intérêt dans l’enseignement. Grâce à un coach à l’école ou un trajet externe court ou long, time-out offre une réponse compréhensive aux problèmes des jeunes.

3.3.2. Contribution de la Formation professionnelle

La Commission communautaire française, signataire d’un Accord de coopération avec la Communauté française et la Région wallonne, contribue à la mise en place du Service francophone des Métiers et

des Qualifications (SFMQ), notamment à travers la participation active de Bruxelles Formation et du Service de Formation PME aux travaux de ce service.

La Commission communautaire française, à travers son Service public de formation, participe aux travaux de mise en œuvre du Cadre Francophone des Certifications.

La Commission communautaire française contribue à l'organisation du Consortium de validation des compétences, réunissant les Services publics de formation professionnelle (dont Bruxelles Formation) et les services publics de formation des classes moyennes. A noter en la matière la reconnaissance des compétences acquises en formation, certificats délivrés en fin de formation par les services publics de formation qui vise aussi à une meilleure cohérence des processus de valorisation des apprentissages sur le marché du travail.

La promotion des métiers techniques auprès des élèves de l'enseignement secondaire et auprès des demandeurs d'emploi est soutenue par la Commission communautaire française via l'organisation de diverses manifestations (concours des métiers, portes ouvertes, salons, ...) La diffusion d'informations relatives aux études, aux formations et aux métiers techniques a été revue afin de la rendre plus efficace sur le territoire bruxellois (liens avec les écoles, plateforme internet,...)

L'accord de coopération entre les différentes autorités communautaires et régionales afin de permettre la création d'un outil de suivi des trajectoires des élèves de l'enseignement secondaire et supérieur en lien avec les outils de suivi des services publics de formation et d'emploi est opérationnel depuis peu.

3.3.3 L'éducation et la formation informelles

Cette thématique vise à favoriser le développement personnel ainsi que l'intégration dans la société de jeunes «en recherche de sens» en tant que citoyens responsables, actifs, critiques et solidaires.

La Plateforme pour le Service Citoyen réunit un ensemble d'organismes autour d'un objectif commun: la création d'un Service Citoyen pour les jeunes de 18 à 25 ans en Belgique. Elle articule son travail autour de 5 pôles d'activités dont un concerne le développement de projets-pilote de Service Citoyen.

La plateforme pour le service citoyen est chargée d'organiser en 2014 une expérience test du Service Citoyen pour 60 jeunes en situation de décrochage scolaire et/ou peu diplômés, via le lancement de programmes d'une durée de 6 mois en concertation avec les partenaires. La réalisation concrète de cette action pilote est prévue pour une période de 12 mois au maximum. La manière dont on pourra procéder à la validation de cet apprentissage informel est en cours d'analyse. Un comité d'accompagnement suit l'évolution de l'expérience et son impact sur le devenir des jeunes au terme du Service.

3.4 Objectif - Climat/Environnement/Energie

En ce qui concerne les objectifs UE2020 en matière de climat et d'énergie, la Région bruxelloise s'est définie une politique ambitieuse. Celle-ci a déjà porté ses fruits puisque la consommation d'énergie par habitant et les émissions de CO² ont été réduites de 25% entre 2004 et 2014.

Dans cette politique, l'action de la Région se concentre principalement sur la réduction de la demande énergétique et sur l'amélioration de l'efficacité énergétique.

3.4.1 Le Code bruxellois de l'Air, du Climat et de l'Energie (COBRACE)

Le COBRACE coordonne les mesures et inscrit les matières de l'air, du climat et de l'énergie dans une seule réglementation, claire, cohérente et structurée. Il renforce la politique énergétique bruxelloise

déjà récompensée par la Commission européenne (Sustainable Energy Award 2012) et permet des avancées significatives en termes de mobilité.

Le COBRACE a été adopté le 2 mai 2013 par le Parlement bruxellois.

Les mesures visent la réduction des émissions de polluants et la stimulation de l'efficacité énergétique en priorité dans les secteurs des bâtiments et du transport. Parmi celles-ci, le COBRACE instaure une obligation de mener un programme d'action pour la gestion énergétique pour les surfaces de plus de 100.000m² (50.000m² pour les pouvoirs publics), il crée un label pour les bâtiments à haute performance énergétique et environnementale et rationalise les parkings hors voirie via le permis d'environnement. Pour stimuler l'exemplarité des bâtiments publics, le COBRACE fixe un taux de rénovation annuel, il permet d'imposer dans les bâtiments publics neufs ou soumis à une rénovation lourde un objectif de production d'énergie renouvelable et il instaure la prise en compte du coût d'occupation dans les contrats d'occupation conclus par les pouvoirs publics.

3.4.2 Le Plan régional intégré air-climat-énergie

Un projet de *Plan intégré air-climat-énergie* a été adopté en première lecture le 26 septembre 2013. Il est actuellement soumis à étude d'incidences sur l'environnement et sera prochainement soumis à enquête publique. Il vise à répondre à trois défis qui se posent en RBC : l'accès à l'énergie et la facture énergétique des ménages et de la Région ; la qualité de l'air et ses conséquences sur la santé de la population ; l'atténuation et l'adaptation aux changements climatiques.

Le plan prévoit 59 mesures, déclinées en 130 actions dans 9 axes orientés autour des secteurs émetteurs (bâtiment, transport, consommation), du renforcement de la dimension sociale, de la transition de l'économie et des mesures d'adaptation au changement climatique. En complément, les axes de surveillance de la qualité de l'air et de mécanismes de flexibilité renforcent les mesures actuelles dans ces deux domaines.

Par ailleurs, il complètera et renforcera les actions entreprises dans le cadre du plan Iris 2 en prévoyant notamment une révision de la fiscalité des transports sur la base de critères environnementaux. Par ailleurs, une disposition du COBRACE, entrée en vigueur le 5 février 2014, vise à restreindre l'utilisation de la voiture en agissant sur les emplacements de stationnement gratuits sur le lieu de travail.

3.4.3 Planification en matière de mobilité

Le Plan Iris 2 vise à réduire la charge de trafic automobile de 20% sur le territoire de la Région *et lutter contre la congestion automobile* au profit du transfert modal vers les transports publics, cyclistes et piétons. A cet égard, le Gouvernement a approuvé fin 2012 le premier *plan piéton* qui vise à augmenter la part des déplacements à pied. Concernant les cyclistes, la Région poursuit le déploiement des équipements, mais également des mesures de sensibilisation.

Le stationnement constitue un levier majeur de la politique de mobilité. En vue d'harmoniser et de simplifier les règles de stationnement dans les 19 communes bruxelloises et de libérer de l'espace en voiries pour d'autres modes de déplacement que la voiture, le *Plan de Politique régionale du stationnement* est entré en vigueur le 1^{er} janvier 2014 et sera mis en œuvre progressivement.

Le gouvernement bruxellois a par ailleurs approuvé en juillet 2013 un *Plan stratégique pour le transport de marchandises en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale* ayant pour objectifs 3 objectifs la réduction du nombre de km effectués par camions pour le transport de marchandises (centre de distribution urbaine), le report modal vers la voie d'eau et le ferroviaire, ainsi que la simplification des modes de livraison.

L'ordonnance mobilité du 26 juillet 2013 fixe quant à elle un cadre en matière de planification de la mobilité, constituant un outil stratégique et réglementaire ayant pour objectif la mise en cohérence des politiques régionale et communales en la matière, tant au niveau des orientations générales que des mesures (aménagement, etc.) concrètes.

En première ligne de la lutte contre la congestion automobile, la Région de Bruxelles-capitale poursuit également ses programmes d'investissements conséquents en matière d'infrastructure de transports publics. A cette fin, le nouveau contrat de gestion de la STIB ouvre la voie à des investissements ordinaires et extraordinaires pour 4,4 milliards d'€ d'ici 2022 afin de permettre à la STIB de respecter son engagement à augmenter sa capacité de transport de 22,4% d'ici 2017 via des extensions du réseau et l'achat de matériel roulant.

Les mesures résultant du plan iris2 et les plans stratégiques connexes par thème (plan de transport de marchandises, plan piéton, plan vélo, plan de sécurité routière) sont progressivement exécutées sur le terrain et portent leurs fruits. Les dernières mesures montrent clairement que la mobilité évolue déjà maintenant dans le sens souhaité:

- la marche est devenue le principal mode de déplacement, 37% des déplacements se font maintenant à pied, (contre 32% en '99)
- l'utilisation du transport public à Bruxelles (sans train) a augmenté de 15% à 25% pour tous les déplacements
- le vélo à Bruxelles connaît une progression fulgurante, de 1 à 4%
- la part de la voiture dans les déplacements à Bruxelles a diminué de 50% à 32%.

En attendant la réalisation des grands chantiers d'infrastructure, dont l'extension du métro vers le Nord de la Capitale densément peuplé, la STIB a augmenté début 2013 la fréquence sur différentes lignes afin d'offrir un meilleur service aux voyageurs. La Région améliore également la circulation des transports publics de surface en leur donnant la priorité de passage (équipement de télécommandes des carrefours à feux, sites propres immunisés de la circulation, etc).

3.4.3 L'Alliance Emploi-Environnement

L'alliance Emploi-Environnement est un des cinq domaines prioritaires identifiés dans le Pacte de Croissance Urbaine Durable (New deal). L'Alliance Emploi-Environnement vise la structuration et le développement de secteurs économiques liés à l'environnement. L'objectif est de mettre les entreprises bruxelloises en capacité de capter les fruits du développement dans ces secteurs (aujourd'hui, la construction durable, l'eau et les ressources-déchets) et de valoriser l'important potentiel d'emploi, y compris moins qualifié. L'Alliance Emploi-Environnement contribue à mobiliser et à coordonner les acteurs publics, privés et associatifs dont les partenaires sociaux autour d'actions concertées.

- Le premier axe de l'Alliance Emploi-Environnement est le secteur de la *construction durable*. L'objectif est de développer, d'une part, une offre d'entreprises locales capable de répondre au défi des nouvelles ambitions énergétiques des bâtiments et, d'autre part, d'atteindre une diminution des impacts environnementaux du bâti. Un des moyens est l'adaptation de l'offre de formation (formation continue, formation qualifiante, insertion de chômeurs par le travail) en vue d'avoir des travailleurs formés également à ces nouveaux défis. Les actions sont mises en œuvre depuis deux ans et les résultats sont de plus en plus importants (augmentation du nombre de personnes formées, augmentation de l'utilisation des aides économiques, ...).

- Le deuxième axe de l'Alliance Emploi-Environnement lancé en 2012 est consacré à l'eau. Le but est d'accroître significativement le nombre d'emplois en faveur des jeunes demandeurs d'emploi bruxellois dans les secteurs d'activités liés au cycle de l'eau par le biais d'actions de stimulation économique, de soutien aux entreprises, d'insertion, de formation, etc. Et ce, dans le maillage gris (égouts et canalisation) et dans le maillage bleu+ (gestion alternative de l'eau). Les actions sont mises en œuvre depuis novembre 2012.
- Le troisième axe de l'Alliance Emploi-Environnement est le secteur des *ressources et des déchets*, avec un accent sur la prévention, le réemploi et le recyclage. Les travaux de l'alliance garderont le même souci de saisir toutes les opportunités économiques et d'emplois public, privé et d'insertion dans le secteur des ressources et des déchets. Les activités de collecte, de maintenance, de réparation, les déconstructions sélectives et la commercialisation de produits de seconde main sont les plus pourvoyeurs d'emplois locaux. La mise en œuvre des actions commencera avant la fin de l'année.
- Le quatrième axe lancé fin 2013 concerne l'alimentation durable et vise une structuration de tous les maillons du *système alimentaire*, de la production alimentaire à la transformation, la distribution, la restauration et la formation et la filière des traitements des déchets ; un rééquilibrage des parts de marché en facilitant l'accès au marché de l'alimentation durable pour les petits acteurs ; une augmentation de l'accessibilité à l'alimentation durable, ainsi que l'exemplarité des cantines et organismes publics.

3.4.4 Les marchés de l'électricité et du gaz

La RBC a transposé les directives 2009/72/CE et 2009/73/CE en juillet 2011. Les nouvelles ordonnances adoptées dans ce cadre ont permis de renforcer les compétences, les missions ainsi que l'indépendance de l'autorité de régulation régionale. Une simplification d'accès au marché pour les fournisseurs a été organisée et la protection et l'information des consommateurs consolidées (guichet d'information, service des litiges, mécanisme d'indemnités forfaitaires, ...) tout en renforçant la garantie d'accès à l'énergie. Une série de mesures visant à améliorer l'efficacité énergétique ainsi que la promotion de l'électricité verte ont également été prises. Cette transposition répond à la recommandation de la Commission européenne d'introduire des mesures pour renforcer la concurrence sur les marchés de l'électricité et du gaz en améliorant l'efficacité des autorités sectorielles de régulation et de concurrence.

Dans le cadre du transfert de la compétence liée aux tarifs de distribution du gaz et de l'électricité prévu par la 6^{ème} réforme de l'Etat, le gouvernement a adopté en deuxième lecture le 23 janvier 2014 un projet d'ordonnance modifiant l'ancienne ordonnance relative à l'organisation des marchés du gaz et de l'électricité, prévoyant notamment les lignes directrices qui encadreront la méthodologie tarifaire destinée à encourager le gestionnaire du réseau de distribution à améliorer les performances, à favoriser l'intégration du marché et la sécurité de l'approvisionnement et à mener la recherche et le développement nécessaires à ses activités. Le régulateur BRUGEL assurera l'exercice effectif de cette nouvelle compétence.

3.4.5 Réduction de la consommation énergétique et amélioration de l'efficacité énergétique

Plusieurs initiatives ont été prises, visant tant les particuliers, que les entreprises, les collectivités et les pouvoirs publics :

- Le programme des *Primes Énergie 2014 approuvé le 24 octobre 2013 confirme les augmentations de primes décidées en 2012 avec un budget global de 20 millions € et simplifie les démarches administratives.*

- Le *Défi énergie* continue de sensibiliser les Bruxellois encouragés de manière ludique à réduire leur consommation énergétique, ainsi qu'à émettre moins de CO₂.
- L'appel à projets « *bâtiments exemplaires* » a pour objectif de soutenir des projets performants afin de démontrer leur faisabilité technique et financière, et d'encourager le secteur dans ce type de démarches. A ce jour, 621.000 m² de bâtiments passifs pour 243 laurats ont ainsi été créés en 6 ans grâce à l'appel à projets, portant à /800.000 le nombre total de m² de bâtiments passifs à Bruxelles.
- *L'exemplarité des pouvoirs publics dans les bâtiments* se traduit par le respect au minimum du standard passif pour les constructions neuves et du standard très basse énergie pour les rénovations lourdes dans le cadre des investissements immobiliers de tout organisme dépendant de la Région. Ces mêmes obligations sont imposées à toute construction ou rénovation lourde (logements, écoles et bureaux) à partir de 2015. Le potentiel de réduction des émissions du secteur est très significatif. A titre d'exemple, on prévoit une économie de 15.000 tonnes de CO₂ chaque année. Dans le cadre de l'Alliance habitat (voir infra), la construction prévue des nouveaux 6.720 logements sociaux, modérés et moyens (locatifs et acquisitifs) devra répondre au standard passif (600 millions d'€), tandis que les rénovations de logements sociaux existant se verront appliqué le standard basse énergie (300 millions d'€).
- La *Maison de l'Énergie* propose un service d'accompagnement des ménages dans leurs démarches d'économies d'énergie dans leur logement, que ce soit en matière de choix techniques et de matériaux ou d'accès aux incitants

3.4.6 Propreté publique

Il convient d'ajouter les trois mesures suivantes en matière de collecte et de traitement des déchets:

- *la création d'un centre public de traitement des déchets organiques;*
- *l'utilisation de camions hydrauliques de collecte des déchets* qui devraient permettre une diminution d'environ 14 tonnes par an et par véhicule des rejets en CO₂ (et autres gaz) et qui devraient connaître une consommation moyenne de carburant réduite de 29% ;
- la création d'un réseau de chaleur (chauffage urbain) valorisant la chaleur actuellement perdue à l'incinérateur de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, en raison d'une température trop basse pour une autre exploitation. Ce réseau permettrait de fournir de la chaleur à des utilisateurs situés à proximité de l'incinérateur.

3.5 Objectif - Cohésion sociale et lutte contre la pauvreté :

3.5.1 Stratégie générale & Objectifs spécifiques

La Note de politique générale relative à la lutte contre la pauvreté 2009-2014 rédigée et approuvée de concert par le gouvernement bruxellois et les Collèges des 3 Commissions communautaires de Bruxelles, est construite autour de 34 objectifs stratégiques concrets et trace un cadre ambitieux permettant de relever le défi que constitue la lutte contre toutes les formes de pauvreté au sein de la Région. A ce titre, il est primordial que tout citoyen puisse participer à la vie sociale et économique et ce, dans des conditions qui contribuent au bien-être individuel comme à la prospérité de la société tout entière. L'objectif est de mener une politique commune qui favorise la qualité sociale de notre Région. La stratégie qui est suivie à cet effet consiste à investir dans la promotion et la consolidation de la politique sociale, en misant sur une politique préventive, plurielle et participative :

- une politique préventive permettant d'éviter à quiconque les situations de pauvreté;
- une politique plurielle permettant de lutter contre l'inégalité de traitement, la discrimination;
- une politique participative tenant compte des connaissances et des éclairages de tous les acteurs concernés par la pauvreté.

La Note de politique générale 2009-2014 forme la base des plans d'action biennaux de lutte contre la pauvreté : le Plan d'action bruxellois de lutte contre la pauvreté 2010 en était le premier plan opérationnel. Le plan d'action 2012 s'inscrit dans une logique de continuité, mais s'adresse plus spécifiquement à la problématique de la pauvreté des jeunes adultes. Le prochain plan d'action, prévu pour la fin 2014, se penchera sur la thématique des femmes et de la pauvreté. A titre d'exemples de concrétisation de certaines mesures, on peut noter :

- le développement d'un test d'impact sur la pauvreté pour chaque décision politique ;
- en matière de logement : on note le développement du logement social et plus particulièrement l'objectif de garantir dans chaque commune dans les 10 années à venir un taux de 15% de logements de qualité à gestion publique et à finalité sociale, la lutte contre les logements vides et insalubres, le renforcement des aides aux personnes sur le marché locatif (allocation de relogement), , une réflexion sur la mise en place d'un système d'encadrement des loyers, le développement d'un cadre législatif pour éviter dans la mesure du possible les expulsions sans proposition de relogement et l'amélioration de la performance énergétique des logements ;
- la promotion de l'accès à l'enseignement et la formation mettra en avant les actions préventives, les campagnes et projets contribuant à une diminution du décrochage scolaire ;
- l'agrément d'une maison d'accueil pour un public spécifique de sans-abris âgés de 18 à 25 ans (en commission communautaire française).

3.5.2 L'Alliance habitat et l'accès au logement

Face à la cherté du logement à Bruxelles, laquelle risque de se renforcer avec la hausse démographique attendue, le gouvernement bruxellois a adopté en septembre 2013 l'«Alliance Habitat».

Concrètement, cette Alliance qui sera dotée d'un budget pluriannuel global de 953 millions d'€ vise à développer l'offre de logements publics avec 6.000 nouveaux logements par an jusqu'en 2020, permettre aux Bruxellois d'accéder plus aisément à la propriété et encourager enfin une véritable relance économique en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale par la création de 1.600 emplois directs durant cinq ans dans le secteur de la construction.

Outre la construction de nouveaux logements qui absorbera quelques 600 millions d'€, l'« Alliance Habitat » planifie une poursuite des programmes de rénovation du parc de logements sociaux en Région bruxelloise. 300 millions d'€ seront mobilisés à cet effet sur une période de quatre ans.

Enfin, l'initiative met également en place une expérience pilote d'allocation-loyer dotée de 2 millions d'€. L'objectif est ici de diminuer le poids du loyer dans le budget des ménages les plus fragilisés et d'augmenter par ce biais leur pouvoir d'achat.

Elle profitera dans un premier temps à 1.000 ménages prioritaires toujours inscrits sur les listes d'attente de logement social à Bruxelles.

Au-delà de l'alliance-habitat et de ses différents programmes signalons l'adoption par le Gouvernement bruxellois, le 28 novembre 2013, de l'arrêté instaurant une allocation de relogement qui reconfigure l'ancien régime des adils⁹ en visant désormais aussi des publics cibles particulièrement fragilisés : les sans-abris et les femmes victimes de violence.

Il convient également de relever la pérennisation du « Community Land trust » grâce au financement de sa structure porteuse et à un second projet de production de logements. Pour rappel, ce modèle innovant permet à des publics fragilisés l'accès à la propriété via une séparation entre la propriété du bâti et celle du terrain.

3.5.3 Contribution de la Formation professionnelle à l'objectif d'inclusion sociale

En tant que vecteur de lutte contre l'exclusion sociale, la formation professionnelle pour les demandeurs d'emploi est orientée prioritairement vers les publics fragilisés, éloignés du marché du travail et vise à les positionner au mieux. Les accompagnements mis en œuvre sont individualisés autant que possible afin de prendre en compte les spécificités des différents publics et prévenir les risques d'arrêt prématuré.

Cet axe d'intervention mené en partie dans le cadre du Programme opérationnel FSE Wallonie-Bruxelles permet de soutenir la formation organisée dans le cadre du dispositif coordonné d'insertion socioprofessionnelle avec une septantaine de partenaires issus de la formation et de l'insertion socioprofessionnelle ainsi que de l'aide aux personnes handicapées, principalement. Quelques 15.000 personnes ont bénéficié du dispositif en 2012 (données 2013 non disponibles).

Ces actions contribuent à une meilleure cohésion sociale c'est-à-dire à une meilleure assurance de l'accès aux droits que sont le droit au travail et à la formation, le droit à mener une vie digne.

4. Matières transversales

4.1. Politique industrielle et entrepreneuriat

Tout en agissant de manière volontariste sur le problème du manque de qualification, le développement équilibré de la Région appelle une attention constante sur l'ensemble des composantes du développement économique et de la compétitivité.

Pour répondre à ce défi de compétitivité, la politique industrielle de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale repose sur une stratégie de spécialisation intelligente au service de l'économie et de l'emploi, en veillant à développer une économie durable et à intégrer au mieux les entreprises dans un tissu urbain complexe, limité par des contraintes spatiales et confronté à une démographie en forte croissance. C'est pourquoi elle veille à ce que ses mécanismes d'aides financières à l'expansion économique (27 millions EUR) facilitent davantage cette intégration. Elle accorde également une attention particulière au développement économique local. En ce sens, la nouvelle Zone d'économie urbaine stimulée (Zeus) entrera en vigueur courant 2014 afin de soutenir l'entrepreneuriat et de créer de l'emploi dans les quartiers défavorisés en termes socio-économiques.

Bruxelles connaît une dynamique entrepreneuriale supérieure à la moyenne nationale avec beaucoup de création d'entreprises, mais également un taux élevé d'échecs. Afin d'encourager l'entrepreneuriat et de soutenir la pérennité des entreprises – notamment des start-up, TPE et PME – la Région continue à développer et étudier un éventail de mesures visant les 5 axes politiques prioritaires repris ci-dessous. La Région travaille actuellement sur l'élaboration d'un Small Business Act bruxellois qui rassemblera

⁹ Allocations de Déménagement-Installation et Intervention dans le Loyer

ces mesures et axes politiques, ainsi que les objectifs à long terme. Une coordination périodique entre ces axes, mesures et organismes dirigeants est prévue au sein du CCE.

4.1.1. Entrepreneuriat

I. Formation

La Région ne lance pas uniquement des initiatives de formations pour les chercheurs d'emploi (comme illustré dans l'objectif « emploi et formation professionnelle » ci-dessus), mais soutient également une panoplie de formations conçues pour stimuler l'esprit d'entreprendre, notamment au sein des groupes cibles, comme par exemple :

- *Cap'Ten & Boost your Talent* sont des programmes de sensibilisation dans les écoles qui ont déjà touché des milliers de jeunes afin de stimuler leur esprit d'entreprendre ;
- *AFFA* propose une formation aux femmes qui souhaitent créer leur propre entreprise ;
- *le Passeport pour la Réussite* offre des formations gratuites (RH, gestion, marketing, juridique, stratégie, outils web) aux indépendants et chefs d'entreprises de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale.

II. Accompagnement

La disponibilité de processus d'accompagnement est un accélérateur de croissance pour les entreprises. Avec *Impulse Brussels* (ex-ABE) comme grand acteur institutionnel qui offre des conseils sur mesure lors des différents stades du cycle de vie d'une entreprise, la Région favorise également l'accompagnement par mentoring via des réseaux informels, comme le Réseau *Entreprendre à Bruxelles*.

La Région de Bruxelles-Capitale souhaite aussi renforcer son positionnement sur les segments et les niches d'activités correspondant aux forces de ses acteurs et présentant un potentiel d'activités économiques et d'emploi. L'instrument permettant de soutenir ces niches est le cluster qui développe la promotion et la compétitivité d'un secteur défini. Il met en réseau un ensemble d'entreprises et de centres de recherche implantés dans la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale et ayant des activités convergentes. La Région compte à ce jour 5 clusters sectoriels, depuis le lancement en octobre 2013 de *screen.brussels*, dédié aux industries créatives et au multimédia, complétant les clusters existant dans les domaines des NTIC, de l'écoconstruction, de l'environnement et des sciences du vivant.. Après l'évaluation du positionnement de ces clusters en termes de degré de maturité et de résultats, la politique bruxelloises de clustering sera renforcée, structurée et le rôle des clusters réaffirmé. La Région poursuit ainsi sa transition vers une économie de services et de la connaissance, en encourageant la RDI et en rapprochant les entreprises, universités et centres de recherche, capable de jouer un rôle à l'échelle internationale.

Par ailleurs, afin d'en renforcer les synergies, le gouvernement de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale a décidé de rassembler les acteurs institutionnels compétents en matière de commerce (*Atrium Brussels*), d'entrepreneuriat (*Impulse Brussels*) et d'innovation (*Innoviris*) au sein de la « maison de l'entrepreneuriat ». Cette porte d'entrée unique facilitera notamment les démarches de la cible importante que sont les starters et renforcera l'accompagnement multidisciplinaire des entreprises bruxelloises.

III. Infrastructures

Malgré l'essor démographique que connaît la Région bruxelloise et qui exerce une pression sur l'accroissement du nombre de logements, la ville doit maintenir, voire élargir, des espaces à vocation

économique. Dans un contexte urbaine, on peut imaginer la présence de bureaux et de commerces, mais il faut également prévoir des ateliers de production et des zones industrielles qui sont facilement accessibles pour les travailleurs. Ceci permettra aux entreprises de s'installer et de s'agrandir à Bruxelles de sorte qu'elles ne ressentent pas le besoin de migrer vers les autres Régions belges. Ceci est prévu dans le Plan Régional de Développement Durable.

4.1.2. Accès au Financement

L'accès au financement est crucial pour la survie et le développement d'une entreprise, mais devient de plus en plus difficile à obtenir, notamment à cause de la récente crise financière. Les banques prennent en effet moins de risques et sont réticentes quant au financement de petites entreprises. La Région essaie de remédier à cette situation en développant le Fonds *bruxellois de Garantie qui propose notamment* la nouvelle « garantie expresse » classique, verte ou micro-finance, permettant l'octroi, dans certaines conditions, d'une garantie en 8 jours, et en soutenant des *sources de financement alternatif* tel que le crowd funding, Brusoc, seed capital pour entreprises innovantes ou encore les bourses pour la création d'entreprises d'économie sociale. L'intensification des interactions entre institutions privées et publiques est à explorer davantage afin d'offrir des outils permettant de faciliter l'accès des entrepreneurs au financement.

4.1.3. Innovation

La Région ne compte pas uniquement de nombreuses entreprises, mais également des centres de recherches, des universités et des hautes écoles. La stimulation de l'investissement privé en R&D à Bruxelles et la valorisation de la recherche dans les entreprises est cruciale. En effet, une meilleure *synergie entre le monde d'affaires et le monde de recherche* est un facteur clé de succès pour la croissance économique et la compétitivité bruxelloise. Pour cette raison, une attention particulière sera portée à la création et au renforcement des clusters et des incubateurs dans les secteurs porteurs bruxellois, conçus pour créer ce lien entre l'entrepreneuriat et l'innovation (voir objectif « RDI » et le point « accompagnement » ci-dessus).

4.1.4. Internationalisation

Grâce à son statut de « Capitale de l'Europe », Bruxelles bénéficie d'un rayonnement international. Cette réputation est un atout indéniable pour la promotion des exportations bruxelloises et l'attraction des investissements étrangers à Bruxelles, mais doit être complétée par une réflexion stratégique et dynamique qui répond à l'actualité.

En ce qui concerne le volet *promotion des exportations*, l'accent en 2013 était sur l'exportation lointaine, afin de tirer un avantage concurrentiel de l'euro faible. Le plan d'actions 2014 se focalisea notamment sur les pays à forte croissance (Chine, Malaisie, Singapour...) et les actions au sein de l'Union européenne. Le volet *attraction des investissements étrangers* accordera également la priorité aux pays lointains à forte croissance (Chine, Corée, Inde notamment), tout en maintenant les efforts sur les Etats-Unis et la France qui restent de loin la première source d'investissements à Bruxelles.

Ces 2 volets constituent un réel potentiel de croissance économique et de création d'emploi.

4.1.5. Économie durable

La dimension « durable » de l'industrie a pris une importance croissante au cours de ces dernières années. La Région de Bruxelles-Capitale a mis en place ou soutenu plusieurs initiatives de stimulation économique sur le développement durable, comme par exemple :

- *l'Alliance Emploi-Environnement* (voir point 3,4 ci-dessus)
- *Brussels Sustainable Economy* définit, élabore et met en œuvre un plan stratégique de développement de filières économiques dans le domaine de l'environnement.
- *Greenbizz* est un incubateur d'entreprises dans les secteurs environnementaux de l'éco-construction, des énergies renouvelables, et des éco-produits.
- *EMOVO* est un centre de recherche et de formation qui se centre sur les technologies de l'énergie et de l'environnement.
- *Ecopôle* est un centre d'économie sociale dans le domaine du réemploi et du recyclage de déchets.
- les Clusters *EcoBuild* (construction et rénovation durables) et *BrusselsGreenTech* (technologies vertes) favorisent la création, la croissance et la pérennité des entreprises actives dans ces secteurs.

Dans le cadre du Plan régional de développement durable, la région prévoit de mettre en œuvre une stratégie de développement économique durable s'appuyant sur le concept de Smart City.

4.2. Les fonds structurels et d'investissements

Les priorités retenues dans l'accord de partenariat 2014-2020 sont étroitement articulées avec les objectifs de la Stratégie Europe 2020 et complètent les stratégies régionales développées dans ce cadre. L'amélioration de la compétitivité des PME, le développement de la recherche et de l'innovation, l'offre de formations permettant de soutenir la productivité, la lutte contre la pauvreté et la promotion de l'inclusion sociale ainsi que l'utilisation efficace des ressources et la réduction des émissions de gaz à effet de serre sont les principaux objectifs qui seront poursuivis au travers des différents programmes.

Les fonds structurels et d'investissement FEDER et FSE actifs en région bruxelloise¹⁰ sont un levier important permettant d'établir un lien effectif entre la Stratégie Europe 2020, le Programme National de Réforme, les politiques menées par la Région bruxelloise et les défis démographiques, environnementaux et socio-économiques auxquels la Région fait face.

Les fonds interviennent en complément des politiques publiques menées par la Région pour renforcer structurellement et de manière durable, inclusive et innovante l'économie bruxelloise et soutenir l'intégration sociale par l'organisation de formations, la réinsertion professionnelle, l'inclusion active ou encore la promotion de l'égalité des chances.

La cohérence déjà forte des programmes FEDER et FSE 2007-2013 avec les cadres politiques régionaux, nationaux et européens a formé une assise solide pour l'élaboration des programmes 2014-2020 et le démarrage rapide des projets dès 2014.

Enfin, la Coopération territoriale européenne permet le développement d'échange de bonnes pratiques et d'innovations avec d'autres régions d'Europe -qui peuvent ensuite être transposés dans la politique régulière en cas de succès.

¹⁰ Trois programmes opérationnels (PO) actifs en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale sont détaillés ici: le PO FEDER Régional, ainsi que les PO FSE régionaux et communautaires (Wallonie-Bruxelles). Notons que les PO FSE Fédéraux et Flamands développent également leurs activités sur le territoire de la Région.

4.2.1 Fonds Social Européen (FSE)- programme Emploi

I. Programmation 2007-2013

Le Fonds social européen (FSE) constitue l'instrument majeur de l'Union européenne en matière de politique d'emploi européenne. Dans le cadre de l'objectif 'Compétitivité régionale et Emploi', le FSE vise à renforcer la compétitivité et l'attractivité de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale (RBC) ainsi que l'emploi en anticipant les changements économiques et sociaux.

Le Programme opérationnel (PO) élaboré pour la RBC a plus particulièrement pour objectif de favoriser l'intégration professionnelle des demandeurs d'emploi, dont les demandeurs d'emploi les plus exposés au risque d'exclusion ; d'augmenter la participation des femmes sur le marché du travail, notamment par une meilleure conciliation de leur vie professionnelle et de leur vie privée ; et la création d'un climat favorable à la fourniture de services adéquats en matière d'emploi via le déploiement d'une concertation organisée sous forme de partenariats thématiques coordonnés.

