



Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015–19

BELGIUM

German-speaking community



Cedefop monitoring of vocational education and training policies and systems

Progress towards the medium-term deliverables
of the Riga conclusions

Country chapter

BELGIUM

GERMAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

Developments in vocational education and training policy
in 2015-19

Cedefop (2020). *Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015-19: German-speaking Community of Belgium*. Cedefop monitoring and analysis of VET policies. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/developments-vocational-education-and-training-policy-2015-19-belgium-de>

© European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), 2020.
Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

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

Contents

Tables and figures.....	4
Tables	4
Figures	4
Introduction	5
Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015	7
CHAPTER 1. MTD 1 – All forms of work-based learning with special attention to apprenticeships	10
1.1. Baseline 2015.....	10
1.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20	10
1.3. Main actions taken in 2015-19.....	11
1.3.1. Attracting learners to apprenticeship	11
1.3.2. Cabinetmaking apprenticeship programme certified by Belgium and Germany	11
1.3.3. Supporting apprentices at risk of dropping out: the ESF project BIDA	12
CHAPTER 2. MTD 2 – Quality assurance mechanisms in line with EQAVET and continuous information and feedback loops to IVET and CVET	13
CHAPTER 3. MTD 3 – Access to VET and qualifications for all through more flexible/permeable systems, guidance and validation of non-formal and informal learning	14
3.1. Baseline 2015.....	14
3.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20	15
3.3. Main actions taken in 2015-19.....	15
3.3.1. Guidance	15
3.3.2. Transparency, recognition, validation	16
3.3.3. Training, reskilling and upskilling vulnerable groups, jobseekers and employees	17
CHAPTER 4. MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET	18
4.1. Baseline 2015.....	18
4.2. Key competences addressed in the reporting period	19
4.3. Key competences in initial VET	20
4.4. Key competences in CVET.....	20
CHAPTER 5. MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuing professional development of VET teachers and trainers	22

5.1.	2015 Baseline	22
5.1.1.	Access to VET school teaching: entry requirements and initial training	22
5.1.2.	In-company trainers: entry requirements and initial training	23
5.1.3.	Trainers at CVET institutions: entry requirements and initial training	23
5.1.4.	VET school teachers: main lines for CPD	23
5.1.5.	In-company trainers: main lines for CPD	23
5.2.	CPD for teaching/training staff in VET schools 2015-19	24
	Statistical overview: 2019 update	25
	Conclusion	28
	Acronyms	29
	Bibliography	30

Tables and figures

Tables

Table 1.	Framework data: score on VET indicators in Belgium and in the EU: 2010-15	8
Table 2.	Key competences addressed in 2015-19	20
Table 3.	Score on VET indicators in Belgium and in the EU: 2015, last available year and recent change.....	25

Figures

Figure 1.	Share of 15-year-olds with low achievement in reading, maths and science	19
-----------	--	----

Introduction

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

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

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

The country chapter is structured as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Aspects of vocational education and training context in 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, the proportion of upper secondary students enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) programmes in Belgium was above the EU average: 59.7% in 2014 compared to 48% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 29); 60% in 2015 compared to 47% in the EU ⁽³⁾. However, only 5.9% of upper secondary initial vocational education and training (IVET) students were following work-based programmes in 2014, against 34% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 29). The employment rate of recent upper secondary education graduates was also below the EU average: 67.4% in 2014 compared 70.8% in the EU (European Commission, 2015). However, the rate was higher when taking VET graduates only: 75.6% in 2014, compared to the EU average of 73% (European Commission, 2016). Adult participation in lifelong learning was low: 6.9% in 2015 compared to 10.7% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 29) (Table 1).

VET in the country faced the challenges of addressing early school leaving and resulting NEETs (not in education, employment, or training). On the adult side, a shared focus among all three regions/communities was to provide adults with additional qualifications and recognise their skills. In the German-speaking Community, a skills validation system was being developed.

⁽³⁾ Eurostat, data for 2015.

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

Indicator label	2010		2015 (*)		Trend in 2011-5 (per year)		
	BE ^f	EU ^f	Yr	BE ^f	EU ^f	Range	BE EU
Access, attractiveness and flexibility							
IVET students as % of all upper secondary students	A	A	'14	59.7 ^b	48.0 ^b _{E1}	'13-'14	▪ -0.5 ▪ -0.9
IVET work-based students as % of all upper secondary IVET	A	A	'14	5.9 ^b	34.0 ^b _{E2}	'13-'14	▪ 0.0 ▪ 0.1
IVET students with direct access to tertiary education as % of all upper secondary IVET			'14	20.9	69.2 ^{E3}	'13-'14	▪ 0.2 ▪ -1.4
Employees participating in CVT courses (%)	52.0	38.0 ^e	'10	52.0	38.0 ^e		
Employees participating in on-the-job training (%)	21.0	20.0 ^e	'10	21.0	20.0 ^e		
Adults in lifelong learning (%)	7.4		'15	6.9	10.7 ^b	'13-'15	→ 0.0 → 0.0
Enterprises providing training (%)	78.0	66.0 ^e	'10	78.0	66.0 ^e		
Female IVET students as % of all female upper secondary students	A	A	'14	58.0 ^b	42.7 ^b _{E1}	'13-'14	▪ -0.5 ▪ -1.0
Employees of small firms participating in CVT courses (%)	34.0	25.0 ^e	'10	34.0	25.0 ^e		
Young VET graduates in further education and training (%)			'15	37.7 ^b	33.0 ^b	'14-'15	▪ -0.3 ▪ -0.3
Older adults in lifelong learning (%)	4.6	5.3	'15	4.5	6.9	'10-'15	→ 0.0 ↗ 0.4
Low-educated adults in lifelong learning (%)	3.2		'15	3.0 ^c	4.3 ^b _C	'13-'15	→ 0.0 ↘ 0.1
Unemployed adults in lifelong learning (%)	9.7		'15	9.0	9.5 ^b	'13-'15	↗ 0.3 ↘ 0.4
Individuals who