Le service FSE d'Actiris a ainsi assuré la gestion administrative et financière du PO FSE Objectif 'Compétitivité régionale et emploi' de la RBC (programmation 2007-2013).

De 2007 à 2013, près de 29 millions d'euros ont été investis par le FSE dans les projets suivants, qui s'inscrivent dans les trois priorités dégagées pour la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale : (1) l'accompagnement des demandeurs d'emploi en vue d'accroître leurs possibilités d'accès au marché du travail et l'amélioration de l'intégration professionnelle des personnes en situation ou menacées d'exclusion, (2) l'augmentation de la participation des femmes au marché du travail, notamment par une meilleure conciliation de la vie professionnelle et de la vie privée, (3) la coordination de la démarche partenariale et anticipation des besoins

II. Programmation 2014-2020

Une analyse du contexte socio-économique de la RBC a été réalisée afin d'identifier les principaux défis et de déterminer les priorités en matière d'emploi à prendre en compte pour les sept années de la future programmation. Sur base de cette analyse socio-économique, le futur Programme Opérationnel FSE de la RBC s'articule autour de trois axes prioritaires qui sont déclinées en 2 Objectifs Thématiques et 4 Priorités d'Investissement comme décrit dans le tableau ci-dessous :

| Objectifs thématiques retenus | Priorités d'investissement retenues |
|--|---|
| Promotion de l'emploi et soutien à la mobilité professionnelle | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- l'intégration durable sur le marché du travail des jeunes qui ne travaillent pas, ne font pas d'études ou ne suivent pas de formation.- l'accès à l'emploi pour les demandeurs d'emploi et les personnes inactives (y compris les initiatives locales pour l'emploi) et le soutien à la mobilité professionnelle- la modernisation et le renforcement des institutions du marché du travail, y compris des actions visant à améliorer la mobilité professionnelle transnationale. |
| Promotion de l'inclusion sociale et lutte contre la pauvreté | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- inclusion active |

4.2.2 Fonds social européen –« Wallonie-Bruxelles 2020. eu », volet bruxellois

Les différentes évaluations du programme opérationnel Wallonie-Bruxelles 2007-2013 ont émis un ensemble de recommandations en vue de la préparation de la nouvelle période de programmation 2014-2020. Ces recommandations concernent tout à la fois la poursuite des objectifs fixés, les priorités essentielles et la gestion du programme.

Les enjeux fondamentaux pour le Programme opérationnel FSE « Wallonie-Bruxelles 2020. eu » sont :

- l'augmentation du taux d'emploi ;
- la lutte contre la pauvreté ;
- la stimulation d'activités créatrices de valeur ajoutée ;
- la transition vers une économie de la connaissance ;
- l'amélioration de la qualité de la main-d'œuvre et son adéquation avec les besoins des entreprises,

le tout dans une optique de transition vers une économie fondée sur une utilisation rationnelle des ressources et à faible émission de carbone.

Le programme opérationnel FSE s'articule dès lors autour de trois axes et une initiative transversale qui constituent les principales priorités de financement pour la programmation : entreprises et créativité, connaissances et compétences, société inclusive et emploi, l'initiative transversale Jeunesse.

- Entreprises et créativités

Afin que les entreprises bénéficient d'un personnel formé et capable de s'adapter aux évolutions technologiques et aux défis de la mondialisation, cet axe privilégiera à Bruxelles la formation des indépendants et des créateurs d'entreprises.

- Connaissances et compétences

Les actions cofinancées par le FSE viseront à renforcer la compétitivité des entreprises à travers différentes mesures ciblées en faveur de publics tels que les demandeurs d'emploi et les personnes inactives qui reçoivent des formations pointues porteuses d'emplois, dans les métiers émergents et d'avenir ou des formations à haute valeur ajoutée.

- Société inclusive et emploi

L'approche prônée par cette priorité est une approche intégrée d'insertion sociale et professionnelle de publics discriminés, de personnes défavorisées ou les plus éloignées du marché du travail. Au regard des spécificités d'intervention du FSE, l'objectif global de cet axe est d'améliorer l'accès à l'emploi, ou à tout le moins de réduire la distance à l'emploi, de personnes ou de publics particuliers, ainsi que de contribuer à diminuer les effets de stigmatisation liés au cursus scolaire, à l'origine nationale, à l'identité sexuelle ou au parcours socioprofessionnel des personnes concernées.

- Initiative transversale pour l'intégration durable des jeunes sur le marché de l'emploi

En lien avec l'Initiative Emploi Jeunes, un volet transversal prône l'intégration durable sur le marché du travail des jeunes. Les objectifs sont notamment de réduire les conséquences négatives du décrochage scolaire ainsi que la prise en compte de la problématique des NEETs. Afin d'atteindre ces objectifs et ceux fixés par le dispositif bruxellois de Garantie pour la Jeunesse, des actions porteront notamment sur :

- la promotion de la formation en alternance ;
- les actions d'accrochage, d'orientation des jeunes ;
- le rapprochement des jeunes des réalités du monde de l'entreprise ;
- la formation et le coaching professionnel des jeunes, en ce y compris via des stages en entreprise ;
- l'accompagnement de la transition à l'emploi des jeunes qui sortent du système d'enseignement ;
- l'accompagnement vers l'acquisition d'une certification pour des jeunes qui ont trouvé un emploi, mais qui ont décroché de l'enseignement ou qui ont terminé l'enseignement sans certification.

4.2.2 FEDER

I. Programmation 2007-2013

Le diagnostic établi par la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale dans son Programme opérationnel 2007-2013 a permis de définir une Zone d'Intervention Prioritaire - englobant le canal et les quartiers centraux - au sein de laquelle l'ensemble des moyens FEDER sont investis. Cette stratégie de concentration des moyens et de ciblage sur les quartiers les plus défavorisés a permis le financement de nombreux projets innovants en matière de soutien à l'économie de la connaissance, aux PME et à l'entrepreneuriat, au développement des compétences, d'efficacité énergétique et d'environnement et à l'attractivité et la revitalisation du territoire.

Plus précisément, ce sont quatre groupes d'opération, représentant au total 34 projets, qui contribuent à renforcer les politiques régionales et à mettre en œuvre la Stratégie Europe 2020 :

- le soutien au développement et à la création d'activités économiques;
- le soutien à la mise en place d'un pôle de développement urbain lié aux secteurs économiques de l'environnement;
- l'amélioration de l'attractivité et l'image de la Zone d'Intervention Prioritaire ;
- le renforcement des infrastructures de proximité en lien avec l'emploi et la formation, via notamment le financement de centres de formation et d'actions menant à la création d'emploi ainsi que la création de places d'accueil pour la petite enfance

II. Programmation 2014-2020

Face au triple défi économique, environnemental et de réduction de la dualisation socio-économique, la stratégie du programme opérationnel FEDER 2014-2020 vise l'amélioration du fonctionnement du métabolisme urbain de la Région. Il s'agit de se fonder sur les acquis de la programmation précédente et de considérer cette fois la ville entière et comme un écosystème qui importe, métabolise et rejette

différents flux (énergétiques, économiques, etc.). A travers quatre axes complémentaires (soutien à la R&D ; stimulation à la création de PME dans les secteurs porteurs ; développement d'une économie circulaire en promouvant une meilleure utilisation des ressources ; réduction de la dualisation sociale, économique et environnementale) le programme opérationnel entend investir dans les projets qui répondront aux objectifs suivants :

- soutenir les filières de développement socio-économiques porteuses en termes d'emploi (non délocalisable) pour les bruxellois ;
- soutenir l'innovation et les activités qui répondent aux défis bruxellois ;
- relocaliser l'économie au profit des citoyens (dont les travailleurs) ;
- travailler sur l'amélioration du cadre de vie des Bruxellois ;
- favoriser les circuits courts, l'économie de fonctionnalité et l'écologie industrielle ;
- développer des business modèles durables et innovants.

Le Programme opérationnel repose de plus sur deux principes d'action :

- Le premier vise à concentrer ses efforts, dans une logique de filière, sur le développement de secteurs économiques identifiés comme porteurs en termes d'emploi pour les bruxellois et en termes de développement économique régional ;
- Le second vise à territorialiser les projets d'infrastructures dans les zones les plus fragilisées de la capitale et dans celles qui présentent un potentiel stratégique de développement particulier.

4.3. Les Contrats de quartiers durables

Les Contrats de quartier durables jouent un rôle de premier plan dans les politiques transversales de rénovation urbaine et de développement des quartiers fragilisés. Ils constituent le principal outil intégré de mise œuvre de la Ville Durable à l'échelle des quartiers. Ces contrats auxquels les habitants sont étroitement associés via un dispositif de participation très important, permettent à la Région et aux Communes de réaliser des programmes pour améliorer le cadre et les conditions de vie des citoyens par des réalisations concrètes, comme l'aménagement d'espaces publics et de parcs, la production de logements et d'équipements collectifs. Ils fédèrent également une large gamme d'actions tournées vers la formation, l'insertion socioprofessionnelle et la cohésion sociale.

Depuis le 28 janvier 2010, une nouvelle ordonnance a permis de réformer le dispositif en y intégrant les enjeux du développement durables et les préoccupations environnementales propres à une Ville durable au 21ème siècle. En 2014, 4 nouveaux Contrats de quartier Durables ont été sélectionnés et totalisent 44.000.000 € d'investissements destinés pour la période 2014-2018 au renforcement durable des quartiers fragilisés du territoire de la RBC.

En agissant sur l'ensemble des dimensions de la durabilité à l'échelle des quartiers populaires de la RBC –cohésion sociale, excellence environnementale, développement économique- cet outil de rénovation urbaine intégrée participe pleinement aux objectifs fixés par la Stratégie Europe 2020.

4.4. Simplification administrative et modernisation de la fonction publique

Actuellement, il existe trois enjeux en matière de simplification administrative en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale : réduire les frais et charges administratives des PME et des ménages, revaloriser le travail des agents et contribuer à une image positive de la fonction publique bruxelloise, enfin, réduire les dépenses réalisées par la Région pour des fins administratives. Afin de faire face à ces trois défis et d'informer régulièrement le public concernant le Plan bruxellois de réduction des charges administratives du Gouvernement et de recueillir l'opinion des utilisateurs, la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale a créé un site internet entièrement consacré à la simplification administrative : www.sanstracas.be.

Les étapes suivantes ont déjà été entreprises :

- *Diminuer les charges administratives dans le cadre d'adjudications publiques.* La plate-forme e-Procurement a été introduite, obligeant la mise en ligne des cahiers des charges et permettant l'introduction d'offres électroniques. L'administration ne peut uniquement réclamer les documents dont elle ne peut disposer électroniquement. Tout ceci équivaut à une économie administrative de 85% des charges pour les adjudications publiques.
- *Diminuer les charges administratives des textes de loi.* Le 22 décembre 2010, le gouvernement a approuvé l'introduction du test « Sans Tracas ». Les modalités du test « Sans Tracas » ont ensuite été fixées par le Gouvernement le 24 mars 2011. Ce test est une version légère d'une Analyse de l'Impact de la Réglementation (AIR) et doit entraîner une réduction drastique des charges administratives pour la nouvelle réglementation bruxelloise.
- *Modernisation des formulaires de demande.* Ce projet est actuellement divisé en trois parties. Tout d'abord, l'objectif est de simplifier tous les formulaires, pas uniquement au niveau du contenu mais également la manière de demander les informations. L'objectif est que les formulaires soient compréhensibles pour le public cible. La deuxième partie concerne **la mise en ligne de tous les formulaires**. A cet égard, le Gouvernement a décidé d'un guichet électronique pour l'ensemble de la région : « Irisbox ». Tous les nouveaux formulaires y sont mis en ligne depuis le 1er janvier 2012, les formulaires existants devant y être disponibles au plus tard pour le 1er janvier 2014.
- *L'application NOVA permet quant à elle une gestion intégrée des dossiers relatifs aux demandes de permis d'urbanisme, de permis de lotir et de permis d'environnement, ainsi que des dossiers liés à la performance énergétique des bâtiments.* Elle permet en effet aux administrations communales et régionales en charge des permis d'urbanisme d'instruire ces dossiers et de s'échanger les informations dont elles ont besoin.

Depuis le 1er mars 2012, la Région a mis en ligne sur le portail régional de l'urbanisme une application de « permis en ligne », avancée majeure en termes de simplification et de communication sur les procédures administratives relatives aux permis d'urbanisme demandés, octroyés, non octroyés en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale.

Dans la foulée de cette application et de l'adaptation des formulaires de demande de permis, une démarche complète de dématérialisation a été engagée pour donner aux citoyens la possibilité d'introduire leur demande de permis directement en ligne.

Annex 7: Youth guarantee implementation plan

Belgian Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP)

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|--------|
|  Synerjob introduction | p. 3 |
|  Federal contribution to Implementation Plan | p. 9 |
|  Flanders Implementation Plan | p. 13 |
|  Wallonia Implementation Plan | p. 39 |
|  Bruxelles-Capital Implementation Plan | p. 75 |
|  German-speaking Implementation Plan | p. 119 |

OBJET : Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan – Synerjob Introduction

The Belgian contribution to the Youth Guarantee

Youth unemployment and inactivity is a major concern for Belgian authorities who welcome the European Youth Guarantee with genuine interest. From January 1st, 2014, the different regional authorities will launch the implementation of the Recommendation by introducing new measures that will ensure to every young person under 25 a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed.

For many years and particularly since the beginning of the economic, social and financial crisis, Belgian authorities have engaged in structural changes to provide higher quality training and to facilitate the integration of the youth workforce into the labour market, with a dedicated focus on the less qualified population and the youth who left school without qualifications. The Regions worked notably in strengthening the relationships between education policies, training and employment. The objectives are to ensure a better matching between skills and labour market needs alongside with an early intervention giving the opportunity to young people to get in touch with the environment of enterprises (development of apprenticeship education and training, strengthening of vocational training, promotion of technical and scientific skills ...).

The federal government supports the Youth Guarantee mainly through the unemployment benefit system. The specific system for school-leavers who become job-seekers, the integration allowance, is a strong encouragement for this group to register themselves with the regional PES. The federal monitoring within this system and within the broader unemployment benefit system contributes to ensuring their active job search. Moreover, the federal measures to reduce labour costs for young workers (mainly the low skilled) encourage their hiring by employers. Additional federal measures for long-term young unemployed facilitate the work of the regional PESs for this target groups, allowing them to focus on the youth guarantee beneficiaries.

Most recently, on the basis of a Federal initiative launched in 2013 – creating 10.000 *workplace integration traineeships* for young school leavers with at most a secondary school certificate, regional authorities have adopted the required legislation for the implementation of adapted and tailored-made “Transition traineeships” schemes at regional level.

The actual regional labour market contexts, in which the Youth Guarantee is being implemented, and the identified needs within the regions are described in the following Implementation Plans. Note that, due to elections and therefore new political context in Belgium, the content of these plans may evolve to a certain extent, but not undergo significant changes.

The Synerjob coordination

Complying with the Belgian Constitution, the Belgian federal system involves three linguistic Communities (Dutch, French, and German) and three economic Regions (Brussels-Capital, Flanders and Wallonia) of Belgium. Regional and Community levels exercise their allocated competencies, namely Employment and Active Labour Market policies (at regional level) and Education policies (at Community level).

As underlined in the 2013 Belgium National Reform Programme, the cooperation between regional Public Employment and Vocational Training Services has been strengthened over time, principally through the reinforcement of interregional labour market mobility, on the basis of an interregional cooperation agreement.

Synerjob is thus born from this operational cooperation. Synerjob is the Belgian Federation of public services involved in the areas of employment and vocational training in Belgium.

The Federation was created in July 2007 as a non-profit organisation according to the Belgian Law, gathering under one banner four Public Employment Services - namely **VDAB**, the Public Employment and Vocational Training Service of Flanders; **le Forem**, the Public Employment and Vocational Training Service of Wallonia; **Actiris**, the Public Employment Service of Brussels-Capital Region and **ADG**, the Public Employment and Vocational training Service of German-speaking Community -; as well as the public Vocational Training Service of Brussels-Capital Region, **Bruxelles-Formation**.

The Federation earned its stripes through its substantial experience of close cooperation as to Employment and Training policies at Belgian level (including the issue and challenge of tackling youth inactivity and boosting youth employment in a proactive approach) and additionally at European level as Belgian Public Employment Services cooperated- within the European network of Public Employment Services and contributed to the EU2020 strategy).

Synerjob members are exchanging good practices in all matters related to Employment and training, including the issue of young unemployment, they also cooperate in interregional mobility and develop benchmarking between members of the Federation. There is a close linkage between all members of the Federation.

This is the reason why **the Synerjob Federation** has been identified as the Belgian “**single point of contact**”¹ in charge of communicating with the European Commission on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

Considering the constitutional context of Belgium described above, the interdependence of employment and training systems in each region/community and the necessity of building up partnership-based approaches and ensuring cooperation and synergies with concerned institutions, actors and operators, Synerjob, as “Youth Guarantee” coordinator, was appointed to transmit the Belgian national Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, that is thus structured according to four regional implementation plans, as no coordination structure is

¹ Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee (2013/C 120/01).

foreseen in the Belgian Constitution regarding employment matters and each region is in charge of the measures related to its own labour market.

Dialogue with other authorities and stakeholders and partnerships approaches

As mentioned in the “PES 2020 Strategy Output paper” (PES contribution to EU 2020), a critical success factor for the EU 2020 strategy is an operating and running labour market. Public Employment Services are therefore mandated to fulfil “conducting functions”, notably by encouraging labour market actors to cooperate and innovate, to collaborate closely with public or private partners and to align labour market actors with labour market policies

In the meantime, European Public Employment Services are asked to facilitate career evolutions/conversions/change of direction and to smooth the transitions between learning and working which, in fact, they often have the opportunity to do. They initiate and encourage interaction and cooperation across different career transitions actors including social partners and stakeholders in the fields of education and vocational training.

The four Belgian Public Employment Services enjoy then a privileged position for building structural partnerships approaches with relevant authorities – notably Vocational training and Apprenticeship organisations as well as Education and Youth authorities – officiating the “conducting role” as foreseen in the framework of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee,.

The Synerjob Federation’s members are fully aware of the importance to involve and associate upstream, at regional and local levels, relevant institutions, partners and operators for supporting and participating to the delivery of the Youth guarantee.

These close regional cooperation and partnerships approaches as along with collective or multi-stakeholders initiatives, are described in the following regional Implementation Plans.

Reaching the NEETS in Belgium

The Belgian social security system induces that young school-leavers automatically register as jobseekers to the appropriate regional Public Employment Service (VDAB in Flanders, Actiris in Brussels-Capital Region, Forem in Wallonia, ADG in the German speaking Community) to be eligible (precondition) to social allowances at local level (Municipality) or to inclusion/unemployment benefits at national level. Therefore, although some young people completely escape from PES data systems and registers, the rate is relatively low in Belgium, although there are regional variations. As detailed in the following Implementation Plans, it is considered that a large number of NEETS are registered within a system or register and is therefore the focus of PES.

Regarding young people who are neither in employment nor in education or training and who would not be registered as jobseekers, regional authorities and Public Employment Services need to develop and implement adapted and tailor-made actions, in cooperation with other authorities and inclusion operators and structures. Implementing a partnership approach, this targeted population need to be identified, reached out to, and re-engaged back into education, training, apprenticeship or into work applying personalised inclusion pathways, allowing personal background and specific social and familial situation to be taken into consideration.

Common offers for the Belgian Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP)

2. Implementing the Youth Guarantee Scheme at national level

2.1. Formulation of the national Youth Guarantee

- All actors involved in the Youth Guarantee implementation in Belgium follow a common identification process through social assistance and protection centres, public employment services, and partners. All actors have also identified the need to increase their knowledge of the targeted population and are facing the same difficulty regarding the identification of the NEETs, as far as the non-registered part of the NEETS is concerned. This should be, however, a relatively small part of all NEETS. Therefore, all actors agreed to organize a common seminar on methodologies to identify and integrate those NEETS who do not register by themselves through the common identification process.

2.2 Partnership approaches (see YG CR, rec.2-7 and SWD section 3.1) (*approx.: 500 words= 1 page*)

All actors involved in the Youth Guarantee implementation in Belgium have developed partnership approaches in order to improve the effectiveness of the proposed measures.

- We apply a multi-sector integrated approach for the public actors involved ;
- We do consultation and cooperation with non-profit youth and integration organizations ;
- We develop partnerships between private and public sector ;
- We implement interregional and international mobility.

2.3 Early intervention and activation; (see YG CR, rec. 8-10 and SWD section 3.2) *(approx.: 750 words= 1,5 pages)*

In terms of early intervention and activation, all actors involved in the Youth Guarantee implementation in Belgium have a common goal: provide upstream top quality services to support the targeted public into their transition from training to work environment.

- We provide labour market information for and in schools
- We prevent early drop outs and offer second chance education programmes
- We do Youth targeted counselling / information

2.4 Supportive measures for labour market integration (see YG CR, rec. 11-20, and SWD section 3.3) *(approx.: 2000 words=4 pages)*

As for supportive measures for labour market integration, all actors involved in the Youth Guarantee implementation in Belgium are offering a wide range of measures based on a common goal and dedicated to three shared axes:

- We increase the number of traineeships' offers
- We provide personalised guidance based on the identified individual needs
- We provide intensive training

4. Assessment and continuous improvement of schemes (see YG CR rec. 24-26)

All actors are dedicated to assess and continuously improve the initial proposed schemes. All actors will be monitoring the actions through the common European Social Fund indicators.

Federal contribution

To the Belgian Youth Guarantee Implementation
Plan (YGIP)

Federal contribution to the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan

The federal government supports the Youth Guarantee mainly through the unemployment benefit system. The specific system for school-leavers that become job-seekers, the integration allowance, is a strong encouragement for this group to register with the regional PES. The federal monitoring within this system and within the broader unemployment benefit system contributes to ensuring their active job search. Moreover, the federal measures to reduce labour costs for young workers (mainly the low skilled) encourage their hiring by employers. Additional federal measures for long-term young unemployed facilitate the work of the regional PESs for this target groups, allowing them to focus on the youth guarantee beneficiaries.

2.2. Key organisations

| Name | Type | Level | Role | Coordination |
|--|------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| National Employment Office (RVA/ONEM) | Federal agency | National (federal) level | Responsible for the payment of the integration allowance to young people and for the follow-up of the search behaviour of young unemployed | NEO and the regional PES coordinate on a structural basis |
| FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue | Federal ministry | National (federal) level | Responsible for legislation on SSC reductions, labour market entry traineeships | Coordinates with regional ministries on a regular basis and through the interministerial conference meetings |

2.3. Key reforms and initiatives

| Name | Objective | Target group | Scale | Organisation | Timetable | Implementation cost |
|--|---|---|----------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Integration allowance (Inschakelingsuitkering, allocation d'intégration) | Provide an encouragement for registration at the PES and active job search | All young job-seekers | National | NEO | Reform implemented on January 1 2013 | Included in the normal unemployment benefit budget |
| Right to social integration (recht op maatschappelijke integratie / droit à l'intégration sociale) | Provide an income and encourage job-search for young people without any income through the provision of social assistance benefits, linked to an individual | All legal residents <26 with insufficient | National | Local welfare offices (OCMW/CPAS) | On-going | Included in the normal social assistance budget |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|-------------|----------|----------------|---|---|
| | integration agreement (including work experience, training...) | income | | | | |
| Collective obligation to the employers to provide trainee/apprentice places representing 1% of the workforce | Ensure the availability of sufficient training places | All workers | National | FPS Employment | Collective obligation from January 1 2013 (no sanctions foreseen, to be reconsidered in 2015) | / |

Integration allowance :

- All young school-leavers having completed sufficiently qualifying studies enter into an integration period (310 days), after which they can qualify for the allowance. Former apprentices qualify immediately.
- During the integration period, a regular monitoring interview takes place (after 6 and 10 months). Two positive evaluations are needed to qualify for the allowance.
- The allowance has a limited duration (3 years, but it can be extended) and only people younger than 30 can enter.
- The main effect of the allowance is a strong encouragement to register as job-seekers with the regional PES, which significantly broadens the reach of the PES and reduces the number of non-registered NEETs. Since the right to social integration (social assistance) in most cases comes with the same obligation to register as a job-seeker, it has the same effect.

2.4. Supportive measures

| Name | Objective | Target group | Scale | Organisation | Timetable | Cost |
|--|---|---|----------|--|----------------|--|
| Integration traineeships (instapstage / stage de transition) | Provide full time training places that can last from three to six months. The trainee receives a monthly fee from the employer (200 EUR) and an in-work benefit from social security of about 700 EUR | Low skilled young (<30) long-term (> 6 month) unemployment) | National | FPS Employment in cooperation with regions | January 1 2013 | 41,8 million € foreseen, for maximum 10.000 youngsters |
| Social security | Encourage hiring of young workers by | Low-skilled | National | NSSO | On-going, | Included in |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|----------|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| contributions (SSC) reductions | reducing labour costs | young workers (different amounts related to their specific situation) | | (RSZ/ONSS) | reinforced in 2013 | the budget for SSC reduction in general |
| Follow-up of young unemployed | Reinforced monitoring of active job search : two check-up interviews in the (310 day) period before receiving the integration allowance, six-monthly interviews once receiving an allowance | Young unemployed (<26) and recipients of an integration allowance | National | NEO in cooperation with regional PESs | Latest reform entered into force on July 1 2013 | Included in the budget for the follow-up of all unemployed |
| Right to social integration (recht op maatschappelijke integratie / droit à l'intégration sociale) | Provide an income and encourage job-search for young people without any income through the provision of social assistance benefits, linked to an individual integration agreement (including work experience, training...) | All legal residents <26 with insufficient income | National | Local welfare offices (OCMW/CPAS) | On-going | |

3 Funding

/

4. Assessment

4.1. Planned assessment

| Name | Expected change | Measurement | Planned evaluations |
|-------------------------------|--|-------------------|---|
| Follow-up of young unemployed | More frequent follow-up leading to faster integration in the labour market | Monitoring by NEO | Six-monthly evaluation, together with the social partners and the Regions |

Flanders contribution

To the Belgian Youth Guarantee Implementation
Plan (YGIP)



samen sterk voor werk

Outline for the national Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans (YGIP)

The Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans are intended to set out how the Youth Guarantee will be implemented at national level, the respective roles of public authorities and other organisations, how it will be financed, the measures to be put in place, how progress will be assessed and the timetable. The Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans are intended to be guided by the Youth Guarantee building blocks¹ as identified in the Council Recommendation. The Commission's Staff Working Document (SWD)² can serve as a handbook, giving detailed and useful guidance on possible policy measures in the different sections below.

1. Context/Rationale

Nature of youth unemployment

In Flanders there were 48,172 young job-seekers at the end of February 2014, of whom 28,478 were men (59.1%) and 19,694 were women (40.9%). 23,062 of them (almost 48%) are low-skilled (no diploma or degree at all). In comparison with February 2013, you can see that the unemployment of low-skilled young job-seekers has diminished (-7.3%) in contrast to young people with a secondary school diploma (+13%) and the high-skilled (+15.4%). The low-skilled were the first to be affected by the crisis, but in the longer term there are also even fewer jobs for the higher skilled job-seekers.

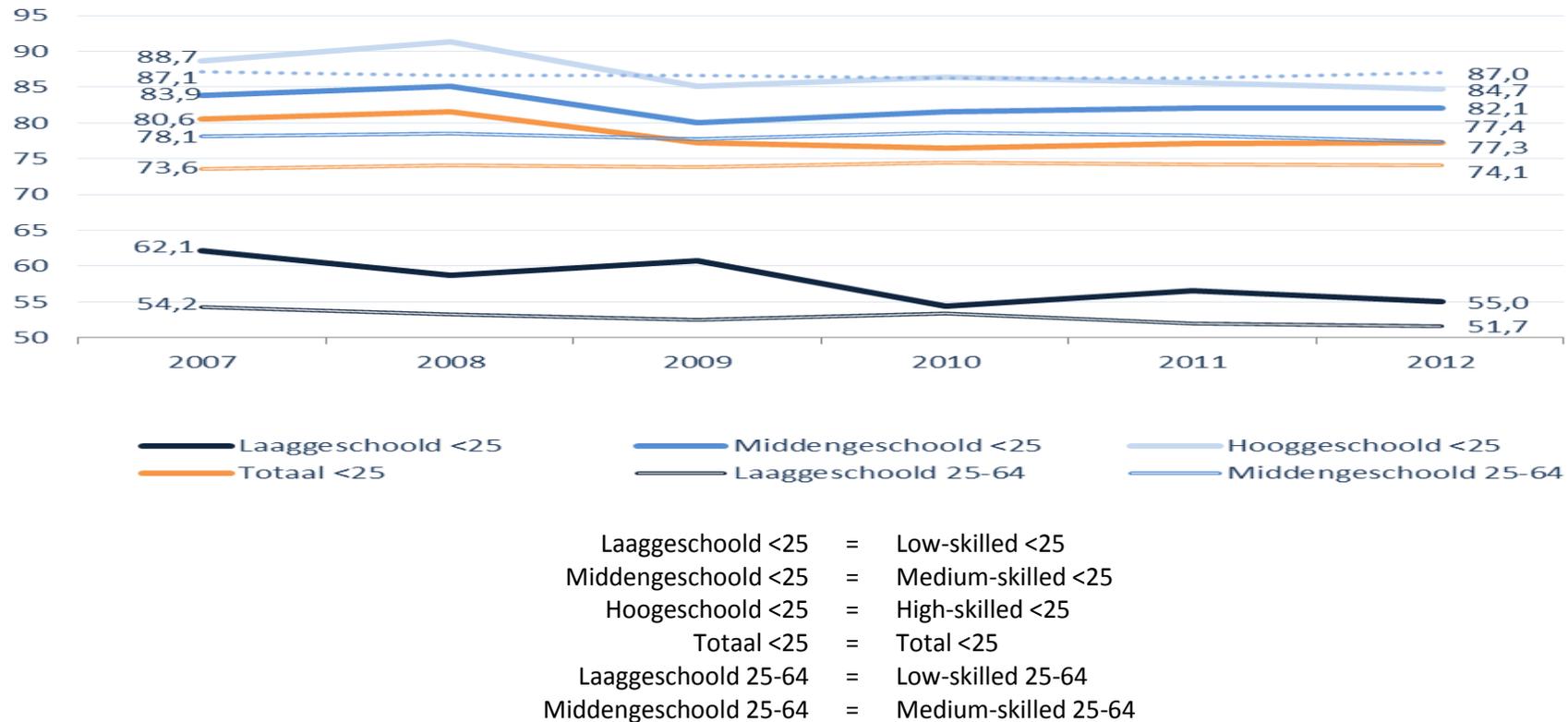
That said, low-skilled young people continue to face difficulties on the labour market. We see this when we look at the employment rates (the percentage of the population that is in paid employment, mostly a guarantee for social integration and not dependent on social welfare or benefits). The comparison of the employment rate (and the 2007-2012 evolution) by age and education level (figure) provides interesting insights. Immediately it becomes clear that there is a very low employment rate among low-skilled job-seekers. In 2012, only 55% were in paid employment. The gap with the medium-skilled and high-skilled is huge: 82.1% for the medium-skilled young people and 84.7% for the high-skilled young people. The comparison based on the employment rate is purely quantitative and says nothing about the difference in pay and working conditions for example. After an entry into the labour market which is

¹ Building up partnership-based approaches; Early intervention and activation; Supportive measures for labour market integration; Use of Union funds; Assessment and continuous improvement of schemes; Implementation of Youth Guarantee schemes.

² Commission Staff Working Document (SWD) Accompanying the Proposal for a Council Recommendation on Establishing a Youth Guarantee {COM(2012) 729 final}, available in 22 EU languages: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1036&newsId=1731&furtherNews=yes>.

sometimes very difficult, more young people than average are employed in temporary jobs, the wages are much lower than average and they are more often employed below the education or qualification level they have achieved, especially at the beginning of their career.

Figure The evolution of the employment rate by age and education-level (Flemish Region; 2007-2012)

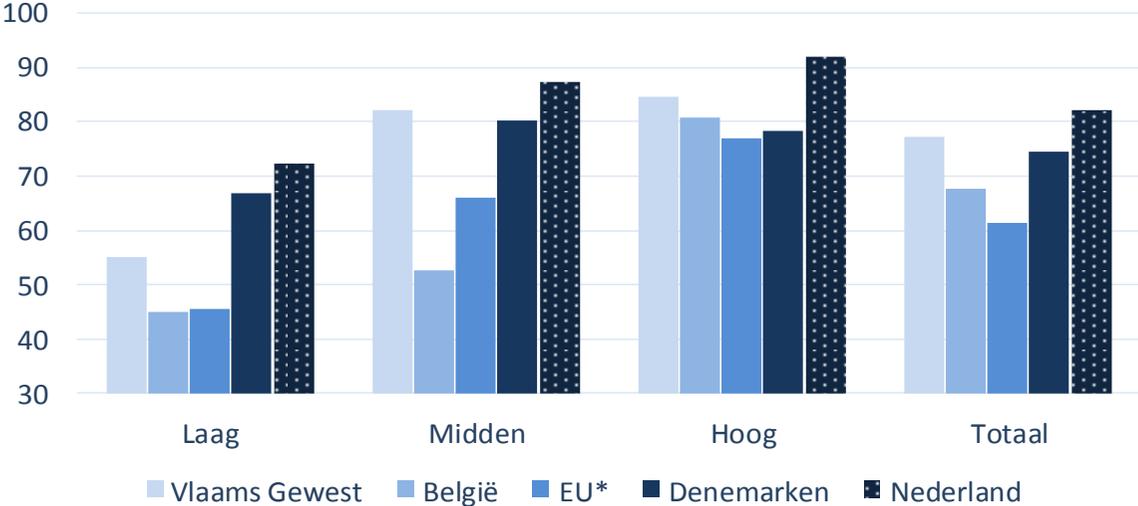


The 2007 - 2012 evolution also indicates a growing gap between the low-skilled and the higher-skilled. Since the crisis especially, the employment rate among low-skilled young people has diminished significantly (-7), while among medium-skilled young people the decrease is the smallest (-1.8).

Also, the international perspective shows once more that only the low-skilled young people are doing less well. Even though their employment rate (55%) is a little higher than the EU average (46%), it is still much lower than Denmark (67%) and the Netherlands (72%). Medium-skilled and high-skilled Flemish

young people are in a good position: slightly higher than Denmark and slightly lower than the Netherlands (where 92% of high-skilled young people are in work). In conclusion, we can say that in an international perspective, the overall employment rate among Flemish young people is actually fairly high.

Figure Employment rate of young people according to their educational level (Flemish Region, Belgium, EU, Denmark and the Netherlands; 2012)



- Laag = Low
- Midden = Medium
- Hoog = High
- Totaal = Total
- Vlaams Gewest = Flemish Region
- België = Belgium
- EU = EU
- Denemarken = Denmark
- Nederland = The Netherlands

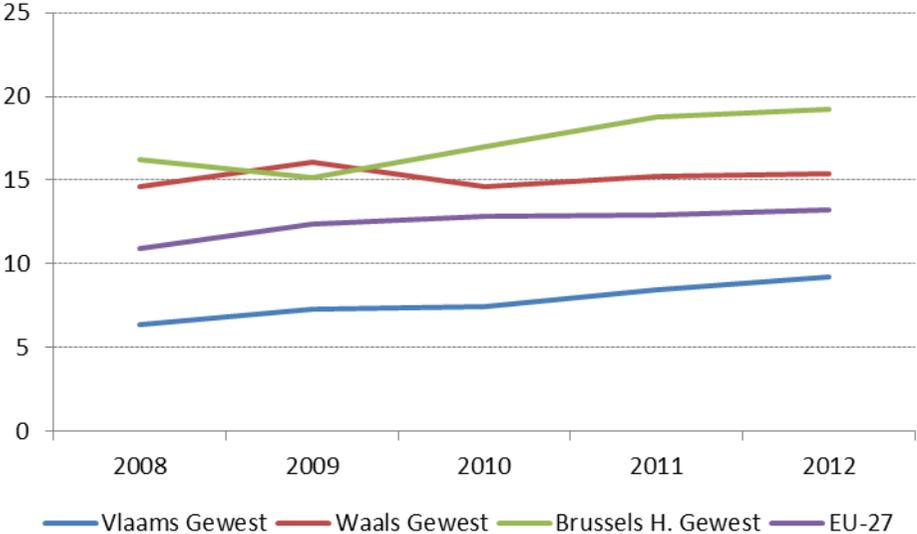
* EU percentage is underestimated because there are no 'exclusive to students' data available for member states such as Germany and the United Kingdom where young people have a high employment rate.

More recent data indicate declining (paid) employment in Belgium and Flanders. Because of the zero growth, the high number of restructurings and bankruptcies, with high job losses in small and medium enterprises, there is a negative 'expansion demand'. But also the 'replacement demand' is not high enough to halt youth unemployment.

NEETs in Flanders

Nobody knows exactly how big the group of the NEETs (young people who are 'Not in Education, Employment, or Training') is or the extent to which they are known at the VDAB. The recent 'Early School Leaving & Youth Unemployment' publication (by M. Elchardus & S. De Groof) tells us that some young people never register at VDAB or that they withdraw from unemployment after a while. The exact percentage is not known. So some of the NEETS are registered at VDAB, but a certain unknown percentage of them have withdrawn from the labour market. Nevertheless, there are a few indications of how big the total NEET group is. In 2012, 9.2% of 15-24 year olds were NEETs (figures from the European survey of labour). And the percentage is rising due to the crisis. Only 35.1% of them are looking for a job. 11.5% of 20-24 year olds are NEETs and 42.3% of them are looking for a job.

Figure: Evolution of NEETs (15-24 year olds) by region and EU 27



Vlaams Gewest = Flemish Region
 Waals Gewest = Walloon Region

Brussels H. Gewest = Brussels-Capital Region
 EU-27 = EU-27

NEET young people belong to the vulnerable target group. This vulnerability can be the result of all sorts of issues: pregnancy and motherhood, long-term illness, invalidity, bereavement, conscious and deliberate decision to stay at home, move to another country, issues of poverty, non-show when invited by the VDAB to a meeting, etc. Their vulnerability prevents them from looking for work, resulting in them becoming even more distanced from the labour market until they disappear off the radar completely. These young people are explicitly in need of extra remedial activities before they can enter the labour market, but are inaccessible through the preventive approach of for example the youth work plan.

The preliminary trajectories for vulnerable groups have therefore been created, subsidised by the European Social Fund. Since January 2014, local partners in a number of Flemish cities have been searching for the NEET target group via a location strategy, and are drawing up an action plan to eliminate the bottlenecks to work. These preliminary trajectories are intended to result in the target group being in a stronger position to be guided towards the labour market. The involvement of a broad local network and tailor-made approaches are essential for finding the NEET young people.

Existing key institutional actors in the area of youth employment and NEETS

| Key institutional actor | Roles and responsibilities | Target groups | Services and measures offered |
|--|---|--|---|
| Flemish Ministry of Work and Social Economy | Advice, evaluation, follow-up and coordination on policy regarding work and social economy in Flanders, including youth employment/unemployment | Minister, Government of Flanders, policy makers, employers, citizens | Advice, evaluation and follow-up Employment measures in social economy |
| Federal Public Service Employment | Advice and legal assistance on labour law and social security | Minister, Government, citizens, employers | Labour law |
| Public Employment Service of Flanders (VDAB) | Flemish Service for Job Mediation and Vocational Training. VDAB has, as the career director, the mission of creating for all Flemish citizens the space necessary for them to develop themselves and their careers as effectively as possible. The aim is to improve labour market functioning and prosperity for all. As a service provider, VDAB helps citizens to | Citizens: job-seekers, employees, employers | Labour market mediation, development of competencies, career services, facilitation of labour market functioning - guidance, coaching, training, vacancies counselling. VDAB wants to offer a quick but high-quality service and to approach the citizen as efficiently as possible. |

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| | develop their career according to the market demand. VDAB has a strong cooperation with other service providers. VDAB places a special focus on disadvantaged citizens. | | To realise this VDAB uses the latest computer applications (e-tools, e-counselling, automatic online matching and sending of job offers, etc.) |
| ESF Agency Flanders | Management Authority of the European Social Fund Flanders | Employers, non-profit organisations, policy actors | Finance of projects |
| Flemish Ministry of Education | Advice, evaluation and follow-up on education policy in Flanders and Brussels (in Dutch) | Minister, Government, schools, parents, children, students | Education |
| Local administrations, employees in the field, schools, health organisations, etc. | Local projects on NEET and youth unemployment | Citizens | Local projects |
| SYNTRA Vlaanderen | Provides training for entrepreneurs and apprenticeships for school-going youth (15 years and older) | School-going youth (15 years and older) Entrepreneurs | Training and apprenticeships |
| Flemish Ministry of Youth | Coordination of a horizontal action plan on youth (leisure, education, work, equality, etc.) | Minister, Government, citizens | Coordination |
| RVA/ONEM (National Employment Office) | Administration and sanctions on unemployment allowances | Job-seekers receiving unemployment allowances | Unemployment allowances |
| Flemish Youth Council | The Flemish Youth Council is the official advisory council for the Government of Flanders for all areas concerning children, young people and their organisations in Flanders. We ensure that the voice of children and young people reaches the policy makers and defend the interests of the youth work organisations in Flanders and Europe. The Flemish ministers have to solicit the | The youth target group is extremely diverse. The Flemish Youth Council knows as no other how to reach young people and how to have them participate in policy. We wish to hear not only the voice of young people who are searching for work, but that of everyone who is making the transition from school | Youth participation To learn as a government about the specific needs/requirements of young people |

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| | <p>advice of the Flemish Youth Council every time they want to take a decision that will have an impact on children and young people. However, the Flemish Youth Council also issues advice on its own initiative. Viewpoints and recommendations are prepared in committees, working groups, and during other meetings, and are subsequently passed on to our Annual General Meeting which then gives the final result to the Government of Flanders. In this way, everyone can take the desires and needs of Flemish young people and the interests of the youth work into account. With one single specific goal: To make the policy in our own country and far beyond its borders more youth-friendly.</p> | <p>to their first job experiences.</p> | |
|--|---|--|--|

The added value of the Youth Guarantee (YG)

In 2007, VDAB implemented the Youth Employment Plan (YEP) to tailor its standard services better to the needs of young job-seekers aged 18 to 25. Its goal is to stimulate young people (18-25 years) to find a job (possibly their first) as quickly as possible and to provide them with the training and guidance they need in order to be employed in the long term. Within 6 weeks after their registration as a job-seeker, VDAB invites all low-educated and medium-educated young people to an information session and a personal conversation with one of the counsellors. All the time they are automatically matched by our Mijn Loopbaan ('My Career') system with vacancies that fit in with their preferences and skill level. If they have not found a job within 12 weeks after registration, they are invited for a screening which may lead to a 'pathway guidance' advice session. In this way, within 5 months after registration, every young person should either be at work or receiving personal counselling. Currently, we are achieving this for 93% of the registered unemployed 18-25 year olds.

Back in 2002, an ESF-funded project was started in cooperation with the University of Leuven to come up with a practical solution for the pathway guidance of unqualified school leavers. It resulted in the 'Find-Bind-Mind' methodology in 2004. We learned that in order to reach these young early school leavers (drop-outs), it is crucial to have a local presence (this goes for partners too), to have a good cooperation with schools and to find a way to connect with the interests and environment of these young unemployed. For this specific and often difficult group, a project approach combined with attitude training and job-seeking is preferred.

To provide pathway guidance to those who needed it most in 2008, we set up a tender specifically for 18-25 year olds to enlarge our capacity by an annual 4,050 career trajectories and at the same time to benefit from the partners' expertise. In this project, attitude, training and job-seeking were mandatory for all young people. Despite the economic crisis, our partners generally succeeded in this way in employing the majority of young people they were counselling. In 2012 some 60.6% of young people who received pathway guidance found a suitable job.

If our counsellors notice that a young person has a very specific and poorly-sought-after preferred job, and the counsellor concludes that the young person therefore has a very small chance of becoming employed, the counsellor will encourage the young person to broaden his or her job preferences. To support the young person in making this process, which can often be rather difficult, the counsellor will refer him or her to our orientation centres, where a series of tests and conversations will help the young person to discover what other jobs he or she might like to carry out. It is hoped that by so doing young people will avoid becoming long-term unemployed.

VDAB has decided not to create a new plan, but to optimize and strengthen the existing Youth Employment Plan so that VDAB can offer every young person (i.e. a rate of 100%) with either a job or personal counselling within 4 months after registration. VDAB will also set up projects with partner organisations to reach young people who are neither in training or being coached.

The added value of this strengthened approach is:

- better tie-in between education and the labour market (school leavers plan - cooperation between the Ministry of Work and the Ministry of Education)
- better information exchange between the many organisations/agencies/associations/services/etc. that work with young people
- projects with partner organisations in major cities to 'track down' young people who never registered as job-seekers, and lead them towards the VDAB services
- workplace learning (IBO ('Individuele beroepsopleiding' or individual vocational training), internships, apprenticeships, 'instapstages' (federal integration traineeships), etc.) becomes a standard module of the trajectory of unqualified young people - cooperation with sectors to create forms of workplace learning.
- specific tools for high-skilled job-seekers: e-counselling, website, chat, apps for searching for jobs, etc.
- further developing an acquired skill recognition program (EVC) which gives job-seekers the opportunity to prove to an employer that they are properly skilled for the job (in cooperation with several partners and the Ministry of Education). Job-seekers will attain a certificate after certain tests and vocational training.
- stakeholder management: VDAB wants to involve and to get to know the specific needs of young people so we can customize our services. VDAB wishes to work more and more in partnering with organisations that have a strong link with young people and good experience in working with them, so that the counsellors and instructors find the chance to build upon this expertise to adjust their working methods to the needs of young people. To stimulate direct participation, VDAB organises digital Youth Panels in cooperation with the Flemish Youth Council. These panels function as a barometer: what do young people find important in the world of work and what service do they want VDAB to offer them?
- greater involvement of subregional and local administrations: cooperation between VDAB, social networks, 'talenthuizen' (talent houses), (vocational) schools and CPAs

2. Implementing the Youth Guarantee Scheme at national level

2.1 Formulation of the national Youth Guarantee

A Youth Guarantee, following the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013, ensures that all young people up to the age of 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed.

Quoting from the annual business plan of the Flemish Service for Employment and Vocational Training (VDAB)2014: “In conformity with the European Youth Guarantee Scheme, we carry out various activities so that young people can find work after a maximum of four months. We do this using a tailor-made trajectory in which maximum effort is given to increasing competence (individual vocational training, work experience projects for young people, preparatory internships, etc.) and a quicker and lasting systematic guidance. This approach allows for a more intensive and tailor-made approach to be guaranteed for the more difficult target groups. In this context, we provide a trajectory plan at the end of the sixth month of unemployment involving a commitment to an intensive competence enhancement for unqualified young people. We guarantee from 2014, specifically for all unqualified young people, that they will receive a trajectory plan no later than the end of the sixth month of unemployment with a commitment to an intensive competence enhancement (see SD4) (unless a MMPP (medical, mental, psychological or psychiatric) issue first needs to be resolved). If they satisfy the conditions for participation, they can begin a vocational training trajectory at school (OKOT) with which they can still achieve their educational qualification. If OKOT is not one of the possibilities, a bottleneck-focused vocational training or one of the types of workplace learning is set up.”

Specifically:

- The Flemish Youth Guarantee: All young job-seekers under the age of 25 years will be offered a tailored trajectory with competence enhancement actions (technical and non-technical competences (attitude, application skills, etc.) within 4 months after registration as a job-seeker. All unqualified school leavers start by the end of the sixth month after registration with a vocational training and/or work experience.³

³ Naturally, the VDAB doesn't start only after six months; it starts much sooner. Already after one month, the VDAB starts estimating the distance between the labour market and resources/counselling. It is the intention that these people are able to start a training course/internship/job (deadline!) after six months at the latest. The months preceding this can then be considered as a 'preparatory' phase: gaining insight into their competences and interests, orientation or reorientation, working on non-technical competences (attitude, interview skills, etc.).

- Those NEET young people who do not register with VDAB are 'tracked down' and motivated to be counselled by partners at municipal level. The starting point for the non-registered NEETs is the moment they leave school. Therefore essential administrative data (education, social services, municipalities, etc.) will be combined.

2.2 Partnership approaches

| Name of key organisations | Type of organisation | Level of responsibility | Role in implementing the Youth Guarantee Scheme | Ensuring the success of the partnerships |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--|---|
| Public Employment Service (VDAB) | Public Service | Regional | Is responsible for implementing the YGS in cooperation with partners. The core business is to see all the young job-seekers within 4 months after registration and to determine which trajectory is the most appropriate to refer them to a maximum long-term employment. The VDAB chooses the most appropriate method to activate the young people (vacancy counselling, guidance, mediation, training, work experience, internship, apprenticeship, etc.) The method can be offered by VDAB itself or by a partner (TIBB - trajecten met Intensieve Begeleiding en Bemiddeling: trajectories with intensive counselling and mediation) | VDAB has a separate service 'direction (regie)'. This service makes the arrangements with partners and puts them in agreements/contracts. VDAB controls and monitors the quality of the services of the partners. They receive funding for the guidance/training and an additional amount when the young person gets sustainable employment. |
| The Ministry of Education | Public authority | Regional | <p>To prevent early school leaving (dropping out) there is a cooperation between the Ministry of Work and the Ministry of Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better and more data exchange: municipalities have access to educational data so that they can provide a local policy to prevent and combat early school leaving, providing educational information which is important for the counselling to employment, VDAB offers information to schools about early school leavers and their chances on the labour market (schools have a better information in function of educational guidance) - Quick and 'hot' transfer from education to school and vice versa: School and CLB (pupil guidance centre) identify 'risk students'. CLB tries to re-orient the student within compulsory education. If this does not work and the student is 18 years or older, the CLB creates a hot transfer to VDAB. The VDAB motivates the school leaver to achieve a qualification with a qualifying trajectory - Projects for disabled students in which the guidance to work already starts in school (in the context of a good and quick transfer from education to the PES) - | <p>A technical workgroup and a steering committee are responsible for the preparation, implementation and follow-up of an 'early school leaving' action plan.</p> <p>In the technical workgroup there are representatives of the Ministry of Education, the educational networks, social partners, employers' organisations, VDAB and the Ministry of Work. In the steering committee are the heads of these representatives. The Ministries of Work and Education are responsible for the monitoring of the action plan. Every year there will be an evaluation.</p> |

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| | | | <p>Project 'Word Wijs' (Dutch for 'be wise') stimulates unqualified young people to go back to school or follow training to receive a qualification or diploma of secondary school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set-up qualifying trajectories for unqualified or insufficiently qualified young job-seekers: acquired skills recognition program (EVC), vocational training trajectories at school (OKOT, vocational training trajectories at VDAB in combination with modules in a centre for adult education that leads to a secondary school diploma - Realise more work experience initiatives: the system of learning and working and alternated learning (both kind of dual learning systems) will be strengthened with e.g. more work experience places so it will be an equal choice. For example, introduce obligatory internships in the technical and vocational secondary education, more use of labour market instruments within the school context (e.g. schools can use the infrastructure of the vocational training centres of VDAB and partners ('72-hours arrangement'), 'do-day's in vocational training centres for students from 1st and 2nd degree, learning trajectories in which education and VDAB together guide the young person towards an educational qualification, etc.) | |
| Non-profit youth organisations and/or municipalities | NGO | local | Find the non-registered NEETs and guide them to work or to the VDAB counsellor. | There is a contract/agreement. The NGO/municipalities receive an amount for the guidance. The VDAB monitors and checks the NGO. |
| Non-profit youth organisations | NGO | local | Responsible for the implementation of the WIJ (Work Experience Programme for Young People): group sessions (orientation, competence building), intensive individual coaching, certification/qualification for the acquired skills, | There is a contract/agreement. The NGO/municipalities receive an amount for the guidance. The VDAB monitors and checks the NGO. |

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| and/or municipalities | | | follow-up/counselling during the first 3 months of employment. All these activities prevent a long-term exclusion from the labour market and are intended to lead to long-term labour market integration. | |
| ESF + business sectors | Public authority + business sectors (= composed of unions and employers federations) | Regional | Employers within a business sector get support to train young people in the workplace. The support aims to create better organisation of the training in the workplace. | Sectoral agreements between unions and employers within one business sector. |
| Municipalities | Public authority | local | Setting up a local consultation platform (LOP) with VDAB, schools and other local actors who work with young people. | Roadmap, framework agreement and contract. |
| Flemish Youth Council | Government of Flanders advisory body | Regional | Testing of the Youth Guarantee implementation. Communicate this with young people. Pick up on the needs and requirements of young people and adapt our service provision to these. | Opt for structural cooperation with regard to youth information and youth participation in work through a cooperation agreement. |

2.3 Early intervention and activation; (see YG CR, rec. 8-10 and SWD section 3.2) (*approx.: 750 words= 1.5 pages*)

| Name of the reform/initiative ⁴ | Key objective(s) ⁵ | Target group, including number of people covered (if available) | Scale | Name and role of organisation in the lead and cooperating partners | Timetable for implementation | Implementation cost, if applicable |
|---|---|--|---------------------|--|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1) Preliminary trajectories for vulnerable young people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reaching young people who are not registered at the Public Employment Service - offering young people guidance to a trajectory to work | 600 vulnerable young people in the large cities who are not registered with VDAB (those NEETs not registered) on an annual basis | Regional (Flanders) | ESF together with NGOs | January 2014 | |
| 2) Providing educational information which is important for the counselling to employment (my digital me, database with degrees and certificates that are awarded in Flanders (LED)). | All school leavers have a correct and up-to-date file (Mijn Loopbaan - My Career) so that the school leaver automatically receives vacancies that relate to his or her preferences and skill-level (automatic online matching system) | All school leavers | Regional | VDAB | 2014 | |

⁴ In English and original name (in national language).

⁵ Please ensure that the objectives meet the established 'SMART' criteria, i.e. that they are Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound. Developing SMART targets will help to establish the standards by which you can measure the performance. The objectives should be linked to the 'rationale'/needs identified in section 1.

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|-----------------|--|---------------------|---|
| <p>3) STEM action plan: promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics</p> | <p>To introduce a total set of measures, starting from primary school to careers on the labour market through integrated action lines</p> | <p>- 5th year general secondary education (engineering and mathematics days) - 3rd level of primary school and 1st level of secondary school (approach of increasing young peoples' interest in technology)</p> | <p>Regional</p> | <p>Ministry of Education in co-operation with VDAB, Syntra (Flemish network that organizes vocational training for adults), employers' organisations and sectors</p> | <p>January 2014</p> | |
| <p>4) Active promotion of the VDAB services for young people: a free 'Start of career' lessons package downloadable from the website, VDAB counsellors who visit schools to inform students during SID (Study and Information Day) events, a specific youth website (www.vdab.be/jongeren)</p> | <p>All school leavers register with VDAB as soon as possible after leaving school</p> | <p>Final year students, all students who are considering leaving school</p> | <p>Regional</p> | <p>VDAB</p> | <p>On-going</p> | <p>Included in the planned budget YEP</p> |

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| <p>5) Promoting youth participation through: separate subsite for young people (www.vdab.be/jongeren) , use of social media, organization of youth panels, a competition for IT students to develop smartphone apps that make use of our data in a way that is both appealing to young people and useful in their search for a job</p> | <p>Stimulate direct participation in the policy development. Young people get the chance to think and decide about their own future.</p> | <p>All young people</p> | <p>Regional</p> | <p>VDAB</p> | <p>On-going</p> | <p>Included in the planned budget YEP</p> |
| <p>6) action 'school's out, work's in'</p> | <p>40 young people by video chat and 200 in workshops</p> | <p>Guidance for school graduates even before the targets set in the YEP. Several half-day workshops during the summer months to teach them how to prepare for job interviews (online interview training by video chat and/or a workshop in the region)</p> | <p>Regional</p> | <p>VDAB</p> | <p>On-going</p> | <p>Included in the budget YEP</p> |
| <p>7) e-mediation and -counselling</p> | <p>- 200 young people a year (only the province of Flemish Brabant) - VDAB wants to see all the young</p> | <p>- Highly schooled young job-seekers</p> | <p>- Regional (province of Flemish Brabant)</p> | <p>VDAB</p> | <p>- October 2013 - evaluation in April 2014 (to see if it can be extended to the whole of Flanders)</p> | <p>Included in the planned budget YEP</p> |

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| | <p>job-seekers at an early stage. For self-reliant job-seekers VDAB uses efficient and effective tools (chat, e-mail, phone, etc.)</p> <p>- 200 part-time workers/month</p> | <p>- Young people who work part-time and also receive an integration allowance</p> | <p>- regional</p> | | <p>- January 2014</p> | |
| <p>8) Action plan for drop-outs</p> | <p>Decreasing the number of young people who drop out of school (for Flanders, this specifically means cutting the number of drop-outs in half, from 8.6% (according to the EAK indicator) to 4.3% by 2020).</p> | <p>Young people attending school</p> | <p>Regional</p> | <p>The education system (educational authorities, the education coordination bodies and GO!), the interprofessional social partners, the VLOR and SERV strategic advisory councils, Syntra Flanders, VDAB and WSE.</p> | <p>On-going</p> | |

2.4 Supportive measures for labour market integration

| Name of the reform/initiative ⁶ | Key objective(s) ⁷ | Target group, including number of people covered (if available) | Scale | Name and role of organisation in the lead and cooperating partners | Timetable for implementation | Implementation cost, if applicable |
|---|---|---|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| 8) Individuele beroepsopleiding (IBO): individual vocational training to provide on-the-job training leading to employment. Under this scheme, the employer is obliged to hire the trainee after the completion of the training period. The general rule is an open-ended employment contract (without fixed duration). The IBO has recently been modified with the option for the employer to offer a fixed-term contract of a duration which is at least the same as the time of the training. ⁸ | 17,800 IBOs on annual basis | Job-seekers who need specific competences in strengthened actions | Region | VDAB | On-going | Included in the normal budget |
| 9) WerkInleving voor Jongeren (WIJ): Work Experience Programme for Young People | - to strengthen work competencies of unqualified young people - Guidance to work | 3,710 young people in the whole project period. Young people (< 25) are unqualified early school leavers. | 13 cities in Flanders | Lead coordination: ESF and VDAB/Implementing partners: | February/ March 2013 until December 2015 | |
| 10) Instapstages: federal integration traineeships | Provide full time training places that can last 3 to 6 months. The trainee receives a monthly fee from the employer (€200) and an in-work benefit from social | For Flanders: young school leavers under 25 years of age with no degree of secondary education | national | Federal public service in cooperation with the regions | Started in 2013 | Federal: €41.8 million for max 10,000 young people |

⁶ In English and original name (in national language).

⁷ Please ensure that the objectives meet the established 'SMART' criteria. The objectives should be linked to the 'rationale'/needs identified in section 1.

⁸ For the full list and description of selected instruments, see Appendix 3.

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|----------|-------------------------------------|----------|------------|
| | security (about €700) - 10,000 instapstages (national level) of which 4,450 instapstages in Flanders | | | | | |
| 11) TIBB: trajectories with intensive counselling and mediation | 2500 extra trajectories | Young job-seekers | regional | VDAB | On-going | €3,707,500 |
| 12) Developing an acquired skills recognition program (EVC) to prove to an employer that the job-seeker is properly skilled for the job. After some tests they receive an official certificate. VDAB provides free vocational training to prepare young unqualified job-seekers to get the certificate. | - 550 'proofs of experience' - VDAB wants to give legally recognized professional qualifications. But the quality framework to accredit vocational training is not yet operational. | All job-seekers | regional | VDAB in co-operation with education | 2014 | |
| 13) Onderwijskwalificerende OpleidingsTrajecten (OKOT): vocational training trajectories at school | provide the graduate with a bachelor degree, acknowledged by and equal to those issued by the Ministry of Education An OKOT-VDAB degree trajectory is a programme for job-seekers who want to significantly increase their chances of getting a job by making one of the intended shortage occupations their job goal, but who do not | All job-seekers Low-skilled young people can obtain their secondary education diploma through OKOT's second-chance education | regional | VDAB in co-operation with education | On-going | |

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| | have the required diploma and required competences. Low-skilled young people can obtain their secondary education diploma through OKOT's second-chance education | | | | | |
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3. Funding the Youth Guarantee (see YG CR rec. 21-23), (approx.: 750 words= 1.5 pages)

All the reforms and initiatives are part of the YEP. For the implementation of the YEP there were already sufficient resources made available from the Government of Flanders and Europe. So for the successful implementation of the Youth Guarantee there is no need for extra funding.

In the table you can find a more detailed overview of the initiatives which are ESF funded.

| Name of reform/initiative | Years for which funding is planned | Sources & levels of funding | | | | | Number of beneficiaries planned (if applicable) | | | Cost per beneficiary (when applicable) |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|---|--------|-------|--|
| | | EU/ESF/YEI | National Funds, including co-funding | Regional/Local Funds | Employer Funds | Other (please specify) | Male | Female | Total | |
| 9) WIJ | 2013 | 2,226,000 Eur ESF | 2,720,667 EUR Flemish Co-funding | European and regional funding | - | - | - | - | 3,710 | Max. 4,000/young person/guidance |
| | 2014 | 2,226,000 Eur ESF | 2,720,667 EUR Flemish Co-funding | | | | | | | |
| | 2015 | 2,226,000 Eur ESF | 2,720,667 EUR Flemish Co-funding | | | | | | | |

| Name of reform/initiative | Years for which funding is planned | Sources & levels of funding | | | | | Number of beneficiaries planned (if applicable) | | | Cost per beneficiary (when applicable) |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|----------------------|----------------|------------------------|---|--------|---------------------|--|
| | | EU/ESF/YEI | National Funds, including co-funding | Regional/Local Funds | Employer Funds | Other (please specify) | Male | Female | Total | |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1) Preliminary trajectories for vulnerable young people | 2014 | 270,000.00 Eur ESF | 330,000.00 EUR Flemish Cofunding | Regional | - | - | - | - | 600 annual ly | |
| | 2015 | 270,000.00 Eur ESF | 330,000.00 EUR Flemish Cofunding | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|------|----------------------|------------------------------------|----------|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| SectorConvenanten | 2013 | 1,125,000 Eur ESF | 1,275,000 EUR Flemish Cofunding | Regional | - | - | - | - | - | |
| | 2014 | 1,125,000 Eur ESF | 1,275,000 EUR Flemish Cofunding | | | | | | | |

For the entire youth employment plan, the Government of Flanders (with VDAB heading the project) is employing 308.1 full-time equivalents (FTEs), of whom:

- 86 FTEs through outsourcing (incl. work experience projects for young people, and tender-intensive counselling and mediation)
- 26.2 FTEs for extra counselling capacity
- 17.3 FTEs specifically for intensive counselling of low-skilled young people
- 8.7 FTE for job coaching
- For e-counselling and flexi-training: (test project Flemish-Brabant): 5 FTE web coaches

4. Assessment and continuous improvement of schemes (see YG CR rec. 24-26)

All reforms and initiatives are included in the annual business plan of VDAB. This plan will be monitored, evaluated and adjusted (qualitatively and quantitatively) quarterly by the Ministry, the board of directors of VDAB and the experts. In the plan there are 20 operational objectives (e.g. 'to guarantee a comprehensive and tailored mediation and counselling offer to all registered job-seekers under 25 years'), 16 objective indicators (e.g. the satisfaction must be 75%, 60% of the young job-seekers get a job 6 months after registration) and 17 monitoring indicators (e.g. 17,800 IBOs on an annual basis). The initiatives in the context of 'Early School Leaving' are also listed in the 'Early School Leaving Action Plan'. This plan will be monitored and adjusted by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Work, the technical workforce for early school leaving and the steering committee for early school leaving: every year at least 3 meetings of the technical workforce, at least one meeting of the steering committee, an annual evaluation rapport (qualitative and quantitative results), and an annual meeting between Ministries, inspectorate education and the educational counselling service.

Specifically, the following actions for young people will be registered and will be measured and followed up operationally 1, 4, 6 and 12 months after registration:

- The number of young people labelled for the youth work plan/youth guarantee
- The number of those with a job offer (**offer of work**):
 - of whom have an open job offer
 - of whom have a change to the vacancy (must go and apply in person)
- The number of those labelled with indicator screening = 'assessment', 'screening' (1) (**diagnosis: measuring the distance to the labour market**)
- The number of those labelled who have started a counselling or mediation process (**trajectory/training course to strengthen competences**)
- percentage who have left unemployment via action:
 - of those who started a job
 - transmission
 - cooperation rejected
 - with changed eurodat
 - not employable
- percentage conclusively reached (**reach percentage of number of young people who come under the youth guarantee**)
- not conclusive with invitation (**percentage of those young people invited to come to the VDAB, but for whom no service provision has taken place**)
- not (or not yet) processed (**number of young people who fell through the cracks**)

This report is evaluated at appropriate times and is intended to serve as a basis for improving our approach towards young people!

Wallonia contribution

To the Belgian Youth Guarantee Implementation
Plan (YGIP)



Regional Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP) - Wallonia

1. Context/Rationale

Considering the items described hereafter and on the basis of available data, several categories of vulnerable young people can be identified:

- Young people not knowing movements towards employment or training;
- Low-skilled young people, i.e. without a secondary education diploma, including young holders of a foreign diploma without equivalence. Special attention should be paid to young low-skilled women.
- Youth residing in municipalities located primarily along the “Sillon Sambre et Meuse” and the “Botte du Hainaut”.

1.1. What about young Walloon jobseekers?

In Belgium, youth unemployment is structurally higher than in many other European countries and affect particularly low-skilled young people.

In the under 25 years of age group, low-educated youth are over-represented in the Belgian workforce mainly because highly skilled young people are still studying at that age while low-educated youth are already on the labour market. On average, in 2013, 45% of the 54.315 unoccupied young Walloon jobseekers have at most a second cycle secondary education diploma and 40% a second cycle secondary education diploma¹.

Early school leavers are also frequent in Wallonia. According to an analysis of IWEPS², too many young people still leave school without having completed their secondary education and subsequently don't resume to any education or training. In 2012, with a rate of 15% of young people aged 18 to 24 prematurely leaving education and training, Wallonia is further away from the European goal of 10% in 2020 according to "strategy 2020" than Flanders and neighbouring countries. In General, early school leaving is more frequent among boys than among girls.

According to Labour Force Survey, Walloon unemployment of youth aged 15 to 24 is, in 2012, 27.1% (15.4% in 1992). This rate is higher than the average of the European Union of 22.9%. This is especially true in the provinces of Hainaut and Liège where the rate of youth unemployment exceeds the threshold of 25%, 32% and 25.8% respectively.

¹ Le Forem, average 2013 unoccupied jobseekers, administrative data source (excluding German-speaking community).

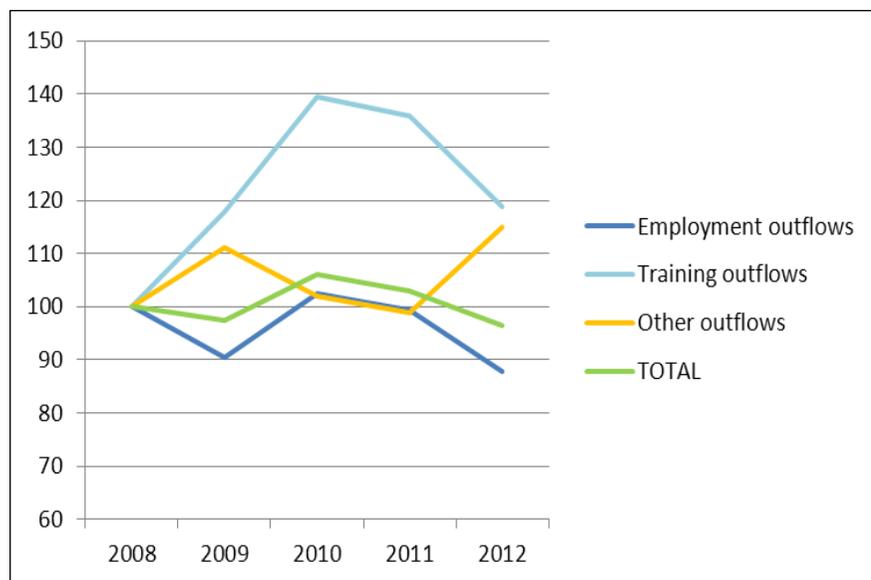
² IWEPS, "the key figures of Wallonia», n°13, December 2013, p. 173.

A significant number of young people find it difficult to integrate the labour market, especially in a sustainable manner. Lack of professional experience and of good command of job search techniques are unfavourable factors, especially in times of economic crisis. One can hypothesize that, in a period of uncertainty, hiring companies prefer experienced and directly operational profiles instead of young fresh graduates with little or no experience.

1.2. Analysis of outflows

1.2.1. Professional experience through employment dynamics

Among different factors that are sex, age, vacancy rates or qualifications, professional experience is the most discriminating factor regarding employment insertion. It is therefore essential for young people to quickly acquire experience to know one or more movements towards employment.



The analysis of youth employment inflows and outflows shows several trends. People can get out of unemployment for either employment, training or for other reasons (older job seekers, social or family exemption, illness, unknown reason, etc.).

First of all, the evolution of the different outflows on base 100 (2008 volumes are reduced to 100) seems to indicate a «communicating vessel» phenomenon between the employment outflows and the 'other' outflows. During economic slowdown (2009-2012), employment outflows seem to lower while other outflows seem to rise. This trend seems to be reversed during recovery (2010 and 2011).

Figure 1: Evolution of the outflows for the unemployment recipients under 25 years of age, base-100, 2008-2012

Source and calculations: Le Forem

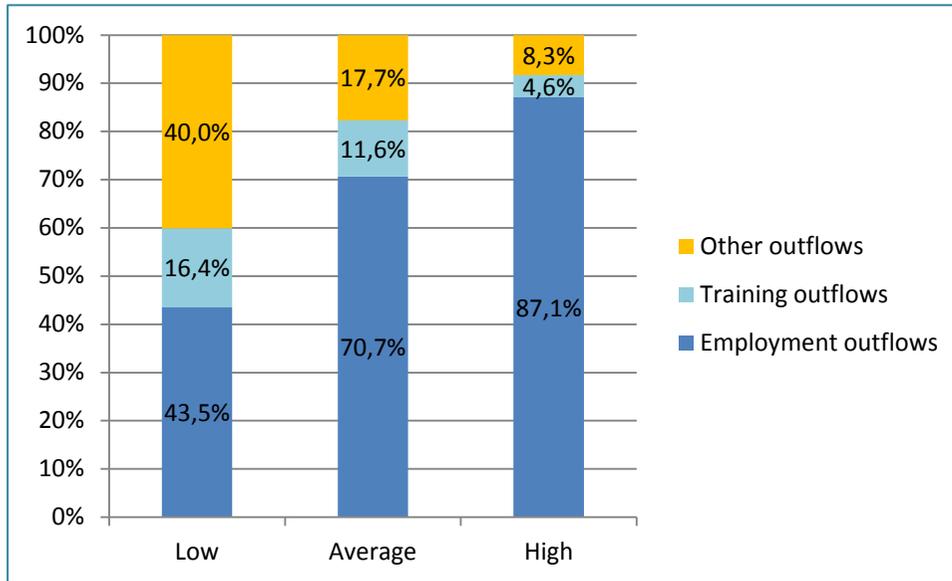


Figure 2: Types of outflows for unemployment recipients under 25 years of age by level of qualification, 2012

Source and calculations: Le Forem

1.2.2. Outflows of young jobseekers according to gender

According to gender, overall outflow types are relatively similar. However, crossbreeding gender and level of qualification shows most significant differences. Low-skilled young women know much less outflows towards employment than young men (35.3% vs. 46.5%). Outflows towards training are somehow higher for young women than for young men and 'other' outflow types are much higher, which suggests a greater risk of leaving the workforce for low-skilled young women.

Then, while observing the level of qualifications³ for 2012, the assumption of a connection between the level of qualification and the employment outflows seems obvious. Indeed, the rate of employment outflows varies from 43.5% for low level of qualifications to 70.7% for average level and 87.1% for high level of qualifications.

The share of employment outflows is quite stable for high and average levels. On the other hand, it fluctuates quite strongly for low level. It is 46.4% in 2009 and 43.5% in 2012. Furthermore, this rate is higher in a favourable economic climate, i.e. 53.8% in 2008, 50.5% in 2010 compared with 49.3% in 2011.

The other outflows show an opposite status. The major part of the other outflows applies to low level of qualifications with 40.0%. This share raised continuously since 2008 (+ 7.8 percent points).

³ For ease of reading, the educational levels were divided into 3 groups: low (primary, secondary first cycle, secondary second cycle and unspecified studies), middle (general, technical or vocational secondary third cycle and apprenticeship) and high (bachelor and master).

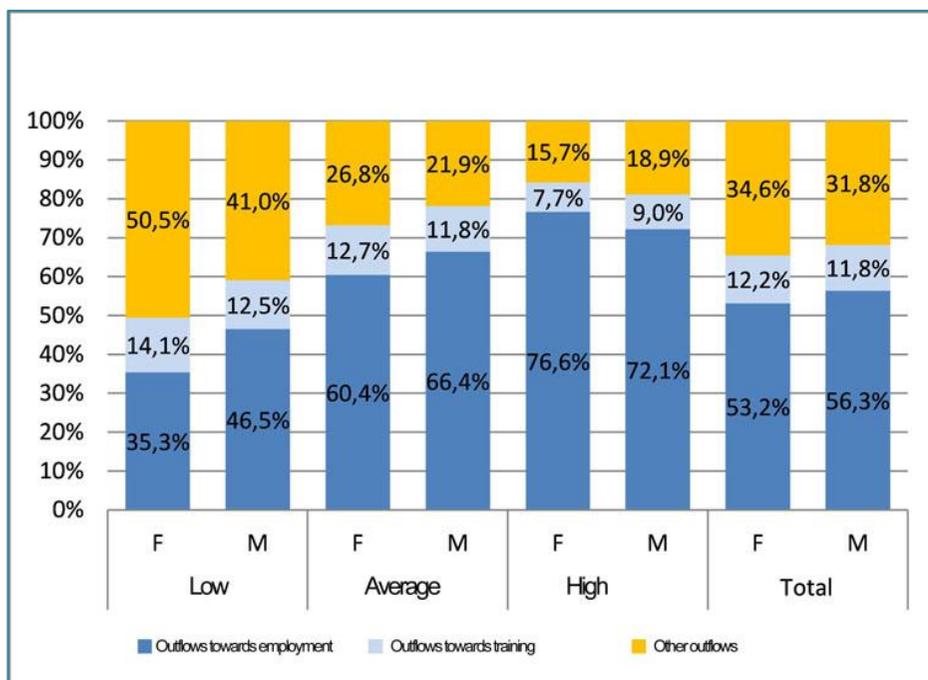


Figure 3: Types of outflows for unemployment recipients under 25 years of age by level of qualification and gender, 2012

Source and calculations: Le Forem

1.2.3. Absence of movements for the unemployment recipient of 25 years of age

Each year, there is a part of youth knowing no movement out of unemployment⁴. This rate was 17.2% in 2012, i.e. 17.2% of all young people have experienced neither employment nor training or any other outflow in 2012. It lowered by 2.5 percent points between 2009 and 2010, but is back on the rise between 2011 and 2012 (+ 2 percent points).

⁴ The absence of movement is defined as any person who is unemployed between January 1st and December 31st and who, between these two dates, knows no employment outflow.

| Level of qualifications | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Low level | 21,0% | 20,8% | 18,7% | 18,4% | 19,6% |
| Average level | 16,5% | 17,2% | 13,8% | 13,9% | 16,9% |
| High level | 3,9% | 5,1% | 3,6% | 3,7% | 5,2% |
| Total | 17,1% | 17,7% | 15,2% | 15,2% | 17,2% |

Figure 4: Absence of movements' rate for the unemployment recipient of 25 years of age by level of qualifications (table), 2008-2012

1.3. Qualification of young people and proportion of unskilled

The share of low-skilled young people (without upper secondary schooling diploma) has increased continuously between 2007 and 2011 in Wallonia before decreasing between 2011 and 2013. The fall in the proportion of low-skilled youth is due to the increase of young graduates of a bachelor or master degree. The absolute number of unskilled young increases, indeed, continuously since 2007.

An analysis by province shows the distinctive situation of the provinces of Hainaut and Liège. These are the only two provinces where the share of low-skilled young people is higher than the average rate of the Walloon region. In regards to Le Hainaut, this share exceeds 50%. Taking into account the youth out of school (registered for the first time at Le Forem between June and October), we may observe that, in 2012, 18.1% of under 25s have a low level of education.

This share is lower than the labour supply of young people taken as a whole. Indeed; high qualified youth tend to know a better integration into the workplace and their share

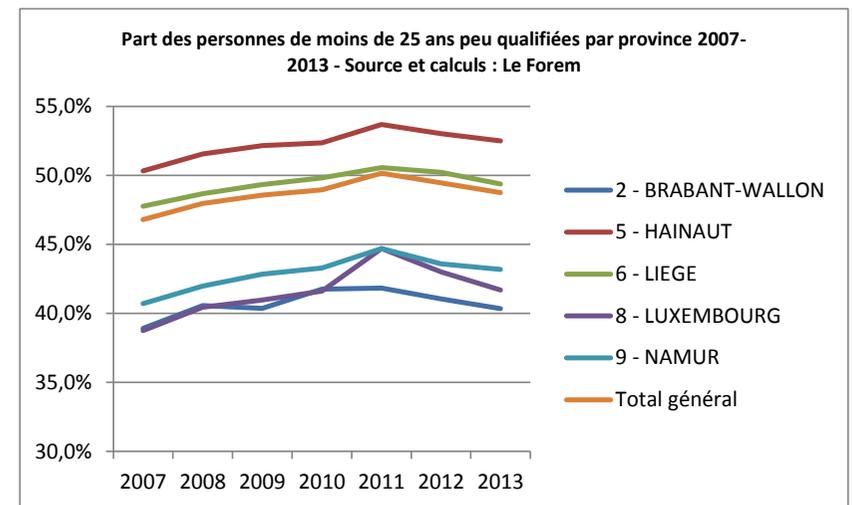


Figure 5: low qualified youth under 25 years of age, per province, 2007-2013

tends to decrease in terms of labour supply. However, this proportion is much lower among women (14.4%) than men (21.9%). Women with a high level of education are also far better represented (45.0% versus 25.7% for men).

Moreover, the rate of labour market insertion after 6 months was calculated for this population. The findings are similar to the labour supply dynamics: like low and average skilled women have a lower labour market insertion rate compared to men with the same level of education, women with a high level of education have a higher rate of insertion than their male counterparts.

Registered for the first time at Le Forem between June and October 2012 per level of education, gender and insertion rate within 6 months

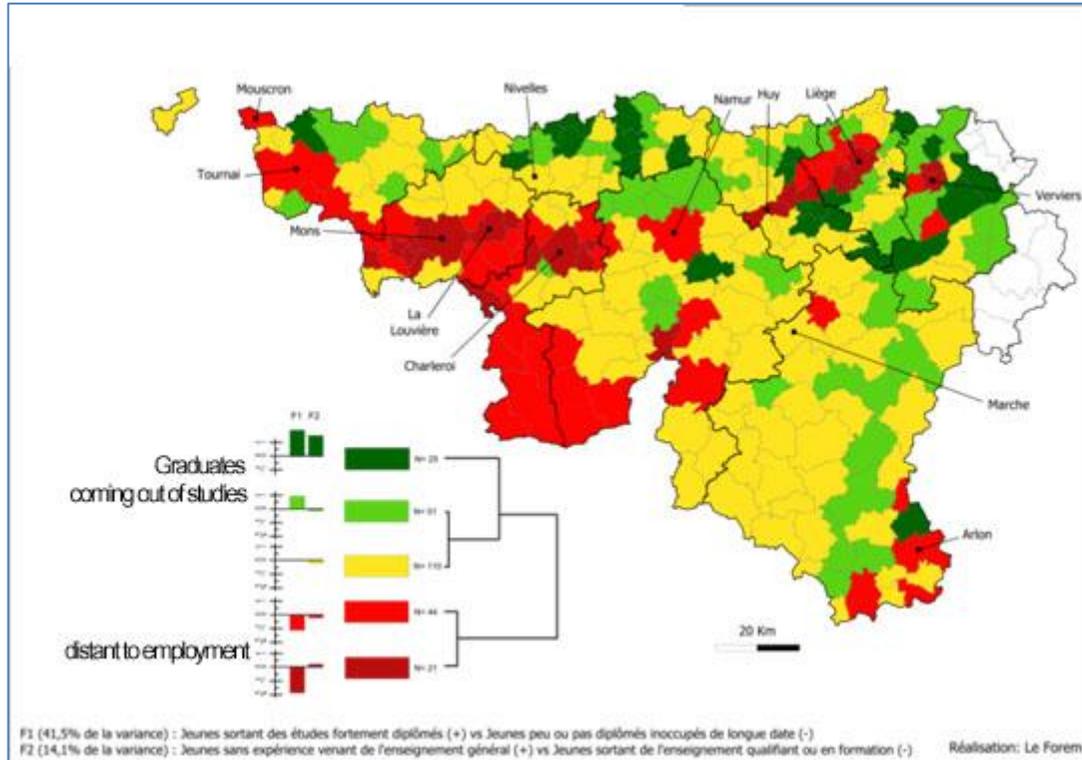
| Level of education | Women | | | Men | | | Total | | |
|--------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Number | % total | Insertion Rate | Number | % total | Insertion Rate | Number | % total | Insertion Rate |
| Low | 1847 | 14,4% | 25,7% | 2698 | 21,9% | 33,8% | 4545 | 18,1% | 30,5% |
| Average | 5206 | 40,6% | 50,0% | 6476 | 52,5% | 53,0% | 11682 | 46,4% | 51,7% |
| High | 5760 | 45,0% | 69,2% | 3170 | 25,7% | 62,4% | 8930 | 35,5% | 66,8% |
| Total | 12813 | 100,0% | 55,1% | 12344 | 100,0% | 51,2% | 25157 | 100,0% | 53,2% |

1.4. Other factors of risk

Forem administrative data do not address some of the risk factors that might explain the high rate of unemployment in Wallonia:

- Nationality alone does not explain the hiring discriminations and the difficult career paths of persons of foreign origin. A particular data processing by the Crossroads Bank for social security would be required to obtain the data. This ambitious project seeks a further study to the extent of the interest of sponsors.
- Family status (single, young couple...) and being born into a family who have experienced unemployment are likely to be other explanatory factors increasing phenomena of economic necessity and social reproduction. Here again, a particular data processing by the Crossroads Bank for social security would be required to obtain the data implying important analysis developments.
- The presence of a disability or inaptitude to work are other factors that cannot be identified on the basis of only administrative data.

1.5. Territories aren't equal facing unemployment



Wallonia presents several sub-regional disparities. Beyond the level of education and unemployment, the analysis of gender, work experience, possession of a driving licence as well as the possible outflows from unemployment using a Hierarchical Agglomerative Classification⁵, summarizes the situation in five major classes of communes in Wallonia where young jobseekers are identified according to their situation of "graduates coming out of studies" to "distant to employment".

Therefore, labour supply of young people in several communes can be schematized as being "graduated from studies" insofar as the proportion of youth jobseekers knowing outflows towards employment and who have a driving licence, a high level of education (master) and are unoccupied for less than 6 months is greater than the Walloon young jobseekers average rate.

Communes of this class can be mainly found in the province of Nivelles and in well-off suburbs of Liège and Verviers as well as in the province of Luxembourg and in the outskirts of Walloon cities except those of Mons, La Louvière and Charleroi.

On the other hand, communes appear to be "distant to employment" insofar as the share of low-qualified young jobseekers, unoccupied for over 2 years and without professional experience is higher than the regional average.

The communes concerned are situated along the "Sillon Sambre et Meuse" and in "La Botte du Hainaut" as well as in large urban centres including Liège, Charleroi, Verviers, Huy, La Louvière and Mons, and in suburban areas of these cities.

⁵ In the same way that for the 'General' typology, the method used is a Principal Component Analysis (ACP) on variables, followed by a Hierarchical Agglomerative Classification (ACH) with the selected factors weighted by the percentage of variance explained.

The communes situated along the “Sillon Sambre et Meuse” and in “La Botte du Hainaut” historically present lower results in terms of unemployment. The economic decline of Liège and Charleroi conurbations go back to decades as old heavy industries have not been fully replaced by new economic structures. These urban areas are also disadvantaged because of the concentration of their population and in particular low-skilled profiles. “La Botte du Hainaut” is a fairly remote area as far as economic centres and transport equipment’s are concerned. Its proximity with neighbouring high level of employment French regions accentuates this difficulty.

1.6. What about NEETs in Wallonia?

The European Labour Force Survey (EFT) shows that amongst young people aged 15-24 years, NEETs represent 15.4% in Wallonia, 19.2% in Brussels-capital and 9.2% in Flanders. Wallonia and Brussels are above the European average which is 12.9% for this age group while Flanders is below. If we only take into consideration the 20-24 age group, then NEETs in Wallonia are 22.3%. The situation is better in Flanders with 11.5% with whom only 42.3% are indicating being looking for employment. The situation is not as good in Brussels with 26.6% of young NEETs in the age group 20-24 years. The percentage of young people looking for a job is higher in Brussels (49.8%) and Wallonia (54.2%).

In Wallonia, it seems that NEETs, as in Brussels, are mostly still looking for a job, unlike Flanders which encounters more inactive profiles. Therefore, the unfavourable socio-economic situation partly explains the situation of NEETs in Wallonia and Brussels.

According to the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), other factors - other than socioeconomic factors- increase the risk of becoming a NEET. According to Eurofound, personal factors related to the individual and his family history do play a role in labour market integration capacity, i.e. if the young reported some form of disability, if he/she is a migrant, if he/she has a low level of education, if he/she is coming/living in a remote region, if he/she comes from a low income household or has parents with low level of education and/or are divorced and who have experienced unemployment. In Wallonia, available administrative data (from among which data of L’ONEM) do not allow an analysis of these indicators, except for the youth level of education. The lack of qualification also seems to be particularly decisive in Wallonia for NEETs insertion or for youth audiences in general as already mentioned above.

1.7. What does the National Reform Programme tell us about the audience?

The NRP analyses data are based according to a methodology agreed with the European Union. For each person registered in the labour supply in Wallonia, we look at whether he/she was given a supportive individual action: individual counselling, access to training, public aids such as “Plan Formation Insertion” (PFI) program, “Aide à la promotion de l’emploi” (APE) or a “Programme de Transition Professionnelle (PTP). Based on criteria defined within the framework of the National Reform Programme, the number of young people who did not benefited from individual actions is, on average in 2012, of 9.3% in Wallonia. Depending on gender, there is a clear difference between men (9.6%) and women (8.9%).

Overview of existing key institutional actors, their roles and responsibilities, target groups, services and measures offered. This section should identify and analyse key structural challenges and specific gaps.

The European Commission insists on the necessary mobilisation of numerous actors and resources to deliver successfully the Youth Guarantee. Establishing strong partnerships between public and private sectors, employers, social partners and youth representatives, strengthening the cooperation and the networking of these actors and resources are therefore key components to the implementation of the Youth guarantee, all for the benefit of the young job seekers.

It follows that the action plan developed by Le Forem is based, beyond the actions to be taken on its own management through its General Directorate of Employment and its General Directorate of Training, on cooperation with and/or on the mobilisation of third party, answering thereby to the recommendation of the European Commission.

Cooperation contracts that le Forem is led to sign with any operator involved in tailored coaching will lay the foundations of partnerships. The needs and the finest approach to respond to it will determine the framework and techniques of third-party solicitations.

To this end, potential beneficiaries for subsidies will be identified in the early stages of the project. These are public operators such as the IFAPME⁶, further education and guidance services⁷, the Federation of CPAS⁸ and the AWIPH⁹, but also current partners such as the Centres de compétence¹⁰. In this context, subsidies would be transferable.

⁶ IFAPME is the Walloon institute for dual education and training of independent professions and small and medium-sized enterprises.

In addition, calls for proposals or public contracts, depending on the action requirements, will be the basis of mobilization of third parties. Typically, these calls or public contracts will be relevant to answer, as an example, the objective that is to facilitate the (re) integration of the NEETs in the labour market.

How the Youth Guarantee will add value to current provision and specifically address the challenges and gaps identified.

As a reminder, the objective of the Youth Guarantee is to ensure that all young people under 25 receive, within four months of having left school or becoming unemployed, a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship. As such, the guarantee aims to prevent early school leaving, improve the capacity of professional integration and remove real barriers to employment.

The minimum Youth Guarantee is currently met at Le Forem. Young people registering after their studies receive, indeed, a tailored coaching within the 4th month, at the most, of their registration as a jobseeker. It is about going further. In this context, Le Forem will ensure that all young people under 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of having left school or becoming unemployed.

The Youth Guarantee action plan will include proposals of concrete and custom solutions: job offers, job trials, work place integration traineeships, language courses, international mobility ...

The Youth Guarantee implementation will rely on strong partnerships both upstream and downstream.

⁷ CPMS are medical, psychological and social assistance centres

⁸ CPAS are Local Public Centres for Social Action.

⁹ AWIPH is the Walloon Agency for the Integration of People with Disabilities.

¹⁰ The 'Centres de compétence' are vocational training centres.

2. Implementing the Youth Guarantee Scheme at national level

2.1 Formulation of the national Youth Guarantee

A Youth Guarantee, following the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013, ensures that all young people up to the age of 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed.

Define the corresponding starting point of the four months for non-registered NEETs (e.g. registration with social services)

The starting point to grant the Youth Guarantee to a young person will be his/her registration with the PES. With regard to the NEETs, the starting point will be their support by a partner organisation (CPAS, Mire, EFT/OISP, Youth assistance organisations) or their registration with the public Employment Service. Here is a principle of early intervention to avoid getting bogged down in inactivity.

Member States that envisage gradual implementation (possible for Member States experiencing the most severe budgetary difficulties and higher rates of NEETs or of youth unemployment¹¹) should detail if/what additional steps (not yet included in this plan) need to be taken in the future to fully implement the Youth Guarantee, as well as an indicative timeline.

The actions will be implemented from 2014 onwards and amplified from 2015.

When the granting of subsidies ESF/YEI decisions shall be notified to operators, Le Forem will adapt, as a result, not only financing but also planning of implementation and indicators related to each of the actions of the Walloon Implementation Plan.

¹¹ In line with recommendation 27 Council Recommendation.

The following actions will be implemented in 2014:

1. Be Equipped to better understand

- Conduct a study to get to know and apprehend the Youth Guarantee target population;
- Meet Youth representatives and associations in order to consider their concerns, their needs and expectations.
-

2. Establish partnerships with both public and private operators

3. Axis 1: adapt the personalised support mechanism

The individual counselling aims to provide each jobseeker a customized service offer. To this end, when a person registers at Le Forem, a personal counsellor is attributed, who will be its referent during his pathway to Le Forem.

The individual counselling scheme provides, in a systematic way for anyone who is committed to it, an assessment meeting, a personalized action plan and a follow up (ranging up to one year if the person didn't find a job before this term).

The individual counselling system was initiated in 2010. The basic logic is well integrated, but Le Forem becomes aware of the difficulty, for counsellors, to really adapt the services offered to the young jobseekers profile.

Based on an in-depth analysis within the framework of a quality approach (analysis of more than 3000 action plans developed with jobseekers), it appears that counsellors provide a coaching somehow inconsistent with expectations, codes, communication means, attitudes and behaviours of young people.

As a result, it has been observed some kind of abandonment of young people for the counselling offer of service. This observation is all the more worrying that regulation on unemployment just came to evolve in Belgium. While until recently, registered young people could claim unemployment benefits after a year of "waiting internship", without condition, law is now subject to the condition of having obtained two positive evaluations in terms of active job search behaviour.

The individual counselling of young people must therefore be redesigned and adapted towards logic of results. In order to do this, Le Forem must:

-Adapt its hooking methods (too many young people don't show up for assessment meeting, others drop out just after). This requires a significant investment in better communication with young people (definitely social media, SMS, telephone oriented - much more flexible and reactive -...)

-Adapt its offer to provide – systematically – a job, an internship or training leading to employment.

To promote a better "connection" between youth and Le Forem, the Public Employment Service has involved young jobseekers in the redefinition of the individual counselling scheme (working groups on the communication, content, modes of interaction, expectations,...).The individual counselling scheme as well as the communication means will be re-defined with them in order to design a more suitable offer of services.

1. Measure 1: create a coaching mode suitable for this generation

Objective: improving our impact on youth through tailored grip, mobilisation, orientation, and building relation with the world of labour

2. Measure 2: set up a system of sponsorship for young job seekers

Objective: enable young job seekers to benefit from support and counselling of volunteering experienced workers (6 months per job seeker)

- Experiment the sponsorship system using external expertise
- Deploy the sponsorship system in the regions involved

4. Axis 2: reinforce the identification and development of skills

1. Measure 1: identification of potential and skills development

Objective: improve the identification and the development of skills of young people leaving school, primarily those without qualifications

- Develop an online tool to assess potentials of youth without qualifications
- Develop new training in the field of "basic" skills
- Increase the volume of training for the target population (including basic skills and job trials)
- Reinforce the attractiveness of technical jobs to target audience
- Organizing internships to discover specific trades
- Organizing internships to discover the profession of independent
- Strengthening key and professional competences as well as 'soft skills'

5. Axis 3: strengthen relations with business

1. *Measure 1: deploy the transitional training course and other internships*

Objective: facilitate the transition from school to working life through traineeships

- Generate opportunities for internships while raising employers' awareness

2. *Measure 2: alternate training*

Objective: develop and implement an alternate training learning system for young job seekers

- Increase the volume of training for young job seekers

3. *Measure 3: international mobility*

Objective: support young people to get training and work abroad

- Promote internships abroad for youth under 30 years old

6. Axis 4: develop relations with schools

1. *Measure 1: organize information sessions for young people animated by local job centers and/or vocational training teams*

Objective: develop Le Forem's key-role of prevention by supporting the transition from education to employment upstream

- Recruit school relations officers who will be in charge of labour market and training information dissemination to youth in education.
- Contribute to the implementation of 2 "Cités des métiers" (Charleroi and Liège).

7. Axis 5: NEETs

1. *Measure 1: partnerships with expert partners*

Objective: Entrust the target audience to expert partners in a project portfolio rationale

2.2 Partnership approaches

Table 2.2: Key organisations that will support and deliver the Youth Guarantee scheme

- **Overview table listing the key organisations that will be involved and describe their role.**
- **Identify the Youth Guarantee Coordinating Organisation¹² and describe shortly how the partnerships among the key organisations will be coordinated (e.g. Committees, IT platforms, wikis...).**

As requested by the European Commission, a single point of contact has been designated. Synerjob will be the interface that ensures this mission. The effective coordination will be organized in 18 months turns by each of the regional PES. Le Forem is taking the first round and will therefore pilot the Youth Guarantee implementation kick off.

Additionally, as pointed by the European Commission, partnership approaches are key to support and deliver successful Youth Guarantee scheme. It follows that the action plan developed by Le Forem is based, beyond the actions to be taken on its own management through its General Directorate of Employment and its General Directorate of training, on cooperation with and/or on the mobilisation of third party, answering thereby to the recommendation of the European Commission.

To ensure the regional steering of the plan, a Steering Committee will be set up with influent politicians on these matters (employment, training, social exclusion, Presidency...) of the Walloon region.

Cooperation with third parties in the context of the Youth Guarantee may be initially incorporated, in respect of particular focus, in cooperation contracts that Le Forem is led to sign with any operator involved in tailored coaching.

As for the budget held for this initiative, the needs and best way to respond to it will determine the framework and techniques of third-party solicitations.

To this end, it is proposed that potential beneficiaries for subsidies are identified in the early stages of the project. Potential beneficiaries are public operators such as the IFAPME¹³, further education and guidance services¹⁴, the Federation of CPAS¹⁵ and the AWIPH¹⁶, but also current partners such as the Centres de compétence¹⁷. In this context, subsidies would be transferable.

¹² As highlighted in recommendation 2 Council Recommendation: "Identify the relevant public authority in charge of establishing and managing the Youth Guarantee scheme and of coordinating partnerships across all levels and sectors. Where it is not possible, for constitutional reasons, for a Member State to identify only one public authority, the relevant public authorities shall be identified, keeping their number to a minimum and identifying a single point of contact to communicate with the Commission on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee."

¹³ IFAPME is the Walloon institute for dual education and training of independent professions and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.

¹⁴ CPMS are medical, psychological and social assistance centres.

In addition, third parties will be mobilised through calls (calls for proposals or public contracts depending on the action requirements), including, as an example, the objective that is to facilitate the (re) integration of the NEETs in the labour market.

For a comprehensive approach of young NEETs, beyond the classical functional requirements of integration, we need to put in place a customized public action, a personalized service for each NEET. The objective is not to superimpose the actions of different professionals of integration, but to weave a harmonious patchwork of different classical actors and specialists. The youth centers, open workplace associations, working daily with under 25's, knowing their aspirations and modes of operation, will help building the strapline and strengthen ties with this audience.

To give us all chances to reach these young people outside any pathway, Le Forem implements an annual 'NEETs' round table gathering about a hundred actors from different backgrounds : i.e. representatives of socio-professional insertion (EFT/OISP, Mire, CPAS), youth specialists (MJ, AMO, Center Youth, Youth Council), education and alternate training organizations' professionals (Ifapme, EPS,...).

Workshops axes are based on:

- How to intensify and especially customize the support offered to young people,
- The establishment between operators of UNIDO techniquo/practice necessary for the young follow up and experienced situations,
- The assessment of the organization and the implementation of innovative actions
- The exchange and dissemination of methodologies between all professionals, pooling of information to act usefully toward each youth,
- Strengthening the ties of these various professionals and with the NEETs.

The overriding challenge of these tables is to take into account all personal and individual reality of these young NEETs and to build with each professional a personalized pathway adapted to each of these youth away from the classical trajectories of insertion.

¹⁵ CPAS are Local Public Centers for Social Action.

¹⁶ AWIPH is the Walloon Agency for the Integration of People with Disabilities.

¹⁷ The 'Centres de compétence' are vocational training centers.

| Name of key organisations | Type of organisation | Level of responsibility | Role in implementing the Youth Guarantee scheme | Ensuring the success of the partnerships |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| e.g. Youth Co-operation Association, Public Employment Service, Employers' Association x, etc. | e.g. NGO, public authority, Social Partner, etc. | Specify: National, regional, local | For example: - Conveys voice of young people, - Provides net new traineeships and apprenticeships in its member associations, - Reaches out to NEETs via its member youth associations (see section 2.3), - Hosts local "one-stop shops" for young people, - etc. | For example, how the partnerships among the key organisations will be coordinated (e.g. Committees, IT platforms, wikis...), cooperation with other services involved. |
| <p>Youth Council Le Conseil de la Jeunesse</p> <p>International Youth office Le Bureau international Jeunesse</p> <p>Youth community centres Les maisons de jeunes</p> | <p>Youth representatives</p> <p>Youth representatives</p> | <p>Region/Community</p> <p>Local</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listen to youth - Bring to the foreground their needs and expectations - Networking - Interface to youth population | Ongoing dialogue upstream |
| L'IFAPME | Training public operator | Region | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complementary actions with PES actions - complementary actions and differentiated targets - on alternate training, training leading to a qualification, job trials and reinforcement of attractiveness of technical jobs. - Develop actions to engage against training drop-outs. | Joint association with the youth global offer of service; Integrated management with the YG coordinator. |
| | | Region et sectors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complementary training service offer in alternate training, training leading to a qualification, job trials and reinforcement of attractiveness of technical jobs. | Coordination is ensured by Le Forem through the network «Réseau des Centres de |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|--|--|
| Les Centres de compétence | Non-profit organization | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additionally, some complementary training offer will also be provided on basic skills and potential assessment. | compétence». Sectors are represented within these structures. Quality integrated offer of training, certified and organised on leading-edge technologies within all training centres of the network. |
| L'EPS ¹⁸ | Further Education | Community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complementary actions with professional insertion actions. School of the second chance as an example. - Complementary training actions on basic skills, training leading to a qualification and job trials. | Joint association with all other actors involved in the Youth Guarantee; Integrated management with the YG coordinator. |
| Les CPAS | Public organisation | Region /local | <p>NEETs and school drop-outs support through calls for proposals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modules to engage, mobilize and connect target audience with labour market. | Calls for proposals to answer targets' needs |
| Les Mires ¹⁹ | Non-profit organization | Region /local | <p>NEETs and school drop-outs support through calls for proposals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modules to engage, mobilize and connect target audience with labour market. | Calls for proposals to answer targets' needs |
| Les EFT/OISP ²⁰ | Non-profit organization | Region /local | <p>NEETs and school drop-outs support through calls for proposals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modules to engage, mobilize and connect target audience with labour market such as basic skills training. | Calls for proposals to answer targets' needs |

Note that this list is non-exhaustive and will be updated with all public and private organisations which will get involved in the Youth Guarantee implementation through calls for proposals and launched by ESF/YEI.

¹⁸ EPS is further education

¹⁹ Mires are regional missions for employment, non-profit organizations aiming at social and occupational integration.

²⁰ EFTs are work-based training enterprises. OISPs are socio-occupational integration agencies.

2.3 Early intervention and activation;

How the national Youth Guarantee will support young vulnerable people facing multiple barriers and bring them closer to the labour market, taking into account the specific situation and needs of the different sub-groups and individuals;

- Include an overview table summarising key planned legislative and administrative reforms and initiatives (programmes, projects) needed to ensure early intervention and activation and outreach, for example: improvement of data gathering and referral systems, integrating second-chance programmes in the education system, etc.;
- List the consultation of all stakeholders, including the Social Partners and youth organisations, and their involvement in the development of reform plans and initiatives.

Young people who are neither in employment nor in education, nor in training and not registered as job seekers are not part of the target audience of the current tailored coaching and moreover, they are not known of Le Forem.

The actions to put in place are therefore different. The objectives will be to identify them, attract them, re-engage them into organized systems either back to education, training, or work.

The diversity of catching points as well as the existing expertise in Wallonia lead us to propose to reserve this public target support to our partnerships, in a projects portfolio rationale bringing together different types of operators.

Furthermore, Le Forem and its institutional partners will conduct specific actions to this target:

- Support school drop-outs public target;
- Develop training in the field of "basic" skills; strengthen key and professional competences as well as 'soft skills';
- Develop information about labour market with education.

Table 2.3: Key reforms and initiatives to ensure early intervention and activation

| Name of the reform/initiative ²¹ | Key objective(s) ²² | Target group, including no of people covered (if available) | Scale | Name and role of organisation in the lead and cooperating partners | Timetable for implementation | Implementation cost, if applicable |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|------------------------------------|
| Planned reforms | | | | | | |
| <i>Example: Reform of the Youth Act</i> | <i>e.g. To lay down provisions on the disclosure of information for the purposes of youth outreach work</i> | <i>e.g. Young persons under 25 without upper secondary schooling</i> | <i>Specify: National, regional, local</i> | <i>e.g. Ministry of Youth (Lead), Ministry of Education (consultation)</i> | <i>e.g. June 2014: Legislative proposal</i> | <i>e.g. N/A</i> |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| Planned initiatives | | | | | | |
| <i>e.g. Navigators for 'Young People Programme'</i> | <i>e.g. - to establish 100 'Youth Guarantee focal points' in PES, providing a one stop-shop (= 1 in each PES in the pilot regions x,y,z)</i> | <i>e.g.- NEETs aged 15-24 in region x,y,z (= 58,400 people); particular focus on migrant males</i> | <i>e.g. Regional (regions x,y,z)</i> | <i>e.g. Regional Employment Authority (Lead) Regional Education Authorities (cooperating partners)</i> | <i>e.g. December 2014: 50 navigators trained and deployed December 2015: 100 navigators trained and deployed December 2016: evaluation and possible scaling up</i> | <i>e.g. 2013-2016: EUR 5 m</i> |

²¹ In English and original name (in national language).

²² Please ensure that the objectives meet the established 'SMART' criteria, i.e. that they are Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant and Timebound. Developing SMART targets will help to establish the standards you can measure the performance by. The objectives should be linked to the 'rationale'/needs identified in section 1.

| | | | | | | | |
|------|---|---|--------------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| 1.EI | Study and dialogue with youth services <i>Etudes et concertation avec les services de la jeunesse</i> | Studies – Surveys – Analysis Dialogue with youth services | Job seekers under 25 years old | | Le Forem | 1 st semester 2014 : Studies – Surveys 2 nd semester 2014 : results identification and dialogue actions | 2014 : 50.340 € |
| 2.EI | Develop relations with education <i>Développer le lien avec l'école</i> | Recruit school relations officers and organize information sessions destined to youth | Students (15 to 18 years old) | | Le Forem | 2014 and 2015 | 2014 : 395.645 € 2015 : 395.645 € |
| 3.EI | Engage against school drop-outs <i>Lutte contre le décrochage scolaire</i> | Engage against school drop-outs managed by partners | Job seekers under 25 years old | | Le Forem and its partners including the IFAPME among others | 2014 and 2015 | 2014 : 503.360 € 2015 : 503.360 € |
| 4.EI | Partnerships actions with NEETs' support expert partners <i>Actions de partenariats avec les partenaires ayant déployé une expertise pour la prise en charge du public des NEETS</i> | - Recruit a partnership relations officer - Develop partnerships | School drop-outs | | Le Forem and its partners including CPAS, Mire, EFT-OISP among others | 2014 and 2015 | 2014 : 3.078.555 € 2015 : 3.078.555 € |

Note: EI is used for the numbering of Early Intervention measures.

2.4 Supportive measures for labour market integration

- Include an overview table summarising key planned legislative and administrative reforms and initiatives (programmes, projects) needed to implement the Youth Guarantee scheme, both in enhancing skills (rec. 11-15) and in labour market-related measures (rec. 16-20), eg. reforms of the education and training system, apprenticeship reform, capacity-building and building partnerships (public authorities, public employment services, schools, youth organisations, training institutions, private employment services, social partners and employers);
- Provide a more detailed description for each planned reform and initiative where relevant;
- List the consultation of all stakeholders, including the Social Partners and youth organisations, and their involvement in the development of reform plans and initiatives;
- Where appropriate, identify specific areas for Member State peer learning, i.e. what particular areas, interventions or good practices would you particularly like to learn more about? This information will help to frame subsequent peer learning support.

Table 2.4: Key reforms and initiatives to enable labour market integration

| Name of the reform/initiative ²³ | Key objective(s) ²⁴ | Target group, including no of people covered (if available) | Scale | Name and role of organisation in the lead and cooperating partners | Timetable for implementation | Implementation cost, if applicable |
|---|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| Planned reforms | | | | | | |
| e.g. <i>Apprenticeship Act</i> | e.g.- <i>to recognise vocational training as equivalent to general education at upper secondary level</i> | e.g. <i>Students in upper secondary schooling (approx. aged 16-18)</i> | <i>Specify: National, regional, local</i> | e.g. <i>Ministry of Education (lead), Employers' and workers representatives (consultation on legislative proposal) Businesses and VET providers (implementing)</i> | e.g. <i>February 2014: Legislative proposal September 2014: implementation with start of academic year</i> | e.g. <i>Legislative proposal: N/A Implementation: Employer subsidies for vocational training placements (such initiatives should then for example be spelled out in a separate line, see d in this example)</i> |

²³ In English and original name (in national language).

²⁴ Please ensure that the objectives meet the established 'SMART' criteria. The objectives should be linked to the 'rationale'/needs identified in section 1.

| | | | | | | | |
|------|---|--|--|---------------------|---|---|--|
| 1LMI | Decree on personalized support (and revision of unemployment legislation) <i>Décret relatif à l'accompagnement individualisé (et révision de la législation chômage)</i> | Decree defining the support of unemployed population in regards to personalized support and cooperation between integration operators. - Adapt methodology to reach public target - Identify a 'youth' referent - Ensure training of counsellors - Ensure coordination | - 20 000 youth/year (Province of Hainaut and province of Liège) aged between 18 and 25 years old | - Region (national) | - Minister of Employment and Training - Le Forem | - Implementation starting in January 2014 – continuous follow up - March 2014 : Action plan - April 2014 : recruitment and designation of a coordinator and of youth referents - May 2014 : methodology adaptation | |
| 2LMI | Decree and order on the work place integration traineeship <i>Décret et arrêté relatifs au stage de transition</i> | - Decree implementation in order for youth to go into training - Allow a great number of youth to get into business internships or in any other form of organizations - Promote different types of traineeships. | - 3760 youth/year aged between 18 and 25 years old | - Region, local | - Minister of Employment and Training - Le Forem - Dialogue with social partners and with youth associations (project partners) | - Roll-out starting January 2014 - Evaluation in January 2015 | |
| 3LMI | Decree draft on alternate training <i>Projet de décret relatif à la formation alternée</i> | - Create a new legal framework for young job-seekers alternate training | - Job seekers aged between 18 and 25 years old (75 in 2014 and 125 in 2015) | - Region | - Minister of Employment and Training - Le Forem - IFAPME | - From February to May 2014 : starting phase (3 times 10 people) - Following the Decree agreement by the Walloon Government and Parliament : Training programmes | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|-------------------------------|
| | | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - June 2014 : Diagnosis - July 2014 : Roll-out - 75 persons would start training in 2014, and 125 in 2015. | |
| Planned initiatives | | | | | | |
| e.g.: Wage subsidies for apprenticeships | e.g.- to increase labour market relevance of vocational training by introducing an obligatory company-based placement of min. 12 months in upper secondary vocational training | e.g. Students in upper secondary education (aged 16-18): Academic year 2014/5: 30.000 (30% of VET students) Academic year 2015/6: 60.000 (60% of VET students) | Specify: National, regional, local | e.g. Ministry of Education (lead), Employers' and workers representatives (consultation on planning of programme) Businesses and VET providers (implementing) | e.g. March 2014: Publication of detailed programme Gradual rollout between 2014-2017 Full roll-out planned for 2017 | e.g. EUR 3000/student/year |

| | | | | | | | |
|------|--|--|--------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| 4LMI | Implementation of sponsorships for young job-seekers Mettre en place un système de parrainage de jeunes demandeurs d'emploi | Implementation of sponsorships in regions involved | Job seekers under 25 years old | | Partners | Length of sponsorship: 6 months + 3 months for matching the pair. 100 sponsorships launched in 2014, and 500 in 2015. | 2015 : 70.470 € 2016 : 226.520 € |
| 5LMI | Collaborate and interact with graduates Collaborer et interagir avec les jeunes sortant de l'école | - Brighten up interactions means (develop communication supports and interaction) - Work out interaction channels at best | Job seekers under 25 years old | | Le Forem | March 2014 : Needs assessment June 2014: Functional analysis of the adaptation of existing tools. June 2015: Communication / youth hooking. | 2014 : 352.360 € 2015 : 251.680 € |
| 6LMI | Communicate with youth Communiquer avec les jeunes | - Make our means of communication attractive to youth - Communication plan for YEI financed actions | Job seekers under 25 years old | | Le Forem | Starting in July 2014: Adaptation of communication means and Youth Guarantee Communication Plan | 2014 : 125.840 € 2015 : 125.840 € |
| 7LMI | Identification of potentials and competences' development Identification des potentiels et développement des compétences | - Develop an online potential assessment tool for youth without qualifications - Develop new « basic skills » trainings - Increase the number of trainings for target audience - Reinforce attractiveness of technical jobs among target audience | Job seekers under 25 years old | | Le Forem and its partners Centres de compétence (non-profit organization) and IFAPME among others | Assessments: June 2014: identification of tools to be tested during 2 nd semester 2014 in order to make 300 assessments and 160.000 hours / trainee during the 2 nd semester 2014. Implementation of assessments in 2015 in order to make 3.000 assessments | 2014 : 3.490.575 € 2015 : 5.226.905 € |

| | | | | | | |
|------|---|---|--------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | | | | | and 250.000 hours / trainee. Spring 2014 : development of new 'basic skills' training modules May 2014 : new actions to promote attractiveness of technical jobs | |
| 8LMI | Support youth international mobility Soutenir la mobilité des jeunes à l'étranger | Finance traineeships abroad for youth under 30 years of age | Job seekers under 30 years old | | Le Forem | 2014 : 40 scholarships 2015 : 40 scholarships 2014 : 120.810 € 2015 : 120.810 € |
| 9LMI | Develop enterprising mind and promote self-employment Développer l'esprit d'entreprendre et promouvoir l'activité indépendante | - Support creation of new professional activity - Organize internships to discover self-employment | Young job seekers | | Partners | 2014 : 300 youth 2015 : 300 youth 2014 : 744.975 € 2015 : 744.975 € |

Note: LMI is used for the numbering of Labour Market Integration measures.

3. Funding the Youth Guarantee

- Include an overview table summarising the level and source(s) of funding of the reforms and initiatives mentioned in 2.3 and 2.4;
- Lay out the overall cost and expected benefits of implementing the Youth Guarantee scheme. For those countries opting for a gradual implementation²⁵, please explain how the different stages will be funded and what would be the priorities for funding;
- Present, in the table or separate text, how the costs will be met by national funding, as well as through EU funds including the Youth Employment Initiative and the European Social Fund.

Table 3: Funding the Youth Guarantee

| Name of reform/initiative | Years for which funding is planned | Sources & levels of funding | | | | | No. of beneficiaries planned (when applicable) | | | Cost per beneficiary (when applicable) |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------------------|--|--------|--------|--|
| | | EU/ESF/YEI | National Funds, including co-funding | Regional/Local Funds | Employer Funds | Other (please specify) | Male | Female | Total | |
| PLANNED REFORMS | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1LMI Decree on personalized support (and revision of unemployment legislation) | 2014 | 564.780 € | | | | | | | 15.000 | 38 € |
| | 2015 | 504.380 € | | | | | | | 20.000 | 25 € |

²⁵ In line with recommendation 27 Council Recommendation.

| Name of reform/initiative | Years for which funding is planned | Sources & levels of funding | | | | | No. of beneficiaries planned (when applicable) | | | Cost per beneficiary (when applicable) |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------------------|--|--------|--------|--|
| | | EU/ESF/YEI | National Funds, including co-funding | Regional/Local Funds | Employer Funds | Other (please specify) | Male | Female | Total | |
| 2LMI Decree and order on the work place integration traineeship Create new traineeships among which the work place integration traineeship | 2014 | 407.725 € | | | | | 1.880 | 1.880 | 3.760 | 108 € |
| | 2015 | 407.725 € | | | | | 1.880 | 1.880 | 3.760 | 108 € |
| 3LMI Decree draft on alternate training | 2014 | 2.164.455 € | | | | | 62 | 16 | 78 | 27.749 € |
| | 2015 | 3.120.840 € | | | | | 125 | 31 | 156 | 20.005 € |
| PLANNED INITIATIVES | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Example: Wage subsidies for apprenticeships</i> | 2014 | <i>EUR 60 m</i> | <i>EUR 30 m</i> | - | - | - | 15.000 | 15.000 | 30.000 | <i>EUR 3000/student/year</i> |
| | 2015 | <i>EUR 120.000 m</i> | <i>EUR 60 m</i> | - | - | - | 30.000 | 30.000 | 60.000 | <i>EUR 3000/student/year</i> |

| Name of reform/initiative | Years for which funding is planned | Sources & levels of funding | | | | | No. of beneficiaries planned (when applicable) | | | Cost per beneficiary (when applicable) |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------------------|--|--------|--------|--|
| | | EU/ESF/YEI | National Funds, including co-funding | Regional/Local Funds | Employer Funds | Other (please specify) | Male | Female | Total | |
| 1.EI Study and dialogue with youth services | 2014 | 50.340 € | | | | | | | | |
| 2.EI Develop relations with education | 2014 | 395.645 € | | | | | | | 15.000 | 26 € |
| | 2015 | 395.645 € | | | | | | | 20.000 | € |
| 3.EI Engage against school drop-outs | 2014 | 503.360 € | | | | | | | | |
| | 2015 | 503.360 € | | | | | | | | |
| 4.EI Partnerships actions with NEETs' support expert partners | 2014 | 3.078.555 € | | | | | | | | |
| | 2015 | 3.078.555 € | | | | | | | | |
| 4LMI Implementation of sponsorships for young job-seekers | 2014 | 70.470 € | | | | | | | 100 | 705 € |
| | 2015 | 226.520 € | | | | | | | 500 | 453 € |
| 5LMI Collaborate and interact with graduates | 2014 | 352.360 € | | | | | | | 15.000 | 23 € |
| | 2015 | 251.680 € | | | | | | | 20.000 | 13 € |
| 6LMI Communicate with | | | | | | | | | | |

| Name of reform/initiative | Years for which funding is planned | Sources & levels of funding | | | | | No. of beneficiaries planned (when applicable) | | | Cost per beneficiary (when applicable) |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|------------------------|--|--------|--------|--|
| | | EU/ESF/YEI | National Funds, including co-funding | Regional/Local Funds | Employer Funds | Other (please specify) | Male | Female | Total | |
| youth | 2014 | 125.840 € | | | | | | | 15.000 | 8 € |
| | 2015 | 125.840 € | | | | | | | 20.000 | 6 € |
| 7LMI Identification of potentials and competences' development | 2014 | 3.490.575 € | | | | | 480 | 320 | 800 | 4.363 € |
| | 2015 | 5.226.905 € | | | | | 2.430 | 1.620 | 4.050 | 1.291 € |
| 8LMI Support youth international mobility | 2014 | 120.810 € | | | | | 24 | 16 | 40 | 3.020 € |
| | 2015 | 120.810 € | | | | | 24 | 16 | 40 | 3.020 € |
| 9LMI Develop enterprising mind and promote self-employment | 2014 | 744.975 € | | | | | 120 | 180 | 300 | 2.483 € |
| | 2015 | 744.975 € | | | | | 120 | 180 | 300 | 2.483 € |

4. Assessment and continuous improvement of schemes

- Do the measures reach their goals? Or should they be amended in order to achieve better outcomes?

Recognising that reforms and funded initiatives will require different types of evaluations, two tables are set out in this section.

- Member States may also wish to integrate the indicators to be used in the context of the European Social Fund and the Youth Employment Initiative to ensure consistency of assessment and evaluation.

-

Table 4.1: Planned assessments for the (non-financial aspects of) structural reforms²⁶

| Name of the reform ²⁷ | Expected change | Means through which change will be measured | Source of information / planned evaluations |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <i>e.g. Apprenticeship Act</i> | <i>e.g. to recognise vocational training as equivalent to general education at upper secondary level</i> | <i>e.g. legislation on access to tertiary education, survey of employers</i> | <i>Explain how the reform will be assessed</i> |

²⁶ Please include all reforms listed in the tables above.

²⁷ In English and original name (in national language).

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <p>1LMI Decree on personalized support (and revision of unemployment legislation) Décret relatif à l'accompagnement individualisé (et révision de la législation chômage)</p> | <p>Decree defining the support of job-seekers within the personalized coaching along with the cooperation with insertion operators. Individualized support of the target audience, definition of an action plan within a portfolio rationale.</p> | <p>Job-seekers are systematically supported between the 1st and the 4th month of their registration. Number of supported job-seekers according to target audience.</p> | <p>Dashboards and databases will be used for predictions and follow up.</p> |
| <p>2LMI Decree and order on the work place integration traineeship Décret et arrêté relatifs au stage de transition Create new traineeships Créer de nouvelles formes de stage</p> | <p>Allow trainees to gain necessary professional competences to enter labour market through a combined traineeship and learning program. Develop alternative internships in NGO, municipalities, and local authorities.</p> | <p>Achievement of objectives regarding work place integration traineeships. Volume increase of behavioural and technical traineeships.</p> | <p>Dashboards and databases will be used for predictions and follow up.</p> |
| <p>3LMI Decree draft on alternate training Projet de décret relatif à la formation alternée</p> | <p>Allow learners to gain job competences mainly through professional internships support (tutoring) where formal education environment has proved to be unsuccessful. Note: Implementation and therefore results achievements depend on Decree implementation and business response to the proposed measure.</p> | <p>The Decree foresee the creation of a technical Committee whose mission is to provide an annual qualitative and quantitative evaluation report measuring among other things the job-seekers insertion rate in the year following the alternate training course. Also foreseen are satisfaction surveys among participating beneficiaries and businesses. At last, the number of jobs competence certification will also be used as an evaluation tool for measuring the success of the reform.</p> | <p>Dashboards and databases will be used for predictions and follow up.</p> |

Table 4.2: Planned assessments of the initiatives and of the financial aspects of reforms ²⁸

| Name of the initiative / reform ²⁹ | Target population (or equivalent) | Population (or equivalent) actually reached | Outcome for population | Sources of information |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| <i>e.g. Reduced social security contributions for employers taking on a young worker</i> | <i>Number of young people eligible to be covered (e.g. either total NEET population, or limited by budget for initiative)</i> | <i>Number of young people actually employed under this scheme</i> | <i>Longer-term outcome for young person (stayed in job, became unemployed, etc.)</i> | <i>Specify how the data will be collected (e.g. tax data on number of reduced social security contributions claimed, or randomised control groups for the longer-term outcomes)</i> |

²⁸ Please include all initiatives listed in the tables above.

²⁹ In English and original name (in national language).

| e.g. Careers advice in schools | Number of young people in school to receive careers advice | Number of young people who received careers advice | Number of young people in a job or continued education after having received careers advice at school | Data source for schools Data source for LM/education outcome |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| 1.EI Study and dialogue with youth services Etudes et concertation avec les services de la jeunesse | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2.EI Develop relations with education Développer le lien avec l'école | 2014 : 15.000 2015 : 20.000 | Difficult to measure | Difficult to measure | Number of youth reached by the initiative |
| 3.EI Engage against school drop-outs Lutte contre le décrochage scolaire | Difficult to measure | Difficult to measure | | |
| 4.EI Partnerships actions with NEETs' support expert partners Actions de partenariats avec les partenaires ayant déployé une expertise pour la prise en charge du public des NEETS | Difficult to measure | Difficult to measure | | |
| 4LMI Implementation of sponsorships for young job-seekers Mettre en place un système de parrainage de jeunes demandeurs d'emploi | 2014 : 100 2015 : 500 | | | |
| 5LMI Collaborate and interact with graduates Collaborer et interagir avec les jeunes sortant de l'école | 2014 : 15.000 2015 : 20.000 | Difficult to measure | Higher participation rate to proposed actions. | Monitoring of activities. |
| 6LMI Communicate with youth | 2014 : 15.000 | Difficult to measure | Higher participation rate to proposed | Monitoring of activities. |

| | | | | | |
|------|---|--|--|---|---|
| | Communiquer avec les jeunes | 2015 : 20.000 | | actions. | |
| 7LMI | Identification of potentials and competences' development Identification des potentiels et développement des compétences | 2014 : 300 youth for assessments and 500 youth for training 20152014 : 3.000 youth for assessments and 1.050 youth for training | 2014 : 270 youth for assessments and 400 youth for training 2015 : 2.700 youth for assessments and 840 youth for training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessments: Allow a target audience without specific training (and therefore without specific professional expectations) to obtain a diagnosis of potential professional development. - 'Basic skills' trainings: allow the target audience to access training leading to a qualification. - Job trials: orientation tool allowing the target audience to practice a limited number of jobs for a limited time of duration enabling the participant to acknowledge his/her abilities and wishes to continue or not to a training leading to qualification. | <p>The assessment tool will allow identifying the beneficiaries' interests in a certain job or sector.</p> <p>Follow up of trainings and job trials will be done through databases.</p> |
| 8LMI | Support youth international mobility Soutenir la mobilité des jeunes à l'étranger | Widely inform on mobility Propose scholarships for traineeship | 40 scholarships | Discover job opportunities abroad | <p>Monitoring of activities.</p> <p>Number of scholarships granted.</p> <p>Number of youth informed on mobility.</p> |
| 9LMI | Develop enterprising mind and promote self-employment Développer l'esprit d'entreprendre et promouvoir l'activité indépendante | 2014 : 300 2015 : 300 | Difficult to measure | <p>Promote forms of employment other than employees work.</p> <p>Create new jobs.</p> <p>Create a self-employment job.</p> | <p>Number of youth met.</p> <p>Number of actions carried out.</p> |

Bruxelles-Capital contribution

To the Belgian Youth Guarantee Implementation
Plan (YGIP)

Outline for the national Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans (YGIP)

Il est proposé que le logo bruxellois «Garantie Jeunes » soit apposé sur la page de couverture.

Commentaire [Maud Char1]: Remarque : *Partnerships* : ...It appears that the Dutch-speaking community authorities are not mentioned as co-authors of the Brussels plan on the cover page...

1. CONTEXT/RATIONALE

a. Overview of the nature of youth employment and NEETs, giving specific evidence where possible

Against a background of Brussels with its high level of unemployment, young people in particular are faced with the phenomenon of economic and social exclusion. In fact, the rate of unemployment (BIT) among young people in Brussels in 2012 was 36.4%, which is a much higher level than the average for the European Union (20.9%) as well as for Belgium as a whole (19.8%). By alternating short periods of work and periods of unemployment, they are also exposed to the risk of poverty and a lack of job security. Indeed, situations of unemployment often reveal disadvantaged and vulnerable living conditions, as well as a lack of employment, which in many cases goes hand in hand with insufficient earnings, making it difficult for young people to house themselves properly or take care of themselves. In December 2012, 30.9% of recipients of social integration allowances in the Brussels Region were under the age of 25.

1. Structure of activity for young Brussels people

According to the Workforce Survey (EFT), in 2012 there were some 137,500 young people in Brussels aged between 15 and 24, i.e. 12.0% of the total population in Brussels. Almost three-quarters of them (72.4%, or approximately 99,000 young people) were not working. While most of these young people from Brussels are still in education (some 86,400 students), we can see that a little over 26,000 of them, 19.2%, can be considered as NEET (not in employment, education or training). As a result, the Brussels Region has a higher NEET percentage than in either Flanders (9.2%) or Wallonia (15.4%).

The employment rate for young people in the Brussels Region is 47.2% (excluding students). This is lower in comparison with the whole of the working-age population (54.0% among the 15-64 age bracket). The employment rate for young people (excluding students) is also lower than that in the two other Regions (77.7% for Flanders and 59.7% in Wallonia). When they are in work, young people tend to have a casual job more than the working population as a whole (29.0% compared with 11.9%). In the same way, part-time work is more widespread among young people (30.0% compared with 21.5%).

2. **Unemployment among young people in Brussels**

On average in 2012 in the Brussels Capital Region, there were 14,761 young jobseekers without work (51.9% men and 48.1% women). No fewer than 9,208 of these young people were poorly qualified (62.4%) and 5,663 had been out of work for over a year (38.4%). In 2012, the rate of administrative unemployment among young people was 30.9% in the Brussels Region, compared with 20.1% for the whole of the population of working age.

It should be stressed that while the Brussels Region had an annual average of 14,761 unemployed jobseekers (UJ) aged under 25 in 2012, Actiris recorded a much higher number of young people in terms of flow over the year. In fact, 33,411 youngsters were registered as unemployed jobseekers in 2012, i.e. at least in one of the 12 months of the year. These are therefore statistics in terms of flow over the year (and not stats for average stock). Putting this figure into perspective with the number of UJ on an annual average gives us an idea of the dynamics and movements experienced by young jobseekers in Brussels. While young people are genuinely affected by unemployment, they are also experiencing a high level of change in their status between unemployment, employment and not working.

Also, in 2012, a little over 11,000 young people came to register with Actiris who were involved in work experience placements after completing their studies. Approximately 80% were under 25 when they came to register for the first time after their studies (20% were aged between 25 and 29). Of these 11,000, 45.8% did not have higher secondary education qualifications (slightly more than 5,000), 30.4% has a higher secondary education diploma and 23.8% had a higher education qualification.

It can also be seen that poorly qualified jobseekers of foreign nationality (from outside the EU) and/or who have been out of work for over a year, more usually live in the inner boroughs of Brussels, which are the less wealthy areas.

3. **Main factors for unemployment among young people in Brussels**

We know that the level of education conditions the ability of young people to find work on the jobs market – and in particular how long it takes them to find employment. This is all the more true in Brussels, where there are very high requirements in terms of qualifications. Indeed, more than half of the jobs in Brussels are occupied by highly qualified workers, whereas in Flanders and Wallonia, it is only one-third. The structure of qualifications for young unemployed jobseekers (UJ) shows us that 62.4% of young people under the age of 25 are poorly qualified. This very high proportion may be explained in terms of the way the time they are in education is stretched out.

The table below shows that the level of unemployment among poorly qualified young people is of great concern, because it is almost 50%.

Table 1: Unemployment rate (BIT) based on age and level of education in the Brussels Region - 2012

| 2012 | < 25 | < 30 | Total |
|---------|------|------|-------|
| Poor | 49.1 | 40.3 | 29.3 |
| Average | 32.3 | 29.6 | 21.1 |
| High | 16.0 | 10.2 | 9.0 |
| Total | 36.4 | 25.2 | 17.5 |

Sources: FPS Economy (EFT), Calculations by the Brussels Employment Observatory

There are many factors that explain the unemployment of young people in the Brussels Region and they are not just limited to problems of qualification. Some factors are more specific to young people, such as failing at school, the dual nature of education, the lack of work experience and their greater susceptibility to variations in the fortunes of the economic situation. To illustrate the problem of dropping out of school, we can see that a large number of youngsters give up on education without obtaining a diploma, which propels them at an early age on to the employment market. In Brussels, the rate of dropping out of school is the highest in the country (18.9% compared with 14.7% in Wallonia and 9.6% in Flanders). We can also see that the huge increase in numbers and relegation to socially less well-considered courses particularly affects some students in Brussels who often find themselves doing subjects they have not chosen. This is all the more so the case in educational establishments that have a high proportion of immigrant youngsters.

In addition to this, other more general factors also apply to young people, such as a lack of language ability, social and spatial segregation, ethnic discrimination in employment, the high competitive pressure on the Brussels jobs market, the reconstitution of employment in Brussels and other individual factors that complicate the process of looking for a job. For example, we can point out that only 9% of young unemployed people in Brussels have a good knowledge of the other national language (28% have at least an average knowledge of the other language) while language requirements are much higher in Brussels than in the other two Regions. These requirements are to be found in numerous positions and sectors, including some jobs where qualification requirements are not high (e.g. hospitality industry, retail, etc.).

4. **Demographic outlook**

Finally, while the marked demographic growth in Brussels is placing considerable demand on housing, educational resources (crèches, schools, etc.) and infrastructure (especially transport, etc.), it is also having a very significant effect on the employment market. Indeed, the number of people in work in Brussels rises considerably each year, which further increases the pressure of competition within the jobs market. Young people, who by definition make their entry on to the employment market when they complete their studies, are exposed to a more complex process of finding work.

While the rejuvenation of the population represents a certain benefit for Brussels, it also amplifies the challenges – closely linked to the issue of young people – that are training and education, the fight against unemployment and providing access to “proper” jobs, i.e. quality employment.

b. Brief overview of existing key institutional actors in the area of youth employment and NEETs, their roles and responsibilities, target groups, services and measures offered. On the basis of this overview, this section should identify and analyse key structural challenges and specific gaps

From an institutional point of view, Brussels is complex and public action in the areas of transition from education, training and employment is situated on multiple levels:

- on a political level, with the Regional Government, the Boards of the Community Commissions in Brussels, as well as the authorities of the French and Flemish Communities responsible for education and aid to young people;
- in terms of social consultation, mainly with the Brussels Committee for Economic and Social Consultation ;
- on an operating level, with the public services for employment and vocational training (Actiris, Bruxelles Formation, VDAB-RDB), including ongoing training for employees and with the parties involved in education and social action (ranging from general information to specific aid) aimed at young people. It should also be remembered that the social security system is federal, as is part of the policy on social action.

As mentioned in the Government Accord for the Region 2009-2014, in the Declarations of the Boards of the Community Commissions, as well as in the latest contributions from Brussels to the National Reform Programme 2011-2013, the fight against youth unemployment and the effort to improve young people's skills is at the heart of the priorities of the Public Authorities in Brussels, in line with all Belgian authorities.

Hence, in terms of its own tasks, the Brussels Capital Region has taken measures in relation to dropping out from education that are not aimed at strengthening the existing procedures, but at implementing tasks that are currently not being carried out, or little so. These regional procedures are based on prevention and remediation. Support for greater efficiency in the delivery of information aimed at young people is now making it possible to increase the number of media used for disseminating information through various interactive tools. Other actions, just as essential and coming under a similar "multi-level" logic of partnership-based, are encouraged between the various parties involved in order to develop or strengthen offerings aimed at promoting the involvement of young people (registered or unregistered jobseekers) or implementing structural collaborations between programmes to encourage youngsters to stay at school, the PMS centres in Brussels, information services and youth aid, as well as the public services for employment and training.

The services provided by Actiris to jobseekers are structured as part of an individualised and personalised process in which the Construction of Professional Project (CPP) programme is the central part. This process is mandatory for all jobseekers aged under 50 who register with Actiris and is more intensive for young people in general, especially those with poor qualifications.

The Wallonia Brussels Federation considers the guidance of young people as too fragmented over structures and institutions. The principle of YEI jobs consists therefore in better coordination of interventions and focusing – for instance - on specific areas with strong concentrations of young school absenteeism and of field workers. . After segmentation of this space, the method below could be used to reduce side-effects of fragmented and potentially diverging actions.

Commentaire [Maud Char2]: Remarque : *Supportive measures for labour market integration (1): enhancing skills : no mention of referral systems for ESL
no indication on the extent to which partners, in particular the partners linked to education, have been consulted.
more detail could be given on the effective coordination with the competent authorities for education (i.e. involving the French and Flemish communities), in particular in the fight against ESL.
no mention of initiatives currently underway on which the YGIP could build*

1. Identify the specifics of this territory. Input information (link the information of different sources) and display it to operational partners : (schools, PMS centres, FWB school mediators, absenteeism services, open centers, youth workers, associations,...).
2. Promote a joint diagnosis and stronger coherence between interventions.
3. Create links between these partners and motivate, support and encourage them for the concerted organisation of best practices .
4. Encourage and follow up on cooperation protocols between these partners.
5. Promote joint development of projects that correspond with everyone's individual mission.
6. Contribute to better synergy between partners.
7. Implement a joint monitoring of the actions and contribute to the quality of the actions.

The issue of school absenteeism and school drop-out has increased over recent years, often as a symptom of other problems in the life of Brussels' youngsters. To tackle this problem, absenteeism prevention is essential, adding support and guidance for the high-risk group, education and training recovery and alternative education path development.

From September 2014 "Time-Out Brussel" welcomes in its new building high-risk young people with school problems of the Dutch speaking secondary education network. Time-Out Brussel is a pluralist structure where education and social partners meet in a coordinated approach of school absenteeism and school motivation. The actions target the young people and their school teams and they aim at dropout prevention and return to regular school career. When young people drop out of the school system, this is usually due to wrong subject choice. VGC wishes more and larger consultation between partners so that the young people gain access to adequate information and interact with the services they are in need of to learn about all possibilities, subject choices and support.

This cooperation will lead to the creation of a "Leerwinkel Brussel" (learning shop) in 2014, a neutral, independent and pluralist counseling service that will supply information about the Dutch educational offer in the Brussels Capital Region. On the one hand, it will provide information and sources about the educational possibilities in the Dutch-speaking fundamental and secondary schools in Brussels (-18 y.). On the other hand, the service will provide information, sources and guidance about adult education (+18 j.) with a professional and qualifying focus.

Young people leaving school without qualification should be able to obtain a qualification and/or diploma afterwards. Therefore, VGC and VDAB will continue to work on the development of (new) alternative education paths and flexible paths for vulnerable groups to eliminate hindering factors on their way to the labor market. Mutual cooperation, exchange and mobility between education and training systems are particularly important in this process. From 2014, VGC, VDAB and Actiris will organise agreements for an easy and adequate transfer of pupils having left the the education system without secondary diploma.

The Flemish Parliament currently discusses the decree about work and care paths announced in the coalition agreement 2009-2014. It aims to develop a tailor-made structural offer for people who are unable to participate in the labor market for medical, mental, psychiatric or social reasons. For the Brussels Capital Region this could be organized in an cooperation agreement concerning mixed job/care policy.

Stage one of the jobseeker process is registration, which includes the immediate clarification of the individual's application and then becomes immediately usable for selecting candidates and sending out job offers. Once the registration and clarification section has been completed, the guidance given to jobseekers varies according to their needs. For young jobseekers registering after their studies and who have a maximum of a higher secondary education diploma, a Youth information session is held within 7 days of their registering, for which the diagnosis interview is scheduled for 28 days after registration and clarification. The follow-up process for this audience is obligatory and intensive throughout the first year following registration.

For young jobseekers with a Belgian diploma (or equivalent) in higher studies who register after graduating, the diagnosis interview is scheduled for 28 days after registration and clarification. The follow-up process for this audience is obligatory and intensive throughout the first year following registration. The information session can be found at the actiris.be website and when the young person registers via Mon Actiris, a link invites him or her to find out more about the session.

Since October 2013, Actiris has had a 2nd-line service called 'Youth Guarantee'. This is aimed at supporting young people aged under 30 in finding a job. This service also handles the placement of young jobseekers in Brussels on transition work experience programmes created by the federal government. In addition to coaching and selecting job offers or work experience placements for applicants, the service also handles the guidance of young people during their actual work experience in a company. From January 2014, the service will develop further to include implementation of the European 'Youth Guarantee' programme.

In addition to support measures aimed at finding jobs, other measures relate more specifically to orientation and knowledge of the world of employment ("JEEP as in Young People, School, Jobs, etc. a whole programme", in French-speaking Belgium, and "JUMP to Work" in Dutch-speaking areas, Codes of Conduct in the workplace, aimed at enabling young jobseekers to learn about how to behave in the world of work; Group for Active Young Jobseekers).

In the area of training, both Bruxelles Formation and VDAB Brussel offer targeted courses that provide educational guidance programmes.

As part of a group of multi-sectorial and multi-level policies (education, youth information, staying at school, training, jobseeking aid, etc.), the **Brussels Youth Guarantee programme** is aimed at:

- helping in the fight against unemployment and the under-employment of young people aged 15 to under 25;
- helping to improve skills (in the broad sense) of young people for the purpose of getting them (back) into the employment market.

To do this, essential reforms are planned between now and 2020 aimed at removing the obstacles in the way of young people finding work successfully, beginning with those who are exposed most to the risk of exclusion from the jobs market.

In addition to its relationship with the aims of the European Union's Strategy 2020, the Brussels Youth Guarantee programme will be part of the aims pursued by the programming tools implemented by the Region (PRDD, New Deal), as well as by the cooperative agreements reached between the Region and COCOF (French Community Commission) and Flanders on mixed employment and training policies.

Finally, young people will be consulted throughout the implementation of the programme, mainly by the youth information services (interactive platform).

A steering committee, made up of all of the parties involved, will be put in place as will a technical coordination process to ensure the practical implementation of the programmes through a search for synergies and areas of consistency between the parties.

On top of the reforms we have planned between now and 2020 a series of prompt measures and early interventions will be implemented, for instance :

1. a common trunk (basic unit) leading to training in a study ;
2. the project Espace Jeunes at bf.carrefour. It aims to enhance the information and the guidance given to young people (targets 1500 young people).
At Carrefour a physical space will be created shared by training services and employment services to offer more personal advice to young people ;
3. on the job transition training : since January 2013 the Brussels Region has the advantage of 1.650 paid training positions created by the federal government. This training aims at unskilled young people younger than 30 years old that registered with Actiris after they left school. Young people who are able to justify that they have been actively looking for a job during the 6 weeks after registration with public employment services are eligible for this measure. The duration of this full-time training varies from 3 to 6 months.
4. Information in schools via Jeep and Jump. The programme exists and is operational (measure 1.2)
5. The Brulingua platform, language tests and -cheques for those registered with Actiris (measure 4.1)

Commentaire [Maud Char3]: Remarque *Early intervention and activation : not much foreseen on NEETs not much activities in the short-run. Essential reforms are planned till 2020 :*

c. Brief outline of how the Youth Guarantee programme will add value to current provision and specifically address the challenges and gaps identified.

In view of the specific nature of Brussels and the multitude of institutions and local operators involved, the approach adopted is multifactorial and transversal.

Multifactorial because it is based on a process with sections upstream associated with educational pathways for young people, ending up with gaining employment. This calls for partnerships to be built around the various sections of actions undertaken by the partners, each within its own area of expertise:

- information and orientation of young people and their parents, as well as business people,
- education and aid to young people with the French and Flemish Community Services, and the services of the Flemish Community Commission ;
- training/informal with the Community Commission Services,
- training with Brussels public operators: Bruxelles Formation, VDAB-RDB, SFPME, Syntra
- work experience, with the mandatory combined action of the social partners and Public Services of Actiris, Bruxelles Formation and VDAB. These latter organisations work with SFPME and Syntra in the area of teaching.
- employment with the Public Service for employment: Actiris.

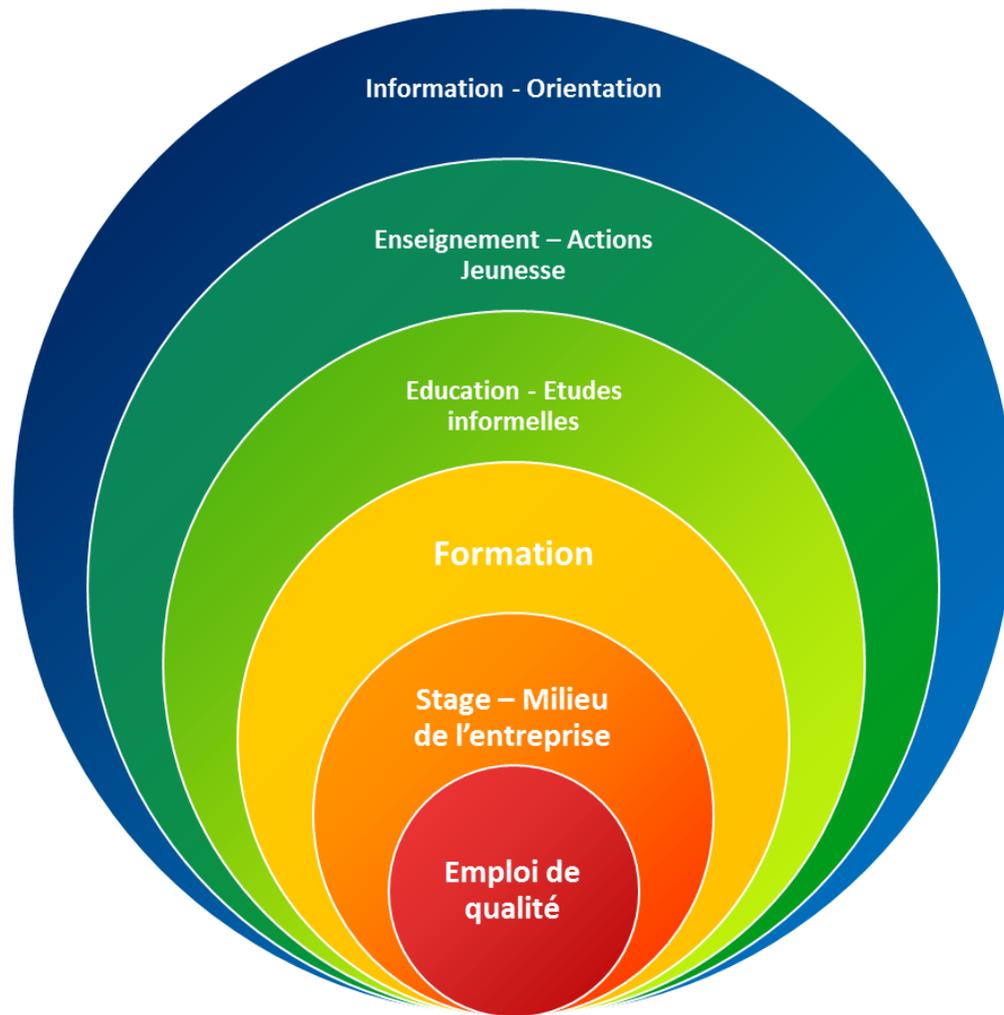
There will be specific attention for job-seekers younger than 25 years old that participate in CPP in systematic guidance by Actiris, through the measure “Tremplin Jeunes” (implemented by Bruxelles-Formation) that creates a specific methodology for individual guidance for young people, so they find work on the jobs market.

All of these public institutions work in partnership with private or public operators, accredited and/or approved to carry out part of the programme’s actions. De presented measures were developed in consultation with the non-trade sector for youth and labor market policies. Social partners have equally been consulted through the management contracts with the institutions involved and in the Brussels' economic consultation committee extended to the Communities.

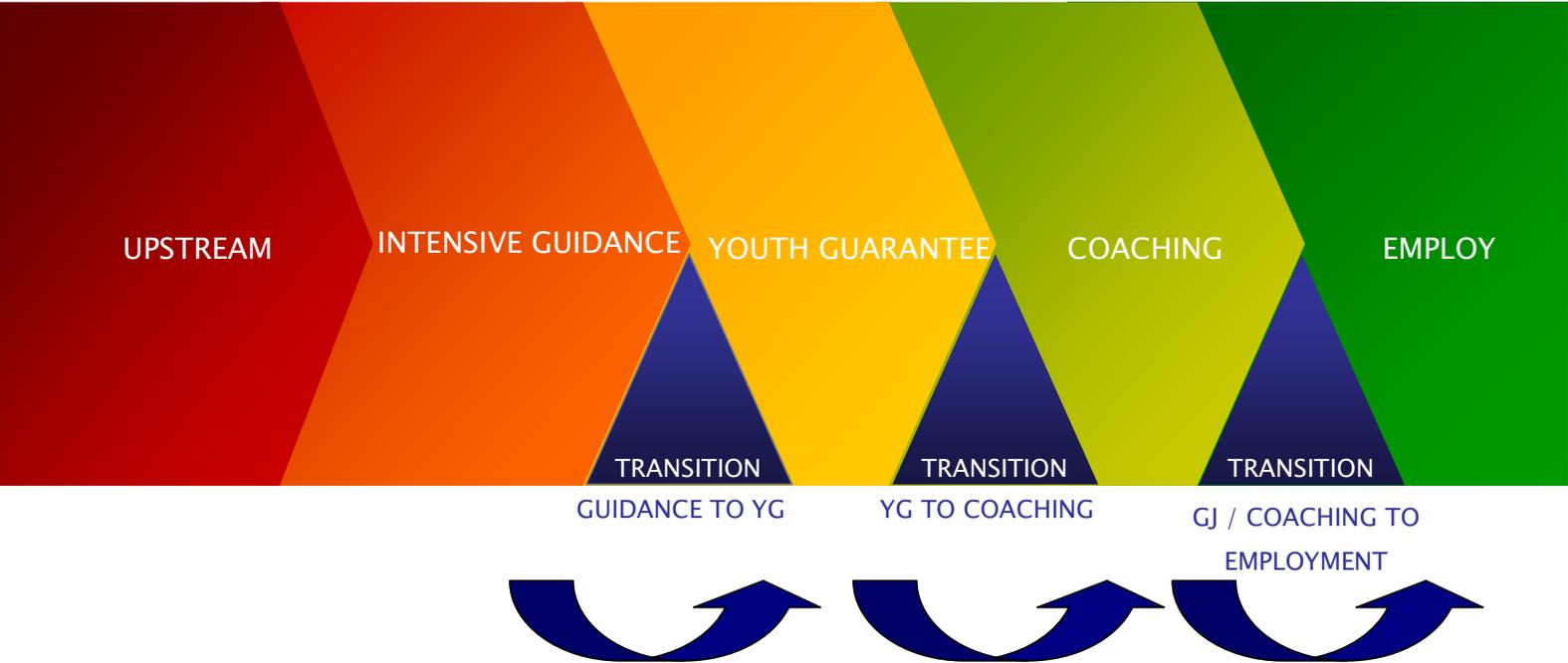
Transversal through consultation and coordination provided by the relevant operating Ministers and by the overall coordination process guided by the Minister-President for the Region.

But this partnership-based approach is neither fixed or limited. It will be required to evolve with each of the implementation stages of the Brussels Youth Guarantee programme.

Commentaire [Maud Char4]: Remarque : *Supportive measures for labour market integration (2): labour market-related measures: no indication on the extent to which partners have been consulted*



Processed followed by young people registered with Actiris



2. Implementing the Youth Guarantee Scheme at a national level

2.1 Formulation of the national Youth Guarantee

From 2014 and then in stages until the objective has been brought fully into operation, any young person aged between 15 and under 25 who drops out of his or her studies without graduating, will be informed within one month of the services he or she can call on ending up, within 4 months, either having a job, doing work experience, enrolling for training, going back to studying or, if necessary, receiving support in social integration, the stage prior to obtaining work.

Any young person aged between 15 and under 25 newly registered as a jobseeker with Actiris will be given guidance aimed at offering him or her, within 4 months, either a job, work experience or training course, or going back to his or her studies, or, if necessary, receiving support in social integration, which is the stage prior to obtaining work.

2.2 Partnership approaches

Table 2.2: Key organisations that will support and deliver the Youth Guarantee scheme

| Name of key organisations | Type of organisation | Level of responsibility | Role in implementing the Youth Guarantee scheme | Ensuring the success of the partnerships |
|--|--|-------------------------|---|--|
| Government of the Brussels Capital Region | Public authority | Regional | Coordination of aims and implementation of the programme | In ongoing collaboration with the Board of the French Community Commission, Board of the Flemish Community Commission Associating the operating ministers of the Government of the French Community and the Government of the Flemish Community Handles the coordination and consistency of the tools for the EU's Strategy 2020, as well as with the New Deal and its various projects. |
| French Community Commission | Public authority | Brussels Community | Handles management of items that can be personalised for the French-speaking people of Brussels, such as work , ongoing training for employees, social action, social cohesion, etc. | The French Community Commission is made up of a legislative body (the Assembly) and an executive body (the Board) |
| Flemish Community Commission | Public authority | Brussels Community | Conducts policy in the area of Education, Training and Employment aimed at training, guiding and supporting young people based on the pathway to training, education and employment. | The Flemish Community Commission is made up of a legislative body (the Assembly) and an executive body (the Board) The Minister for vocational training is responsible for the coordination of this measure. |
| Actiris: Brussels Regional Employment Office | Public Service for joint employment management | Regional | Overall tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - implement Brussels policy on employment - ensure the proper functioning of the employment market in the BCR. Assignments within the context of the Youth Guarantee programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organise the transition of young jobseekers to employment - offer every young jobseeker registered with Actiris the range of YG services - ensure matching between employers and young jobseekers | Operational coordination via Strategic Development Committees (SDC) and joint management committees. |

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| Bruxelles Formation French-language occupational training institute in Brussels | Public Service for joint training management | Brussels Community | Overall tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manage the professional training of jobseekers, handicapped individuals and blue-collar workers - Coordinate the offering in partnership with or in a subcontractor arrangement with sector-based funds, OISPs, employee training and social promotion bodies - Organise professional training | Operational coordination via Strategic Development Committees (SDC) and joint management committees. |
| VDAB Brussel | PES | Regional | Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offers technical screening to jobseekers - Offers language and vocational training to jobseekers - Accompanies jobseekers during their apprenticeship schemes | Operational coordination via Strategic Development Committees (SDC) and joint management committees. |
| Service Formation pour les PME (SFPME) | Public administrative department | Brussels Community | Management service designed to guide the activity of the non-profit organisation Espace Formation PME, the training centre for self-employed workers and SMEs in the Brussels Region. The SFPME approves apprenticeship contracts and work experience agreements and ensure they run smoothly. | Close partnership with EFPME and the fabric of SMEs in Brussels. |
| Syntra | Training centre | Local/Regional | Syntra offers training courses to future and existing entrepreneurs and courses during study time to young people aged between 15 and 25. | |
| Agentschap voor Onderwijs Diensten Vlaanderen | | Regional | The Flemish Agency for Education Services, abbreviated to AgODi, is responsible for conducting the education policy of primary and secondary education, centres for part-time training, part-times arts education, centres for student supervision and inspection and teaching guidance. | |
| Conseil économique et social de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale (CESRBC) | Non-profit | Regional | Main socio-economic consultation body for the Region. It brings together the social partners: representative organisations for employers, employees and non-trading sector on the one hand and representative organisations for employees on the other. | Body that brings together the social partners in Brussels, responsible for issuing recommendations at the request of the Authorities or initiative on any question relative to the social and economic policies in Brussels. |

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|--|--|--------------------|--|---|
| Commission consultative Emploi, Formation, Enseignement (CCFEE) | | Brussels Community | Consultative committee responsible for giving recommendations on initiatives or at the request of the authorities in the areas of employment, training and education | Committee that brings together the main players in Brussels on employment, training and education |
| Brussels Nederlandstalig Comité voor Tewerkstelling en Opleiding (BNCTO) | | Brussels Community | Dutch speaking Committee for employment and training. This committee is comparable to a subregional employment committee in Flanders. | |

2.3 Early intervention and activation

Table 2.3: Key reforms and initiatives to ensure early intervention and activation

| Name of the reform/initiative | Key objective(s) | Target group, including number of people covered (if available) | Scale | Name and role of organisation in the lead and cooperating partners | Timetable for implementation | Implementation cost, if applicable |
|--|--|--|-----------|--|--|------------------------------------|
| Planned reforms | | | | | | |
| DIRECTION 2: Education / Youth Programmes | | | | | | |
| R2.1. Decree (inter-sectorial) issued on 21st November 2013, organising joint policies on mandatory education and youth aid | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To prevent students from dropping out of school through strengthened cooperation between the parties involved in education and youth aid - To make young people feel more at ease both at school and out of school, to promote students remaining in education and hence encourage success for all. | Young people aged 15 to 25 who have not achieved a secondary education certificate | Community | Ministry for Compulsory Education and Ministry for young people and youth aid | From September 2014, the process will operate in 10 education establishments selected based on the high level of student dropouts. | |
| R2.2. Draft amendment to the framework cooperation agreement relative to Training, alternating between the French Community, the Walloon Region and the French Community Commission. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harmonisation of the status of young people on work-linked training courses - Introduction of a preparation module before embarking on a work-linked training course, to reduce early dropouts | Young people aged 15 to 25 who have not achieved a qualification certificate equivalent to the completion of secondary education | Community | Ministry for Education and Brussels Ministry for vocational training (French-language board) | The preliminary draft of the decree will be voted on in the 1st half of 2014. | |
| R2.3. Decree regarding equipment for qualifying education + cooperative | This cooperative agreement enables students in compulsory education and social promotion | Includes: young people in qualifying secondary education | Community | Ministry for Compulsory Education and | The decree and cooperative agreement passed on the 1st reading. They will apply retroactively from 1st January | |

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|---|---|--|---------------------|--|--|--|
| agreement between the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, the Brussels Capital Region and COCOF for school equipment and access to Professional Reference Centres and Advanced Technologies Centres | students to have access to Professional Reference Centres and Advanced Technologies Centres. | and students in social promotion education | | Social Promotion | 2014. | |
| DIRECTION 3: Education / Informal Training | | | | | | |
| R3.1 Modification of the legislation relative to availability on the employment market | To facilitate the making available of this type of programme with jobseekers | Jobseekers aged under 25 registered with Actiris | Federal Regional | National Employment Office Actiris | The legislation relative to availability on the employment market could be modified if the assessment of the experiment to be conducted is positive. | |
| DIRECTION 4: Training | | | | | | |
| R4.1 Cooperation between secondary education and Actiris/VDAB | Motivated and conclusive transfer of students who leave education without a secondary diploma, yet still wanting to organise a qualifying process, whether or not combined with work. | Unqualified school-leavers | Community | Actiris, VGC/VDAB (for Dutch-language education) | | |
| DIRECTION 7: Transversality | | | | | | |
| R7.1. Creation of a process to coordinate policies aimed at young people on a subregional level | Encourage projects between sectors and ensure better monitoring of individual problematic cases | 12-25 years of age. 800,000 people | Community | Ministry of Youth + Interministerial conference on Youth | December 2015 | |
| R7.2. Draft decree for the Flemish Community cooperative agreement between the Flemish Community and | Produce structural programmes tailored for individuals who cannot participate on the employment market on account of medical, mental, psychological, psychiatric or | Young people <25 years of age | Regional | BHG/Actiris/VG/VGC Welzijn | | |

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|-------------------------|------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Brussels Capital Region | social problems. | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|--|--|--|--|--|

| Planned initiatives | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|----------|--|--|------------------------------------|
| DIRECTION 1: Information / Orientation | | | | | | |
| I1.1. Brussels J Platform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve information and online advice for young people. - Trial a shared interactive advice platform online in collaboration with the partners already in place; the aim being to offer online advice to young people looking for information | 10,000 young people | Regional | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service Infor JEUNES - French-speaking and Dutch-speaking partners in Brussels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2014: launch - 2015: consolidation - 2016: evaluation | 2014: 300,000 € 2015: 300,000 € |
| I1.2. JEEP ('Jeunes, Ecole, Emploi... tout un programme') and 'JUMP naar work' programmes | Make the orientation of your people easier by guiding them in constructing a project for education and work. | Programme aimed at students in secondary education, all levels and all sections combined. | Regional | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JEEP: Regional French-language programme organised in partnership with the 9 local Missions for employment of the BCR, the French Community and Actiris, coordinated by the local Mission in Forest - JUMP: Regional Dutch-language programme organised in partnership with local jobshops, VGC, VDAB, Actiris and the Brussels social partners, coordinated by Tracé Brussel vzw | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2014: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>JEEP</u>: 90 groups per year and 1750 young people per year <u>JUMP</u>: 20 schools per year and 480 young people per year - 2015: Increase of 10% - 2016: Evaluation of the projects and increase of 10% if possible | 2014: 500,000 € 2015: 510,000 € |
| I1.3. Space dedicated to young people in the Brussels Training Hub – | Improve the information and orientation offered to young | 1500 young people potentially targeted and professionals in | Regional | Bruxelles Formation/ Actiris/ Efpme, Phare, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2014: launch - 2015: consolidation | 2014: 75,400 € 2015: 75,400 € |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|-----------|--|--|------------------------------------|
| Destination Trades runs by Actiris (located in the centre of Brussels), Cité des Métiers Jeunes | people. Creation of a space shared between the providers of training and employment to offer more personalised advice | various sectors | | CPMS | - 2016: evaluation | |
| I1.4. Inform young people and make them aware of training and learning processes and the jobs market | Guide young people towards qualifying training and to the jobs market | Young people 15 to 25 years of age | Regional | VG/VGC VDAB, Actiris | | 2014: 140,000 € 2015: 140,000 € |
| DIRECTION 2: Education / Youth programmes | | | | | | |
| I2.1. Prevention of school dropouts | Create: - 1 regional platform - 10 local consultation units | Place 250 young people who have dropped out into a training process or work experience placement leading to employment | Community | Ministry for Compulsory Education and Ministry for Young People and Youth Aid | - April 2014: the regional platform will be in place - September 2014: the 10 local units will have been established - June 2016: Evaluation and rollout, based on results | |
| I2.2. Fight against early dropouts on work-linked training courses | - Put in place a design team for the preparation programme - Develop the programme in the 6 Work-Linked Course Training Centres | Have 420 young people attend the preparatory work-linked training course programme | Community | Ministry for Education and Brussels Ministry for Vocational Training (French-language board) | - April 2014: design team in place - September 2014: programme ready to be implemented - June 2016: evaluation and rollout, based on results | |
| I2.3. Information and training on trades as part of the Advanced Technology Centres (CTA) | - Deploy the training offering in collaboration with schools as part of the CTA via trainers accredited to monitor training - Organisation of trade information or training sessions | Young people from age 15 | Community | Bruxelles Formation/ CTA / Ministry for Compulsory Education and Social Promotion | - January 2014: constitution of a team - April 2014: first young people arrive - June 2016: evaluation and rollout, based on results | 2014: 380,000 € 2015: 380,000 € |
| I2.4. Development of appropriate language courses for young people from part-time education and training | Support for students weak in languages to improve their chances of succeeding on the employment market | Young people aged 15 – 25 | Regional | VGC via outsourcing | | 2014: 246,000 € 2015: 246,000 € |

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|--|--|-------------------------------|-----------|---|---|---|
| I2.5. Coaching of youngsters with learning problems from Brussels Dutch-language Education | Strengthen the supervision of students who don't like school and who threaten to drop out due to reintegration in compulsory education | Young people aged 15 – 25 | Regional | VG/VGC via outsourcing | | 2014: 355,000 € 2015: 355,000 € |
| I2.6 Strengthening of School Dropout Processes (DAS) and School Encouragement Services (SAS) | Establish structural collaboration between the DAS and between DAS, SAS and other local youth action services aimed at conducting programmes coordinated at the most appropriate level. | 15 to under 25 | Regional | Coordination of BCR DAS, Education Services of the French Community | 1st quarter 2014: finalisation of a joint action plan second half 2014: implementation 2016: adjustments after evaluation | |
| DIRECTION 3: Education / Informal training | | | | | | |
| I3.1. Civic Year / Civic Service | Enable young people to experience: - Civic commitment in the form of services to the community and meeting activities (voluntary activities) - A time of training and awareness (preparation for civic actions & reflection) - A period of personal maturing (determining a future project) | 16-25 years of age | Community | COCOF administration Actiris and Youth Aid Department of the French Community | 2014: Experiment for 50 young people in Brussels by the Civic Service (18-25 years of age) Integration of the existing process at the level of Youth Aid services (16 and 25 years of age) | 2014: 420,000 € and 17,500 € and 300.000 € 2015 : enlargement of the measure in case of positive evaluation; |
| I3.2 Preliminary programmes for vulnerable groups (Find-Bind-Mind) | Location-focused programmes, in which vulnerable young people are put into a process designed to bring them to training/work | Young people <25 years of age | Regional | VDAB via outsourcing | | 2014: 150,000 € 2015: 150,000 € |
| I3.3 Development of work and care | Structural programmes tailored for individuals who cannot | Young people <25 | Regional | BHG/Actiris/VG/VGC | | 2014: 300,000 € |

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| programmes (W ²) | participate on the employment market on account of medical, mental, psychological, psychiatric or social problems. | years of age | | Welzijn | | 2015: 300,000 € |
| DIRECTION 4: Training | | | | | | |
| <p>I4.1. Language Plan for the People of Brussels – Youth section, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language tests, Language vouchers, Brulingua Platform - Language immersion courses - Dutch language coaching for young people who speak other languages (alongside other courses) - More Dutch language training (trade-focused) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Given that being able to speak both languages is one of the conditions for employment, it is essential the young jobseekers know their level of Dutch/French. If that level is not high enough, a language voucher to attend language courses is issued to them. Also, a free language self-learning platform is made available to jobseekers. It is up to the young jobseeker's counsellor to encourage the person to use this platform. - Develop immersion courses with our partner VDAB and within Bruxelles Formation for VDAB trainees - Promote multilingualism. Dutch and French (minimum bilingual) is required for many vacancies in Brussels - Promote multilingualism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young jobseekers registered with Actiris and whose job project requires them to learn NL/FR. - 50 young people - Young people <25 years of age in other technical vocational training courses - Young people <25 years of age | <p>Regional</p> <p>Regional</p> <p>Regional</p> | <p>Actiris Bruxelles Formation / VDAB</p> <p>- VDAB</p> <p>- VDAB: via outsourcing</p> <p>- Guidance: via</p> | <p>Double the number of young people receiving language and ICT vouchers</p> <p>In 2012:</p> <p>11% of recipients of ICT vouchers = <25 years of age (i.e. 201)</p> <p>22% of recipients of language vouchers = <25 years of age (i.e. 1564)</p> <p>Aims of the Brulingua platform to be defined</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2014: launch - 2016: evaluation Bruxelles Formation and its partners | <p>Redirection of part of the Vouchers budget to the audience of young people</p> <p>2014: 150,000 €</p> <p>2015: 150,000 €</p> <p>2 FTEs Dutch teachers: 2 x 80,000 € = 160,000 € per year</p> <p>2014: 160,000 €</p> <p>2015: 160,000 €</p> <p>25,000 € per group - 4 groups per year:</p> <p>2014: 100,000 €</p> |

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| | | | | Actiris | | 2015: 100,000 € |
| - Bilingual courses (Dutch-French) | Promote multilingualism. Dutch and French (minimum bilingual) is required for many vacancies in Brussels | Young people <25 years of age | Regional | VDAB in conjunction with BruFor Actiris: Guidance | | 2 FTEs Dutch teachers: 2 x 80,000 € = 160,000 € per year 2014: 160,000 € 2015: 160,000 € |
| 14.2. CE2D top-up | Make it systematic to direct CE2D towards joint uptake between BF TREMLIN Jeunes and ACTIRIS to better guide, direct and map out their training/process of staying in work and top up their skills | - 1000 jobseekers in the process of orientation - 250 jobseekers top-up | Community | Bruxelles Formation and its partners | - 2014: launch - 2016: evaluation Bruxelles Formation and its partners | 2014: 1.000.000 € 2015: 1.000.000 € |
| 14.3. Objective 3000 | Increase the range of vocational training courses aimed at young people | 3,000 jobseekers in vocational training | Community | Bruxelles Formation / OISP Partners | - 2014 : launch - 2016 : evaluation Bruxelles Formation and its partners | 2014: 1,000,000 € 2015: 1,000,000 € |
| 14.4. Common syllabus leading to training courses for cutting-edge industrial trades | The aim of putting a common syllabus in place is to enable a new category of jobseekers (young) with a CTSS or CESS qualification to enrol, via a basic unit and work experience acculturation, for a qualifying training course in a manufacturing area. | 420 jobseekers on a common syllabus training course | Community | Bruxelles Formation / Sector funds | - 2014: launch - 2016: evaluation Bruxelles Formation and its partners | 2014: 203,400 € 2015: 203,400 € |
| 14.5. Support for returning to education | Increase the level of diplomas/certification of young people in partnership with social promotion education (e.g. reorientation, resuming education, CESS, etc.) | 100 | Community | Bruxelles Formation / Social Promotion / Education | - 2014: launch - 2016: evaluation Bruxelles Formation and its partners | 2014: 200,000 € 2015: 200,000 € |

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| 14.6. OISP Partnership | Develop the range of training courses/certification of young people removed from the employment market in partnership with the OISP partners | 250 | Community | Bruxelles Formation / OISP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2014: launch after definition of priorities with Actiris - 2016: evaluation Bruxelles Formation and its partners | 2014: 500,000 € 2015: 500,000 € + Actiris 2014: 400.000 € 2015 : 400.000 € |
| 14.7. Partnership between Sector Funds and CDR | Develop our partnerships with Sector Funds in the context of their programmes to assist young people belonging to at-risk groups. | 250 jobseekers | Community | Bruxelles Formation / Sector Funds / CDR of the BCR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2014: launch - 2016: evaluation Bruxelles Formation and its partners | 2014: 500,000 € 2015: 500,000 € |
| 14.8. Partnership between SFPME / EFP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trade trials (retail, care to individuals, catering trades, etc.) - general remediation - participation of Cité des Métiers - Apprenticeship - supervision + orientation + monitoring of young people looking for training and during courses | 1000 jobseekers | Community | Bruxelles Formation / SFPME / EFP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2014: launch - 2016: evaluation Bruxelles Formation and its partners | 2014: 300,000 € 2015: 300,000 € |
| DIRECTION 6: Employment | | | | | | |
| 16.1. Timeslots reserved for supervising and guiding young people on Actiris branches and appropriate methods of guidance geared to the profiles of young people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriate methods of guidance geared to the profiles of young people to prepare them proactively for the range of YG services - Make operational the LaboJeunes guide 'Guiding young people towards employment' | All young jobseekers registering with Actiris | Regional | Actiris | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2014-2015: Main target group = young jobseekers up to the age of 29 with the maximum CESS registered after studies (<u>target group enhanced by the Youth Guarantee = under 25</u>) - 2016: Expansion of the target group depending on the resources available | Current Actiris resources redirected internally to implement the YG |
| 16.2. CV, application letter and codes of | Ensure that every young jobseeker has a CV, and | All young jobseekers registering with | Regional | Actiris and its partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2014-2015: Main target group = young | Current Actiris resources redirected internally to |

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| conduct in the workplace | application letter and the right approach. These are essential elements for finding a job, work experience, etc. | Actiris | | | <p>jobseekers up to the age of 29 with the maximum CESS registered after studies (<u>target group enhanced by the Youth Guarantee = under 25</u>)</p> <p>- 2016: Expansion of the target group depending on the resources available</p> | implement the YG |
| DIRECTION 7: Transversality | | | | | | |
| 17.1. Fight against dropping out of education through Certification By Unit (CPU) | Organisation of immediate remedies and coaching of young people | Young people in tertiary education in 4 options | Community | Ministry for Compulsory Education and Social Promotion | January 2014: allocation of periods-teachers in the establishments concerned | |

2.4 Supportive measures for labour market integration

Table 2.4: Key reforms and initiatives to enable labour market integration

| Name of the reform/initiative | Key objective(s) | Target group, including no of people covered (if available) | Scale | Name and role of organisation in the lead and cooperating partners | Timetable for implementation | Implementation cost, if applicable |
|--|---|---|----------|--|--|------------------------------------|
| Planned reforms | | | | | | |
| DIRECTION : Information / Orientation | | | | | | |
| R1.1 Information and advice platform | Interactive online information and advice platform on any topic of interest to young people | 10,000 young people | Regional | Service Info-Jeunes in partnership with the public services for education, training and employment | - 2014: launch - 2016: evaluation Bruxelles Formation and its partners | |
| DIRECTION 5: Work experience placements | | | | | | |
| R5.1. Legislative framework to be determined (laws – organisation) | Define the legal framework for the creation of 300 new work experience placements | 18-25 years of age (target audience enhanced by the Youth Guarantee = under 25) | Regional | Ministry for Employment | | |
| DIRECTION 6: Employment | | | | | | |
| R6.1. Legislative framework to be determined or modified | Define the legal framework for the creation of 100 jobs intended for a young, insecure audience | | Regional | Ministry for Employment | | |

| Planned initiatives | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|----------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| DIRECTION 2: Education / Youth programmes | | | | | | |
| I2.7. Gear part-time vocational training programmes more accurately to the needs of the employment market in Brussels | Provide appropriate programmes in conjunction with general training | Part-Time Vocational; Training (DBO) | Regional | VG/VGC in conjunction with VDAB | | 50,000 € per course – 2 courses per year = 2014: 100,000 € 2015: 100,000 € Consultants to support students in their search for suitable work experience placements. 2014: 130,000 € 2015: 130,000 € |
| I2.8. Range of second-chance education programmes and education qualifying programmes in conjunction with Dutch-Language Adult Education and Colleges | Expand the range of second-chance education and supervision of individuals on courses to keep young people on track | | Regional | VG/VGC and VDAB | | 2014: 75,000 € 2015: 75,000 € |
| DIRECTION 4: Training | | | | | | |
| I4.10. Validation of formal and informal qualifications gained | Reinforcement of the systems for validating qualifications gained from where they come in order to facilitate a return to training and/or validation of their qualification | Young people at the end of their education | Regional | Skills validation consortium | 2014: Launch 2016: Evaluation | 2014 : 500.000 € 2015 : 500.000 € |
| I4.11. Develop entrepreneurship in young people | Expansion of business courses focused on professions where there are shortages | Young people < 25 years of age | Regional | Syntra | | 2014: 195,000 € 2015: 125,000 € |

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|--|--|--|----------|--------------------------|--|-----------------|
| I4.12. Business courses focused on professions where there are shortages on the Brussels employment market | | | Regional | VDAB and via outsourcing | | Regular funding |
|--|--|--|----------|--------------------------|--|-----------------|

DIRECTION 5: Work experience placements

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|----------------------------------|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| I5.1. Work experience placements | Offer poorly qualified young jobseekers an initial experience is a paid job in a company, non-profit organisation or in the public sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional transition placement (STE): 1650 places annually for young jobseekers with maximum of CESI and up to the age of 29 - Placements abroad: 50 places annually - Placements with companies: creation of 300 places annually | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - STE: Federal and Regional - Placements abroad: Regional (after adoption of the legislative framework) - Other placements: Regional (after adoption of the legislative framework) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Federal Ministry for Employment and Regional Ministry for Employment, Actiris, Bruxelles Formation and VDAB | Creation of 300 additional work experience places in 2014 - 2015 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Placements abroad: 6,000 € per jobseeker per year - Other placements: 4,200 € per jobseeker per year |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--|---|--|---|

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|---|--|---|----------|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| 15.2. Training in companies | Development of offers of work experience placements and training in companies to facilitate the transition to young people to work | | Regional | Bruxelles Formation | | 2014: 547,000€ 2015: 547,000€ |
| 15.3. Increase the number of Individual Vocational Training (IVT) /induction courses for young people | 100 additional IVT courses | Young people <25 years of age | Regional | VDAB: provider Actiris: Guidance | | 1 FTE IVT consultant: 65,000 € per year 2014: 65,000 € 2015: 65,000 € |
| DIRECTION 6: Employment | | | | | | |
| 16.3. Reinforcement of the Service Youth Guarantee | This service is responsible for: - offering young people a job, work experience placement, training course, apprenticeship - providing a coaching function and advice for young people and employers who may need it | 6000 young jobseekers ready for a job, work experience placement, training course, apprenticeship | Regional | Actiris | Recruitment of an additional 10 FTEs in 2014-2015 | 2014: 540,000 € 2015: 550,800 € 2016: 561,816 € |
| 16.4. Employment | Implementation of a process to accommodate a vulnerable young target group | | | Actiris | Execution of an employment aid programme after adoption of the legislative framework | Pilot Project in 2014 – Evaluation and prospective reinforcement. Initial Budget 2014 : 300.000 € |

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|--|--|-------------------------------|----------|------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 16.5. Transition to employment | Every young person who has benefited from a subsidised job, work experience placement, training course, apprenticeship as part of the Youth Guarantee will be given guidance in the first months of their search for work in order to stabilise their employment (coaching for the first six months) | 6000 who benefit from the YG | Regional | Actiris | Creation of a transversal unit | 2014: 486,000 € 2015: 495,720 € 2016: 505,634 € |
| 16.6 Intensive guidance to employment of young people who have gone through the programmes to enhance their skills | Increase the outflow towards employment | Young people <25 years of age | Regional | VGC, VDAB | | 260,000 € per year 2014: 260,000 € 2015: 260,000 € |
| 16.7. Intensive guidance to employment of young people in education | Increase the outflow and inflow towards employment | Young people <25 years of age | Regional | Syntra, VG/VGC | | 2014: 110,000 € 2015: 110,000 € |
| 16.8. Coaching for potential young enterprising starters | Guidance of young people towards entrepreneurship | Young people <25 years of age | Regional | VG/VGC via outsourcing | | 2014: 50,000 € 2015: 50,000 € |

3. Funding the Youth Guarantee

Table 3: Funding the Youth Guarantee

The amounts in the table underneath are not definitive and affect only planned measures (available / accessible funds). These are budget estimates to be elucidated during practical implementation. We adhered to the request to mention the years for which financing was effectively planned. These amounts were mentioned in the light of the possible activation of co-financing through the funds and YEI, that will have a leveraged impact on the presented measures. These funding sources will depend on the way the envelopes of the future structural funds will be distributed, on the future partnership agreement, on the planned operational programmes and on the objectives of the PNR 2014-2016, as well as on budgetary decisions during the next regional period of office.

Globally, the allocated or supposed budget for the implementation of the measures in the regional action plan are guaranteed as proper funding or prefinancing (pending validation of the distributive code for the Belgian OP ESF 2013/2020) by all – French- and Dutchspeaking - institutional actors

The efforts of the institutional partners guarantee the necessary funds for the implementation of the 55 measures in the Brussels' action plan are based on :

- 1) Funding of measures by the (non-increased) operational budget of the departments involved
- 2) Funding of measures by new funds in the budget provided by institutional actors
- 3) Funding of measures through institutional cofinancing + ESF funds
- 4) Funding of measures through institutional cofinancing + ESF funds + YEI

The latter funding processes however both aren't guaranteed for 100 % as the Belgian OP 2013-2020 has not been finalised yet (or at least not the distributive code). Nevertheless, the outcome of the ongoing negotiations will not radically change the global figures that the different OP will dispose of. This contains the effective impact on the measures funded by European funds.

At present, major risk weighs on the Region and the Communities because they prefinance the YEI measures (employment/apprenticeships/professional training) for 100 %.

Commentaire [Maud Char5]: Remarque : *Funding the Youth Guarantee: budget presented is still tentative and needs to be confirmed*

| Name of reform/initiative | Years for which funding is planned | Sources & levels of funding | No. of beneficiaries planned (when applicable) | Cost per beneficiary (when applicable) |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|

| | | EU/ESF/YEI | National Funds, including co-funding | Regional/Local Funds including co-funding | Employer Funds | Other (please specify) | Male | Female | Total | |
|--|--------------|------------|--------------------------------------|---|----------------|------------------------|------|--------|----------------|--|
| PLANNED INITIATIVES | | | | | | | | | | |
| DIRECTION 1: Information / Orientation | | | | | | | | | | |
| I1.1. Bruxelles J 2014 : 300.000 € 2015 : 300.000 € + leverage effect ESF | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | | |
| I1.2. Programmes JEEP (Jeunes, Ecole, Emploi...tout un programme) and JUMP naar werk 2014 : 500.000 € 2015 : 510.000 € + leverage effect ESF | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | 2,230 2,455 | |
| I1.3. Space dedicated to young people in the Brussels Training Hub – Destination Trades runs by Actiris (located in the centre of Brussels), Cité des Métiers Jeunes 2014 : 75.400 € 2015 : 75.400 € | 2014 2015 | | | X X | | | | | 1,500 1,650 | |

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|--|--------------|---|--|---|--|--|-----------|-----------|------------|--|------------------------------------|
| I1.4. Inform young people and make them aware of training and learning programmes and the employment market 2014 : 140.000 € 2015 : 140.000 € +leverage effects ESF/YEI | | X | | X | | | | | | | 2014: 140,000 € 2015: 140,000 € |
| DIRECTION 2: Education / Youth Programmes | | | | | | | | | | | |
| I2.1. Prevention of dropping out of education 2014 : 510.000 € 2015 : 765.000 € + leverage effects ESF | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | 70 105 | 30 45 | 100 150 | | |
| I2.2. Fight against early dropouts from work-linked training courses 2014 : 675.000 € 2015 : 675.000 € + leverage effects ESF | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | 90 120 | 90 120 | 180 240 | | |
| I2.3. Information and training on trades as part of the Advanced Technology Centres (CTA) 2014 : 380.000 € 2015 : 380.000 € + leverage effects ESF | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | 40 40 | 35 35 | 75 75 | | |
| I2.4. Development of appropriate language programmes for young | 2014 | X | | X | | | | | | | 2014: 246,000 € |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| people in part-time education and training 2014 : 246.000 € 2015 : 246.000 € | 2015 | | | | | | | | | | 2015: 246,000 € |
| I2.5. Coaching youngsters with learning problems in Brussels Dutch-language Education 2014 : 355.000 € 2015 : 355.000 € +leverage effects ESF/YEI | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | | | 2014: 355,000 € 2015: 355,000 € |
| I2.6 Strengthening of School Dropout Processes (DAS) and School Encouragement Services (SAS) 2014 : 65.000 € 2015 : 65.000 € +leverage effects ESF/YEI | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | | | 2014 :65.000 € 2015 : 65.000 € |
| I2.7. Part-time Gear Vocational Training programmes more to the needs of the Brussels employment market 2014 : 100.000 € 2015 : 100.000 € +leverage effects ESF/YEI 2014 : 130.000 € 2015 : 130.000 € +leverage effects ESF | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | | | 50,000 € per course – 2 courses per year = 2014: 100,000 € 2015: 100,000 € 2 FTE consultants to support students in their search for suitable work experience places: 2 x 65,000 € = 130,000 € per year 2014: 130,000 € 2015: 130,000 € |

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|--|--------------|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| I2.8. Range of second-chance training programmes and qualifying programmes in conjunction with Dutch-Language Adult Education and Colleges 2014 : 75.000 € 2015 : 75.000 € + leverage effects ESF | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | | | 2014: 75,000 € 2015: 75,000 € |
| DIRECTION 3: Education / Informal training | | | | | | | | | | | |
| I3.1. Civic Year / Civic Service 2014 : 735.000 € 2015 : 1.100.000 € +leverage effects ESF/YEI | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | | | 2014 : 420.000 € (+ 17.500 €) +300.000 € 2015 : 800.000 € + 300.000 € |
| I3.2 Preliminary programmes for vulnerable groups (Find-Bind-Mind) 2014: 150.000 € 2015: 150.000 € +leverage effects ESF/YEI | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | | | 2014: 150,000 € 2015: 150,000 € |
| I3.3 Development of work and care programmes (W ²) 2014 : 300.000 € 2015 : 300.000 € +leverage effects ESF | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | | | 2014 : 300.000 € 2015 : 300.000 € |

| DIRECTION 4: Training | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--------------|------------|---------|---------|---------|
| I4.1. Language Plan for Brussels – Youth section: - Language tests, language vouchers, Brulingua Platform - Language immersion courses - Taalcoaching Nederlands voor anderstalige jongeren (flankerend aan andere opleidingen) - Meer opleiding Nederlands (vakgericht) - Tweektalige opleidingen (Nederlands-Frans) 2014-2015 : see last column | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | | | Immersion | VDAB | VDAB | VDAB |
| | | | | | | | | | | | 150,000.00 | 160,000 | 100,000 | 160,000 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | 150,000.00 | 160,000 | 100,000 | 160,000 |
| Total amount = 570.000 € *2 2014 : 570.000 € 2015 : 570.000 € + leverage effects ESF/YEI | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| I4.2. Top-up CE2D 2014 : 1.000.000 € 2015 : 1.000.000 € +leverage effects ESF/YEI | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | | 250 250 | | | | |
| I4.3. Objectif 3000 2014 : 1.000.000 € 2015 : 1.000.000 € | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | | 3040 3040 | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|------------|--|
| +leverage effects ESF/YEI | | | | | | | | | | |
| I4.4. Common syllabus leading to training courses for cutting-edge industrial trades 2014 : 203.400€ 2015 : 203.400€ +leverage effects ESF/YEI | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | 420 420 | |
| I4.5. Resuming training to obtain a diploma 2014 : 200.000 € 2015 : 200.000 € +leverage effects ESF/YEI | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | 100 100 | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|---|--------|---|--|--|--|--|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| I4.6. OISP Partnership 2014 : 500.000€ +400.000 € 2015 : 500.000€ + 400.000 € +leverage effects ESF/YEI | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | 250 250 | |
| I4.7 Partnership between Sector Funds and CDR 2014 : 500.000€ 2015 : 500.000€ + leverage effects ESF | 2014 2015 | X | X | X | | | | | 250 250 | |
| I4.8. Partnership between SFPME / EFP 2014 : 300.000 € 2015 : 300.000 € +leverage effects ESF/YEI | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | 1000 1000 | |
| DIRECTION 5: Work experience placements in companies | | | | | | | | | | |
| I5.1. Placements 2014 :1.650.000 € 2015 : 1.690.200 € +leverage effects ESF/YEI | 2014 2015 | X | X X | X | | | | | 2,000 2,000 | |
| I5.2. Training in companies 2014: 547.000 € 2015 : 547.000 € + leverage effects ESF | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | | 2014: 547.000 € 2015 : 547.000 € |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|-------------------------|---|
| I6.3. Increase the number of Individual Vocational Training courses/induction courses for young people 2014 : 65.000 € 2015 : 65.000 € +leverage effects FSE/YEI | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | | 1 FTE IVT consultant: 65,000 € per year 2014: 65,000 € 2015: 65,000 € |
| DIRECTION 6: Employment | | | | | | | | | | |
| I6.1. Timeslots reserved for supervising and guiding young people on Actiris branches and appropriate methods of guidance geared to the profiles of young people | 2014 2015 | | | X | | | | | +/- 8,500 +/- 8,500 | |
| I6.2. CV, application letter and codes of conduct in the workplace 2014 : UNKNOWN 2015 : UNKNOWN + leverage effects ESF | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | +/- 5000 +/- 5000 | |
| I6.3. Strengthening of the Service Youth Guarantee 2014 : 540.000 € 2015 : 550.000 € 2016 : 561.000 € +leverage effects ESF | 2014 2015 2016 | X | | X | | | | | 2.000 2.500 5.000 | |
| I6.4 Employment 2014 : 300.000 € 2015 : A PRECISER | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | | |

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|---|----------------------|---|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| +leverage effects ESF/YEI | | | | | | | | | | |
| I6.5. Transition to employment 2014 : 486.000 € 2015 : 495.720 € 2016 : 505.634 € +leverage effects ESF | 2014 2015 2016 | X | | X | | | | | | |
| I6.6. Intensive guidance towards work for young people who have been through skills-enhancing programmes 2014 : 260.000 € 2015 : 260.000 € +leverage effects ESF | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | | 4 FTE consultants: 4 x 65,000 € = 260,000 € per year 2014: 260,000 € 2015: 260,000 € |
| I6.7. Intensive guidance towards work for young people in education 2014 : 110.000 € 2015 : 110.000 € +leverage effects ESF/YEI | 2014 2015 | X | | X | | | | | | 2014: 110,000 € 2015: 110,000 € |
| I6.8. Coaching for young potential business starters 2014 : 50.000 € 2015 : 50.000 € + leverage effects ESF | 2014 2015 | | | | | | | | | 2014: 50,000 € 2015: 50,000 € |
| DIRECTION 7: Transversality | | | | | | | | | | |

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|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 17.1. Fight against dropping out of education through Certification By Unit (CPU) | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

4. Assessment and continuous improvement of schemes

Table 4.1: Planned assessments for the (non-financial aspects of) structural reforms

| Name of the reform | Expected change | Means through which change will be measured | Source of information / planned evaluations |
|--|---|---|---|
| DIRECTION 2: Education / Your Programmes | | | |
| 2.1 Decree of 21st November 2013 organisation of joint policies to prevent students from dropping out of education | The expected change consists of an improvement in wellbeing at school through the intervention of various parties concerned by local units and from there, achieving a reduction in the dropout rate in initial training courses. | The methods of evaluation exist already today through the SCOS (inspection service for compulsory schooling), which measures the level of absenteeism each year. | The reforms will be evaluated through methods provided for in the decree: the steering committee and education consultation committee – your aid. As part of the Youth Guarantee, these bodies will be requested to check the relevance of the resources released in relation to the overall aims in order to be able to determine the priority actions to be deployed beyond 2015 |
| 2.2. Draft amendment to the framework cooperation agreement relative to Work-Linked Training, between the French Community, the Walloon Region and the French Community Commission. | The draft needs to end up with an enhancement of work-linked training across the whole of French-speaking Belgium, resulting in an increase in certifications at the end of the process and an increase in the number of jobs offered by employers. | The coordination and management for the European programmes (CCG) of the French Community measures the annual employment rate of students and the level of certification at the end of courses. | A body will be established to monitor the reforms: the French-Language Office of Work-Linked Training. Its aim will be to explain to the governments involved about the way the system is evolving and suggest gradual methods of improvement. |
| 2.3. Decree regarding the equipment of qualifying education + the cooperation agreement between the FWB, the Brussels Capital Region and COCOF for the equipment of schools and access to Professional Reference Centres and Advanced Technology Centres | The expected change consists of greater access to cutting-edge infrastructures for the training of students and jobseekers and, from there, improved certification and employability levels of young people returning to education. | The cooperation agreement is guided by a monitoring committee that each year audits the volumes in the various centres (CTA and CDC) and checks that each category of beneficiary is able to access the equipment required. | The reforms will be evaluated based on the overall targets set in the cooperation agreement, which aims to increase the number of training hours provided in the centres for uncertified groups and/or groups converting to programmes leading to trades where there are shortages. |

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|--|--|--|--|
| 2.4. Decree covering various measures on matters of social promotion education, defining its steering bodies and incorporating e-learning into its education offering. | The expected change aims to achieve greater success in groups returning to training in the context of education for adults. The role of training counsellors will be particularly important for monitoring the more vulnerable groups publics requiring close attention. | The coordination and management for the European programmes (CCG) of the French Community measures the annual employment rate of students and the level of certification at the end of courses. | The decree sets a framework for new steering bodies. |
| 2.5. Decree organising certification by units of learning acquired (CPU) in qualifying secondary education and modifying various provisions relative to secondary education. | The expected change consists of an increase in the number of students receiving diplomas and a fall in dropout rates: repeating a year is replaced by continuous school support and ongoing remediation. | A range of indicators is put in place by collaboration between the various administrative bodies (success rate, dropout rate, certification rate, etc.). Each establishment is given a specific dashboard. | The decree provides for an evaluation by the Steering Committee, which bases itself in particular on indicators and quality reports from the Inspectorate. |
| DIRECTION 7: Transversality | | | |
| 7.1. Common counting tool for training and employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual monitoring of YG beneficiaries - Monitoring of programme measures (training, work experience placements, jobs) | | |
| 7.2. Coordination programme between sectors | Better coordination between policies within the same territory | Number of inter-sectorial projects emerging from consultation | Youth Service (French Community) |
| 7.3. Overall monitoring programme for the Brussels plan | The overall monitoring programme will be coordinated with monitoring tools implemented as part of the New Deal aimed at providing regular monitoring and guiding the implementation of the Youth Guarantee | The indicators and monitoring / evaluation methods will be developed in line with the objectives of the strategy 2020 of FSE operating programmes in particular. | The overall monitoring programme will be put in place at the level of the Minister-President of the Brussels Capital Region. It will be fed by all of the Youth Guarantee programme operators. |
| 7.4 Introduction of « youth tests » preceding employment and training measures. | Previous assessment of the impacts of these new measures on the implementation of the YG. | | |

Table 4.2: Planned assessments of the initiatives and of the financial aspects of reforms

| Name of the initiative / reform | Target population (or equivalent) | (or) | Population (or equivalent) actually reached | Outcome for population | Sources of information |
|---|-----------------------------------|------|---|------------------------|------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each operator will be asked to put a regular theme-based evaluation system in place for its reforms and initiatives, based on objectives defined in advance. - In addition, an overall monitoring programme for the Brussels “Youth Guarantee” plan is in place and guided by the Minister-President of the BCR. This programme will establish the necessary coherence with the theme-based evaluation systems of the operators who will feed it with their data and analyses. The monitoring tools developed in particular as part of the New Deal will be used for this purpose. - The financial aspects of the reforms will be reported by the different institutions based on the available indicators and operational objectives. - | | | | | |

Commentaire [Maud Char6]: Remarque : *Assessment and continuous improvement of YG Reforms and Initiatives: targets/indicators/etc. not mentioned directly in the Plan*

German-speaking Community contribution

To the Belgian Youth Guarantee Implementation
Plan (YGIP)

Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan of the German speaking Community

1. Context/Rationale

In the German-speaking Community the unemployment rate of young people aged 15 to 24 was 13.6 % in 2012. Fortunately it has only slightly increased since the economic crises (rate in 2007: 13 %). 20% of the unemployed overall are young people, i.e. about 530 persons (2012 average). Young men and women are more or less equally concerned. The unemployment rate of young people in the German speaking Community is however lower than the rate in the other regions of Belgium. Yet, compared to the general unemployment rate of 8.1 % (2012) youth unemployment is still significantly high. (Note: these are the administrative data as reliable LFS data are not available for the GSC). The number of young jobseekers varies significantly depending on the season: it considerably increases in July and August due to the registration of many school leavers and should normally decrease rather quickly again as of September.

In Belgium education is compulsory until the age of 18. Hence the employment rate of people younger than 25 is relatively low compared to other European countries. The employment rate among young people in the GSC was 34.1 % in 2011 whilst the average rate in Belgium was 28.3% (administrative data). This situation can be explained by two particularities of the German speaking Community: First of all, the rate of young people in the dual vocational training system is comparatively higher in the German-speaking Community (these people are indeed statistically considered as employed). Second, the labour market situation in the German-speaking Community is in general quite favourable (which is partly due to its geographic situation as a border region). However, the share of employed young people decreases every year given that/due to the fact that more and more young people stay longer in the formal education system.

The dual vocational education and training system for apprentices (organised by the IAWM and ZAWMs) plays an important role in the successful transition from school to work. Every year, approximately 300 young people sign up for an apprenticeship contract ("*Lehrvertrag*") with a company and the IAWM. These contracts offer them high chances of successful integration into the labour market. More than 90 % of the young people who finish their apprenticeship successfully find a job almost immediately after graduation. Yet, problems also exist within the dual vocational training system: more and more young people lack basic skills when starting their apprenticeship, many of them quit their apprenticeship, many apprentice positions remain vacant, the proportion of young women in this training system is rather low (20%).

The main concerns in the full time compulsory educational system are the difficult transition from school to employment and early school leaving. In 2011 a framework plan regarding occupational orientation was adopted by the Parliament of the German-speaking Community as a cross-sectional subject in all courses and at all stages in the educational system. Schools are responsible for the implementation of this framework plan. The location of three education and training institutions (ADG, technical school, ZAWM) on one single campus in the city of Eupen offers best preconditions to further strengthen

cooperation and synergies between these institutions. The educational system is also seeking to prevent early school leaving especially in technical and professional education. The part time compulsory schooling offers young people aged 15 or more the opportunity to stay in the education system and achieve a qualification which increases their chances of a successful integration into the labour market thanks to tailor made approaches combining theoretical classes in school with practical experience throughout their traineeship in a company. Other initiatives such as the “Time-out” project (ZFP) should allow for young people who are at risk of dropping out of the school system to find social stability in order to avoid their early school leaving. Yet, challenges remain with regards to the integration of young people with a migration background, the still existing cascades in many school careers and more generally the lack of permeability between educational systems, the high number of pupils who lag behind and insufficient support and guidance for pupils in their career orientation. Essential reforms are being prepared in that sense, such as a reform of the psycho-medico-social centres (PMS-centres), elaboration of new perspectives for the development of secondary school system, a concept for the integration of pupils with migration background and the assignment of teachers in special needs education in general schools supporting pupils with special educational needs.

Data collection on school dropouts is at the moment still problematical as young people can enter the educational system of another community or even abroad at any time. A cooperation agreement between the German-speaking Community and the IWEPS regarding data collection of school leavers should help to correct that situation.

The youth unemployment rate in the German-speaking Community is, as already mentioned, relatively low compared to the other regions of the country. Young job seekers in the German-speaking Community are much less often long-term unemployed (61% are less than 6 months unemployed) than other groups of job seekers (32%). Only approximately 16% of the young jobseekers have been registered as unemployed for over 1 year (more or less 90 people in average per year).

The rate of unqualified young people (maximum lower secondary school) is 42% and as high as the rate of unqualified among the older jobseekers. This may seem surprising in the light of a higher participation in education among the younger generation. 21% of young people registered as unemployed in 2012 did not successfully finish any secondary education (school or vocational training). 1 out of 5 newly registered unemployed was thus an early school leaver. This tendency is increasing: in 2000 this rate was scarcely 10%. On the other hand growing numbers of young jobseekers finish upper secondary school education (35%) compared with the other groups of jobseekers (20%) and less people finished a dual vocational apprenticeship or any “other” qualification (acquired mostly abroad). This might be due to the fact that young people who complete their apprenticeship successfully find a job quite quickly and that the number of “foreigners” within the group of young jobseekers is lower compared with the other groups of registered jobseekers.

The most problematic group among young jobseekers is thus especially the group of unqualified people. Moreover, these young people often face various difficulties simultaneously impeding on their labour market insertion. They are more frequently long term unemployed, they more often tend to no knowing either German or French, they often have a migration background and usually do not possess a driving licence. Young men are overrepresented in this low

qualification level (63%) whereas they are underrepresented among the qualified young people (42%). Also, these young people often face social problems or difficulties in their families; they are often insecure about their professional future, or they have a substance abuse problem or other difficulties.

The Jobseekers counselling activities of the ADG are in line with the cooperation agreement concluded between the federal state and the regional authorities. But in addition the ADG supports young people proactively. The existing counselling concept is currently being reviewed so as to better match the advice and guidance with the individual needs of jobseekers. From January 2014 on a new integration concept will therefore be put into place: each jobseeker will be attributed one personal “integration counsellor” and integration services will differ according to the identified needs of the jobseekers and based on their distance from the labour market. Young jobseekers will thus be oriented towards employment and job search or towards other initiatives (such as job application assistance, training schemes or integration measures...). These measures are carried out either by ADG itself or by any other external partner organisation. Moreover, young jobseekers can take part in individual job-trainings such as the various existing training schemes (e.g. individual job-training in an enterprise – “IBU”, APE, the transition traineeship-“EPU”). Young job seekers with a disability can also participate in special measures via the DPB. However, there is still a lack of initiatives for those jobseekers, and especially young job seekers, facing psychological, medical or social problems.

Another contact point for young people facing labour market integration difficulties are the ÖSHZ (social welfare offices at municipal level). In 2012 around 200 persons aged between 18 and 24 received social allowances from a ÖSHZ in the German-speaking Community. These young people are being supported and guided by the DSBE. One important aspect in the provided assistance concerns the reintegration into the labour market. If the young jobseeker has all capacities to take on work in the first labour market he will also have to register with the ADG but – following the cooperation agreement between ADG and the ÖSHZ - he continues to be advised by the DSBE.

The number of NEETs (people not in employment, education or training), which are not registered with the ADG, nor the DPB nor a ÖSHZ should be rather low even if precise numbers are not available. Since young school leavers may be eligible to unemployment benefits after a period of one year they have a strong incentive to register with the PES. So called “streetworkers” in the North Kanton of the German-speaking community as well as a project in the municipality of Kelmis provide a contact point for young people who are not registered.

The demographic evolution will play an important role in the future: Whilst the number of active young people still slightly increased in the last ten years, the German-speaking Community will soon be facing a gradual decline of its active population, including within the group aged 15 to 24. The „replacement rate“ (the ratio of people aged 15-24 to 55-64 year olds) will drop clearly under 100% meaning there will be fewer (young) people entering the labour market than (older) leaving it. This also means that even more has to be done in order for as many young people as possible to acquire the qualifications and skills that are necessary to integrate the labour market. Otherwise, the problem of labour force shortage will become even more important.

- The challenge for the German-speaking Community will be to make sure that as many young people as possible achieve a qualification and the skills that are necessary on the labour market, including social skills. In order for this goal to be achieved, all institutions concerned with implementing the youth guarantee scheme have to contribute and put their efforts together.

2. Implementing the Youth Guarantee Scheme in the German-speaking Community

2.1 Formulation of the Youth Guarantee

Starting point of the youth guarantee in the German-speaking community is the registration of the young jobseeker with the ADG. From January 2014 on, the PES commits itself to invite every young jobseeker for a personal counselling interview within the first four months of his registration (or within the first two months for those jobseekers that haven been identified as “customers needing counselling”) and to conclude an individual and tailor-made integration contract defining measures and tasks that have to be carried out within a defined time period. As from their registration those young people are at the disposal for job vacancies and can take part in supporting measures such as job application assistance or further training schemes for example. However, supporting measures of the Federal state such as the “workplace integration traineeships” or measures to reduce labour costs for young workers are subject to other conditions regarding the unemployment period (they have to be registered unemployed for minimum 6 months). Likewise, entry into the secondary educational system is not possible throughout the whole year and dual vocational apprenticeship contracts can in principle only be signed in the period from 1st July till 1st October (and in exceptional situations until the end of December).

Moreover, the ADG commits itself to using its established partnership network in order to offer young jobseekers an appropriate alternative to work as quickly as possible. The ADG will try to detect possible gaps and fill them through accessing these partnerships. These partnerships should also be further extended in the future especially by involving the youth sector and the social sector if necessary. Concrete actions are listed under the points 2.3. and 2.4.

The ÖSHZs in the German-speaking Community also conclude “integration contracts” with all young people aged under 25 eligible to social allowances (within three months of registration) and request those who are not in education or training to register with the ADG.

2.2 Partnership approaches

The ADG has been assigned with coordinating the youth guarantee scheme in the German-speaking Community. The ADG is the first point of contact for all young people leaving school and being without work. The ADG has been able to build a broad cooperation network within the last few years allowing for young people to have access to a wide range of offers on counselling, training and employment measures.

In the employment field there is a close collaboration between the three institutions having been lawfully attributed the responsibility of jobseekers counselling (their customers are thus partly overlapping). Cooperation agreements have been concluded between the ADG and ÖSHZs (1st February 2012), between the ADG and the DPB (new agreement on 27th November 2013) and between ADG, DPB and ÖSHZ. Through the latter, a platform for “social and professional integration in the German speaking Community” was established at the end of 2010 aiming at a best possible coordination between the institutions when it comes to jobseekers assistance, by appointing one main contact person (“Hauptansprechpartner”) for the jobseeker. Close collaborations also exist with other employment services in Belgium and in neighbouring countries (especially with the PES of the Walloon Region – Le Forem-, with private employment agencies, as well as the PES of Germany (Bundesagentur für Arbeit)). Thanks to these collaborations jobseekers can have easier access to neighbouring training schemes and labour markets. Existing obstacles are easier to overcome. The new Erasmus+ program could also offer new opportunities in that sense in the near future.

In the field of vocational training the ADG collaborates with a broad network of training providers both within the German-speaking Community (organizations for adult education, educational system, IAWM/ZAWMs) and in neighbouring regions or countries (Le Forem, training providers in Germany...). This enables them to offer a best suitable training offer to jobseekers. In July 2013 an agreement on a case-related cooperation was signed between the ADG and the IAWM as well as the ZAWMs. One of the main aims of that agreement is to foster the transition from unemployment into the dual vocational training system. Cooperation agreements were also signed with various industries and their training centers (construction industry, cleaning industry, metal working industry, private placement agencies, CEFORA to name but a few) in order to help support training offers in the German speaking Community as regards content but also financing. The IAWM closely cooperates with institutions in Belgium (Syntra, IFAPME) and in neighbouring countries (Chambers of crafts and trade in Germany e.g.) hence promoting mobility within the dual vocation training system. The DPB and IAWM have also concluded an agreement on case-related cooperation in order to better assist young apprentices with a disability or learning difficulties. The implementation of the Youth guarantee scheme could lead to further cooperation possibilities that will be analyzed in 2014 (e.g. training of young jobseekers within the part time educational system ADG-TZU, or a closer collaboration between ÖSHZs and IAWM).

The ADG also takes on a coordination role in the field of vocational guidance and job information within the German-speaking Community and has been working together with PSM-centres, schools, maintaining bodies of schools, the IAWM and the ministry of Education of the German-speaking community for many years. Many activities were already organized and new initiatives are being launched in that field and in close cooperation between the various partners (informative meetings in schools, job information cells – so called BIZ (*Berufsinformationszellen*), meeting days and awareness raising activities together with industries, the so called “Schnupperwochen”, a common “apprenticeship dating day” and so on). The “Studienkreis Schule & Wirtschaft” (study group for education & economy) is also playing an active role in that field.

Regarding the business creation and promotion of entrepreneurship the WFG (Business development agency for eastern Belgium) is a key point of contact. This institution also addresses young people, gives courses about business creation integrated in the dual apprenticeship program (*Meisterkurs*) and organises activities to promote self-employment and business creation in schools or for youth organisations.

Design and monitoring of the YGIP: The social partners, representatives of the municipalities and representatives of the education system (including schools, vocational training centres and other partners providing training measures) form the administrative board of the ADG. Therefore, they have been involved in the design of the YGIP from the beginning. In addition, a call has been launched for all institutions and organisations concerned (including the ministries, youth organisations, welfare offices, social partner organisations, ...) to participate in a “kick-off-meeting” held in November 2013. The general outline of the YGIP for the GSC and the contribution of each partner were discussed on that occasion. Concerning the monitoring of the YGIP, a steering committee including the main partners will monitor the implementation and the results on a half-yearly base.

Table 2.2: Key organisations that will support and deliver the Youth Guarantee scheme

| Name of key organisations | Type of organisation | Level of responsibility | Role in implementing the Youth Guarantee scheme | Ensuring the success of the partnerships |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|---|
| ADG | PES | Regional | Coordination / organisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Registration of jobseekers, profiling and grading of unemployed, counselling of young jobseekers in order to support their labour market integration - Work placement and traineeship placement (AEP, IBU, EPU) - Vocational training - Online platform for job vacancies and in the near future also for apprenticeship and traineeship vacancies - Vocational guidance and career advice - EURES-counselling | |
| ÖSHZ | Public Authority (Welfare) | Regional | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support of young unemployed eligible to social allowances, coordination of their career path and labour market integration efforts - Work placement (Art. 60 § 7) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Platform between the ADG, DPB and ÖSHZs (Coordination on conceptual considerations) - Monthly Data exchange between ADG and ÖSHZ, in order to assure that jobseekers registered with the ÖSHZ can benefit from measures of the ADG and avoid duplication of work; realization of common case related discussions |
| DPB | Public Authority (Disabled Persons) | Regional | Training Work placement and traineeship placement Assistance on the work place ... | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Platform between the ADG, DPB and ÖSHZs (Coordination on conceptual considerations) - Case-related Information exchange between ADG and DPB for customers of both institutions (unemployed) to benefit from existing measures of each institution |

| | | | | |
|---|--|----------|--|---|
| Ministry of the German-speaking Community (education, training and employment including social economy; ESF agency, youth, social) | Public Authority | Regional | Advice and legal assistance on labour law and social security; advice, evaluation and follow-up on education policy in the German-speaking Community; Management authority of the European Social Fund German-speaking Community, Coordination of youth policy | |
| IAWM/ZAWM | Vocational Training Organisation of Apprenticeships | Regional | Conclusion of apprenticeship contracts (Lehrverträge), guidance of companies and apprentices, control and admission of companies that train apprentices Vocational training and further education | Publication of apprenticeship vacancies on the job website of the ADG (new from 2014 on), organisation of "apprenticeship dating day" (<i>Lehrstellenbörse live</i>) Case-related arrangements in order for young jobseekers to get into the dual vocational training Information exchange between IAWM and DPB regarding case-related cooperation and preparation/design of an individual training program for young people with a disability or with strong learning difficulties in order to facilitate their professional integration |
| Schools / PMS- Centres /IAWM | Public Authority | regional | Education and training Traineeship placement Activities related to vocational guidance of young people | Joint planning and implementation of activities in the fields of occupational orientation (on a yearly base) Linking-up information offers |
| Providers of integration and training measures | NGO | Regional | Training Traineeship placement | Joint monitoring committees for each integration measure and training measure |
| Public and Private employers | | | Supply of traineeships | Publication of job vacancies and traineeship or apprenticeship vacancies via the online platform for vacancies and via the placement service of the ADG |
| Trade unions | | | Providing information for school leavers and young unemployed people | |
| Studienkreis Schule & Wirtschaft (Study group Education & Economy) | VoG | regional | Association of committed representatives from the education and training institutions, companies, public and private institutions and organisations, associations and individuals whose prior aim it is to promote voluntary cooperation between schools and economy. Aims: promoting mutual understanding between schools and companies; enabling ongoing exchange of information; strengthen the cooperation between schools and companies through practical activities Organisation of „action days“ in various industries (e.g. Metal, Media, Chemical industry) focussing on MINT-professions | Plenary meeting (Member are among other . ADG, WFG, ZAWM, IAWM, schools, companies, ...) Working groups on several projects Dialogue between schools, training centres, ADG and companies |

| | | | | |
|---|-----|----------|---|---|
| | | | Organisation of projects such as Dream Day, mini-entrepises and Technikids or job application and interview simulations | |
| Jugendbüro der DG (Youth Office of the German-speaking Community) | NGO | Regional | Preventive, Support and further development of youth work National Agency Erasmus + | |
| Jugendrat der DG (Council of the German-speaking youth) | NGO | Regional | Preventive, structured dialogue | |
| Youth information centres (Jugendinformationszentrum (JIZ) in St. Vith and Infotreff in Eupen) | NGO | Regional | Preventive, provide information particularly related to youth Point of contact for young people Organisation of workshops in schools (about Future and Life planning, applications and CV-writing, work and social security) Activity "Dream Day" (aim is to discover professions during one day) Information & counselling/advice of young people on the topic of mobility (say abroad, ..) Placement of student jobs | Network with schools, PMS-Centers, ADG, Studienkreis Schule & Wirtschaft Network Euro-Desk |
| Streetwork/ Youth counselling | NGO | Regional | Preventive, reaching out to the youth | |
| Open youth work organisations | NGO | Regional | Preventive, non-formal training, reaching out to the youth | |

2.3 Early intervention and activation

As from January 2014 on, the new integration concept of the ADG will be implemented: Each job seeker will have a personal integration counsellor. In an initial profiling stage jobseekers will be sorted into “customer groups” (*Kundengruppen*) based on their distance from the labour market (A-customer groups, meaning customers with good employment prospects and B-customer groups meaning customers that need counselling and/or training). The latter will have a first counselling within two months after their registration as unemployed and a personal action plan will be elaborated. For the former this interview takes place within four months after their registration. The frequency of client contact varies and depends on the jobseekers’ needs but it has to be in line with the federal job search requirements. Each counselling will analyse whether defined goals have been reached and whether the underlying problematic patterns have changed. New goals will be defined and the strategy revised if necessary. According to the jobseeker’s needs, workshops and specific information meetings can also be organized.

Within the educational system activities on data collection of early school leavers as well as structural reforms in order to avoid early school dropout will be planned.

The IAWM is also planning a more systematic data collection on apprentices dropping out. Initiatives to support apprentices with learning difficulties will be continued. Particular attention will also be paid to efforts to attract more young women into the dual vocational training system and technical professions.

Table 2.3: Key reforms and initiatives to ensure early intervention and activation

| Name of the reform/initiative | Key objective(s) | Target group, including no of people covered (if available) | Scale | Name and role of organisation in the lead and cooperating partners | Timetable for implementation | Implementation cost, if applicable |
|---|---|---|----------|---|--|------------------------------------|
| Planned initiatives | | | | | | |
| 1) New integration concept for the counselling and support of jobseekers and unemployed | Young jobseekers who will have more difficulties to find a job receive a personal counselling interview and tailor-made integration contract no later than two months of registration; Jobseekers with good employment prospects receive a standardized contract and a personal counselling within four months after their registration Each jobseeker will be assigned one counsellor Information brochure for school leavers („School's out“) | All registered jobseekers and unemployed aged under 25 | Regional | ADG (coordination and Counselling) Partners: providers of training programs and integration measures, ÖSHZ, DPB, ... | January 2014: Start of the new Integration concept | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|-----------------|--|--|---|
| <p>2) Improvement of the transition from general education to vocational training and creation of a tailor-made offer for disadvantaged young people</p> | <p>Elaboration of a tailor to suit the needs offer and optimization of existing offers allowing a better transition from school to vocational training of younger people in order to improve their employability and hence their chances of a sustainable integration into the labour market.</p> | <p>Young people of compulsory school age who do not have the necessary basic skills to succeed in the vocational full-time educational system and who cannot directly enter the dual vocational training system.</p> | <p>regional</p> | <p>Ministry of Education IAWM technical and vocational schools TZU</p> | <p>2009-2014: Analysis of the current transition from general school to vocational training Research and exchange on best practice projects relating to prequalification and vocational training preparation Analysis and evaluation of existing offers and resources in the German-speaking Community as from 2014-15: Elaboration of a concept providing for a better school to vocational training transition Subsequently creation of the program and implementation</p> | |
| <p>3) Support of apprentices with learning difficulties – “Starterkit”</p> | <p>Aim: help apprentices with lacking basic knowledge and skills who are yet good practitioners to get their final certificate and be able to integrate the labour market by offering them specific support (individual socio-pedagogic support, advice for companies and apprentices and differentiated course forms (<i>Modulunterricht</i>))</p> <p>These differentiated classes (<i>Modulunterricht</i>) offer the opportunity to teach general courses in small groups of four to eight people and hence adapt the teaching rhythm according to the needs of the apprentices.</p> <p>Apprentices who could not acquire the general knowledge and do not pass general courses but still succeed in practical exams can receive a so called „Praktikerzertifikat“ (certificate stating their practical skills).</p> | <p>Young people in the dual vocational training system who experience learning difficulties within the general class environment Currently 6 classes with approximately 30 apprentices</p> | <p>regional</p> | <p>IAWM (approval of courses) ZAWMs (implementation)</p> | <p>up to 2009: Pilot project Since 2009: further development and optimization of the offer 2013: Institutionalisation / integration within the legal framework</p> | <p>Up to 2009, this project was co-financed via the ESF (total cost around 180.000€) In order to guarantee continuity of support for those young people on a structural base the budget of the IAWM was increased by 60.000 € in 2012</p> |
| <p>4) Improvement of the occupational orientation</p> | <p>Punctual action days with the support of industries and in order to present the industry and promote</p> | <p>Young people, especially pupils in primary and secondary school</p> | <p>Regional</p> | <p>Studienkreis Schule & Wirtschaft, PMS-Centers, ADG IAWM/ZAWM</p> | <p>In 2011: adoption of the framework plan on occupational orientation (Rahmenplan Schulische Berufswahlvorbereitung und</p> | |

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| | work and training opportunities Activities to foster the interest of young women in apprenticeship occupations Implementation of the framework plan on occupational orientation in all schools of the German-speaking Community | | | Schools Ministry of the German speaking Community Industries | Berufsorientierung) – implementation ongoing ongoing | |
| 5) Promotion of the attractiveness of dual vocational training | Aim: make dual vocational education even more attractive, e.g. by means of improving the permeability between education systems and avoiding that the dual vocational training system is a blind alley/impasse for young people. Means: ensure that changing tracks is possible through the recognition of learning achievements, the delivery of a certificate of the 6 th year of vocational secondary education (<i>Studienzeugnis des 6. Jahres des berufsbildenden Sekundarunterrichts</i>) if fulfilling the conditions and the possibility to follow a voluntary 7th year in a dual form to prepare for the central examination in order to attend university if successful; the introduction of dual vocational trainings leading to a bachelor's degree in certain professions | All young people who may enter the dual vocational training | Regional | IAWM/ZAWM AHS Potential external partners | 2009: possibility to deliver a certificate of the 6th year of vocational secondary education is provided for by law 2011: organization of dual vocational trainings in financial services professions leading to a bachelor is provided for by law (cooperation between AHS and IAWM/ZAWMs) 2011: Start of a "dual bachelor's degree" in accounting September 2013: Start of a pilot project „dual Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering" in collaboration with external partners 2014: Preparation and launch of a new dual bachelor's degree in insurance and bank profession | annual costs for the dual bachelor in accounting are around 25.000 € Annual costs for the dual bachelor in insurance and bank are estimated at around 20.000 € |
| 6) Platform for apprenticeship vacancies and organisation of „apprenticeship dating day" | Filling of apprenticeship vacancies by young job seekers | All young people Young jobseekers | regional | IAWM, ADG | Publication of apprenticeship vacancies on the online platform for job vacancies as from February 2014 2013 organisation of a „apprenticeship dating day" for the first time; second edition being planned for 2014 | |

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| 7) Time-out Project | <p>Aim: avoid suspension from school and the dropping out of pupils and support the educational reintegration through a comprehensive package of socio-pedagogical measures during a limited period of time</p> <p>This project is a full-time school offer allowing for an optimum socio-pedagogical support of pupils with the aim to fully reintegrate them into their original school. The exclusion from class is limited in time and has to be considered as a bridging structure allowing for young participants to find new social stability and avoid their dropping out.</p> | <p>Pupils from any school in the German-speaking Community</p> <p>Current capacity: 8-10 pupils</p> | regional | ZFP Ministry of Education | Start: April 2011 | |
| 8) Pilotproject Qualiflex | <p>This project aims at enabling young people with various problems (learning difficulties and social disadvantages) at school and who are at risk of dropping out the education system to make the transition into further training or work through a tailor-made approach in a specific field by combining theory and practice through traineeships. Pupils receive an individual training plan.</p> | <p>Pupil aged between 15 and 25, who do not take part in the full-time education system and who do not meet the conditions to enter the dual vocational training system or who dropped out of that system (approximately 70 young people per academic year)</p> | regional | Part-time compulsory schools in Eupen and St. Vith | <p>September 2011: Beginning of the project</p> <p>2014: Evaluation</p> | |
| 9) Support of pupils with migration background | <p>Aim: allow children and pupils with migration background to acquire the language skills (German or French) enabling them to fully participate in regular teaching classes and integrate the community</p> | <p>Pupils with lacking German or French language skills</p> | Regional | <p>Ministry of Education</p> <p>ZFP (conceptual framework)</p> <p>Schools</p> | <p>2013: Elaboration and presentation of a concept for the integration of pupils with migration background</p> <p>2014: further analyses regarding the implementation of the concept and the recommended actions and progressive implementation</p> | |
| 10) "Fit for life" project | <p>Skilled personnel from the youth and social work field as well as teachers can learn about methodologies applied to support young people in the development of their emotional and cognitive</p> | <p>Skilled personnel from the youth and social work field as well as teachers</p> | regional | Youth office of the German-speaking Community | <p>Further education</p> <p>March and October 2011 / Ongoing application through youth work</p> | 5.436,- € |

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| | competencies and social skills. The program includes courses on motivation, health, security, conflict management, communication and self-assertiveness, free time, among others and sets out methodologies to improve key professional skills. | | | | | |
| 11) "Stark genug" Project „Strong enough“ | Young adults from the municipality of Kelmis were trained in order to better grasp the requirements of the labour market and of life in general. Experiential education excursion as well as weekly workshops were organized for participating young adults. During these workshops they could speak about their experience and difficulties, analyse their behaviour and elaborate alternative settings through role-playing. | Young adults | | Streetwork/Youth counselling, ÖSHZ Kelmis, Open Youth work Kelmis | September 2011 – March 2012 Evaluation carried out by the Youth Office of the German-speaking Community Another similar project is currently being elaborated and aims at preparing young adults to live in a flat on their own. | |
| 12) Register of school leavers | In close cooperation with the <i>Région wallonne</i> and the <i>Fédération-Wallonie-Bruxelles</i> the IWEPS and the German-speaking Community are currently working on the creation of a register of school leavers that will be linked to the <i>Banque Carrefour de la Sécurité sociale</i> . This register should allow for an analysis of the transition from secondary school to university education as well the transition from education to work and vocational training. | Statistical data collection of all school leavers | Regional | IWEPS (Wallonie) Ministry of the German-speaking Community ADG IAWM | Signing of a cooperation agreement on 27th June.2013 | |
| 13) Building an integrated service for the well-being and the healthy development of children and young people in the German-speaking Community | The new service will foster the healthy development of children and young people on a physical, mental and social level, promote their individual skills and the inclusion in general education or vocational training. | Children and young people aged -9 to 20+x | Regional | Ministry of Education (lead of the project) Cooperating partners: PMS-Centres Health care centres (<i>Gesundheitszentren</i>) service for child and family (<i>Dienst für Kind und Familie der DG</i>) | Current and future steps: elaboration of a basic concept by the steering committee, composed of the various partner institutions and the ministry of education and supported by external experts, discussions with various actors involved (operators, parliament, trade unions, municipal | additional costs for personnel and relating to implementation of the new service are estimated around 300000 € |

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| | | | | Dental care service for schools <i>(Schulzahnpflege)</i> | representatives ...). 1 st semester 2014: planned adoption of legal texts (decrees) 1st September 2014: establishment and working start of the newly created service | |
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2.4 Supportive measures for labour market integration

Table 2.4: Key reforms and initiatives to enable labour market integration

N.B. Second-chance education programmes already exist for many years in the GSC and about 20-30 unemployed persons a year, mostly young people, get an upper secondary degree through this system. By the means of the new cooperation agreement between ADG, the IAWM and the two ZAWMs (dating from 2013), more young unemployed will be guided to the apprenticeship system as well, to get this qualification (because the apprenticeship certificate is now equivalent to the certificate of the 6th year of vocational secondary education). However, the counselling towards these second-chance qualifications must be based on an assessment of the individual interests, needs and ambitions. A certain share of young unqualified people indeed refuses to go back to any form of school because of earlier negative experiences. For these youngsters, other ways of labour market integration should be found, e.g. through traineeships, validation of competences, integration projects by ADG-partner organisations etc. All of these, as well as a more fundamental reform of the secondary school system, are foreseen or at least planned in the near future, as will be shown hereafter.

| Name of the reform/initiative | Key objective(s) | Target group, including no of people covered (if available) | Scale | Name and role of organisation in the lead and cooperating partners | Timetable for implementation | Implementation cost, if applicable |
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| Planned reforms | | | | | | |
| 1) Adoption of a qualification framework for the German-speaking Community and creation of a legal basis for the validation for non-formal and informal learning in the German-speaking Community | Fostering output oriented teaching and learning Enhancing permeability between educational systems and avoiding impasses in the educational and training path Promotion of Life Long Learning for all Fostering of mobility of employees and young people through better comparison of qualifications Establishment of a legal basis for the validation of non-formal and informal learning | Students at all levels and in all systems Employees Job seekers | Regional | Ministry of education and further education IAWM Industries and social partners (consultation) | November 2013: adoption of a decree on the qualification framework for the German-speaking Community September 2014: Setting up of a technical committee in charge of the classification of qualifications September 2018: Establishment of a validation centre (<i>zentrale Validierungsstelle</i>) in charge of the validation of non-formal and informal learning | |

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| <p>2) Perspectives for the further development of secondary schools</p> | <p>Aim: offer all pupils an education taking into account their skills and matching their needs. Key aspects include 1) broad school offer in the first stage of education including more technical and manual classes; 2) early and efficient support of all secondary school pupils; 3) specific support measures for pupils with special needs in order to reduce the number of pupils lagging behind; 4) improved occupational orientation offer for pupils in schools</p> | <p>All pupils aged 12 and older both in the general secondary education system as well as in the technical and vocational training system</p> | <p>Regional</p> | <p>Ministry of Education (Lead) Schools</p> | <p>Currently: Consultation with all secondary schools of the German-speaking Community and with other actors and institutions concerned about the strengths and weaknesses of the existing organisational structures of the secondary educational level 2nd half of 2014 onwards: Elaboration of a concept and subsequently preparation of legislative texts and progressive implementation</p> | |
| <p>3) Fostering synergies and harmonization of vocational training at schools and in the dual system</p> | <p>Aim: joint use of Infrastructure, teaching material, teachers and companies know-how Teaching on the same campus or using the same workshops and infrastructure should benefit the collaboration between vocational training systems (full-time school and dual) , both from a teaching point of view as well as regarding content. Resources can be used more efficiently by all partners and new synergies can be developed. It fosters the exchange and collaboration between teachers in both educational systems.</p> | <p>Pupils in the vocational secondary school and apprentices in the dual vocational training system</p> | <p>regional</p> | <p>Ministry of education Technical and vocational training schools (RSI, TI) IAWM ZAWMs</p> | <p>Since 2011: Joint use of Workshops and teaching material of TI (<i>Technisches Institut</i>) and ZAWM in Sankt Vith Since 1st Semester 2013: realization of the new campus where RSI and ZAWM Eupen are joined and implementation of the cooperative use of workshops and teaching material A common campus for the TI and ZAWM in St. Vith (southern Kanton of the German-speaking Community) is currently being planned (possible implementation in 2016-2017)</p> | |
| <p>Organisation and evaluation of non-formal training and further education (e.g. traineeship supervisors, voluntary youth leaders, basic training and further education</p> | <p>Aim: convey to young people interpersonal and team management skills, technical expertise or skills relating to sociopolitical engagement</p> | <p>Young people aged 15 to 30</p> | | <p>Youth committee of the German-speaking Community (composed of representatives of the government, the ministry as well as funded youth work institutions) Ministry of the German-speaking Community (Secretariat of the Youth Committee)</p> | <p>December 2011: adoption a new Decree on funding for youth work Once a year the government of the German-speaking Community calls for submission of applications for funding and approval of further trainings for young people</p> | |

| Planned initiatives | | | | | | |
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| 1) Supported employment for young jobseekers with disability (JuGA-UB) | Aim: support the work or traineeship placement of young jobseekers with disability by offering them specialised occupational orientation services, job coaching on the work place and a closer cooperation and assistance for companies. | Young jobseekers (aged 18 to 25) with disability (approximately 60 persons) | regional | DPB (lead and implementing body) | Project duration: 1.1.2014 till 31.12.2014 | In total: 340.000 Euro, 50% are cofinanced via the ESF |
| 2) VIP-Project | Long term traineeship placement for pupils with special needs (Anpassungsklassen) | 5 young people per year | regional | DPB (lead and implementing body) | | Supported by CAP 48 |
| 3) Promotion of traineeship programs, job and traineeship acquisition, implementation of pilot projects (e.g. in the field of kindergarden caring assistance) and analysis of possible extension of projects to other fields | Offer young jobseekers the opportunity to discover jobs and acquire hands-on professional experience through traineeship programs and hence increasing their chances of labour market integration Pilot project „Kindergartenassistent/in“: young jobseekers can acquire first professional experience in social and pedagogical field, preparing themselves for further studies in that field or another related field | Young jobseekers eligible for existing traineeship programs | regional | Ministry of the German-speaking Community ADG Public and Private Employers industries Pilot project „Kindergartenassistent/in“: ADG RSI Ministry of education Schools (provider of traineeship possibilities) | Since 2012: regular training offer for placement counsellors of various institutions in the field of job and traineeship acquisition Pilot project „Kindergartenassistent/in“: October 2013: awareness raising and information session for young jobseekers, job interviews and selection of candidates, beginning of the theoretical courses and first practical experience (AEP). Beginning 2014: four to six month „transition traineeship“ | Pilot project „Kindergartenassistent/in“: ADG budget: 11.000 € Ministry of education: 8.500€ |
| 4) Cooperation ADG-TZU | Create a cooperation structure to enable young jobseekers to get practical experience via TZU facilitating their transition to further training and/or labour market integration | | regional | ADG Part time compulsory vocational training schools | As from 2014: Analysis of cooperation possibilities | |
| 5) Promotion of young peoples' mobility through Erasmus + | Aims at fostering the mobility of pupils, apprentices and students as well as at initiating cross-border partnership projects. | Pupils, Apprentices, students, measures in the fields of youth in action and sports | regional | Ministry of the German-speaking Community – „National authority“ Youth Office of the German-speaking Community – „National agency“ | January 2014: Start of the new ERASMUS+ program | |

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| 6) Fostering of entrepreneurial spirit among young people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classes on entrepreneurship and awareness raising activities in schools, youth organizations, training centers - "Xistence"-Initiative: information and individual counselling for people intending to get self-employed or starting up a business | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - apprentices Pupils - employed or unemployed persons | regional | WFG (lead) ZAWM, school WFG | ongoing | |
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3. Funding the Youth Guarantee

Most reforms and initiatives are financed via the budget of the institutions. Some projects such as the JuGa-UB project are financed through the European social fund or special complementary financing. The new ESF-program from 2015 onwards will also allow to finance new initiatives.

4. Assessment and continuous improvement of schemes

Table 4.1: Planned assessments for the (non-financial aspects of) structural reforms

The GSC has developed and implemented a regional development concept “Living East Belgium 2025” (Regionales Entwicklungskonzept), which is followed up by the means of a comprehensive indicator set. Most reforms mentioned hereafter are part of this long-term scheme and are monitored on a regular basis within this framework. The ministry of the GSC is responsible for this monitoring and evaluation.

| Name of the reform | Expected change | Means through which change will be measured | Source of information / planned evaluations |
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| reforms under 2.4 | | | |
| 1) Adoption of a qualification framework for the German-speaking Community and creation of a legal basis for the validation for non-formal and informal learning in the German-speaking Community | Medium term: Setting up of a technical committee in charge of the classification of qualifications Long term: Establishment of center for the validation of non-formal and informal learning | | |
| 2) Perspectives for the further development of secondary schools | Reducing the number of young people lagging behind Valorisation of vocational education | Measurement of education backwardness Ratio of pupil at risk | Number of people lagging behind: data of schools PISA-Results |
| 3) Fostering synergies and harmonization of vocational education in secondary schools and in the dual system | Joint use of infrastructure and teaching material Exchange and even closer collaboration between teachers from different systems; coordinated education and training offers | Creation of one single campus housing school and training center Inventory of education and training offers | Data collection through schools and training centers |

Table 4.2: Planned assessments of the initiatives and of the financial aspects of reforms

An YGIP-steering committee, chaired by ADG and the Employment-Minister, and including the main partners of the YGIP will be formed to monitor and evaluate the implementation and the results on a half-year base. Furthermore, ADG and the Employment Minister meet on a regular basis (monthly) to discuss implementation issues and possible difficulties. The data collection will also be organized at this level.

| Name of the initiative / reform | Target population (or equivalent) | (or) | Population (or equivalent) actually reached | Outcome for population | Sources of information |
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| Initiatives under 2.3 | | | | | |
| 1 New integration concept for the counselling and support of jobseekers and unemployed | | | | First counselling interview and personalised integration contract (<i>Eingliederungsvereinbarung</i>) within two months after registration for young job seekers who need special counselling Work or traineeship placement | Compass data system of ADG: Evaluation of counselling service interviews Evaluation of data |
| 2 Improvement of the transition from general education to vocational training and creation of a tailor-made offer for disadvantaged young people | | | | Decrease of the number of young people leaving education without qualification | Long term: Data evaluation from the register of school leavers Medium term: concept elaboration |
| 3 Support of apprentices with learning difficulties – “Starterkit” | | | | Specific support for apprentices with learning difficulties enabling them to get a certificate (certificate of apprenticeship or <i>Praktikerzertifikat</i>) | Number of apprentices in differentiated courses (<i>Modulunterricht</i>) enrolled and number of apprentices successfully finishing their apprenticeship or getting a <i>Praktikerzertifikat</i> |
| 4 Improvement of the occupational orientation | | | | Awareness raising activities for professions of the future Increase of number of young women in dual vocational education | Number of participants in organised activities (young people and companies) Gender percentage among apprentices (IAWM) |
| 5 Promotion of the attractiveness of dual vocational training | | | | Increase of the number of young people in dual vocational training | |
| 6 Platform for apprenticeship vacancies and „apprenticeship dating day” | | | | Decrease of the number of apprenticeship vacancies | Number of participants in “apprenticeship dating day” Number of new apprenticeship contracts (ADG, IAWM) |
| 7 Time-out Project | | | | Reintegration of pupils into general teaching; decrease of school suspension | Number of participants in the project & their education path afterwards (ZFP) |
| 8 Pilot project Qualiflex | | | | Support young people with learning difficulties or social disadvantages through individual training plans and help them make the transition to training or work | Education/career path of young people in that education system (TZU) |

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| 9 Support pupils with migration background | | | Convey necessary language skills in order to enable pupils to follow regular teaching classes | Schools: data collection |
| 10 "Fit for life" | | | Convey methodological skills | |
| 11 "Stark genug" – Project „Strong enough“ | | | | |
| 12 Register of school leavers | | | Data collection of school leavers providing analysis of transitions from education to work | register (IWEPS, BCSS and partner institutions) |
| 13 Building an integrated service for the well-being and the healthy development of children and young people in the German-speaking Community | | | Short term: Gründung der neuen Einrichtung und Aufbau der Strukturen | |
| Initiatives under 2.4 | | | | |
| 1 Supported employment for young jobseekers with disability (JuGA-UB) | 40 to 60 persons | ... | Labour market integration | DPB: Data collection |
| 2 VIP-Project | Pupils with special needs | five young people per year | Long term traineeship placement | DPB: Data collection |
| 3 Promotion of traineeship programs, job and traineeship acquisition, implementation of pilot projects (e.g. in the field of kindergarden caring assistance) and analysis of possible extension of such projects to other fields. Pilot project: "Kindergartenassistent/in" | Young jobseekers who meet the requirements for the various traineeship programs | Current pilot project: 20 participants | Work placement or traineeship placement | ADG: Data collection |
| 4 Cooperation between ADG-TZU | Low qualified jobseekers aged under 25 | | Partial qualifications achievement and labour market integration | |
| 5 Promotion of mobility of | Young people in school or training | | Training and traineeships abroad | |

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| young people within Erasmus + | | | | |
| 6 Fostering of entrepreneurial spirit among young people | Young people at school or in training | | Fostering of self-employment | Data of INASTI |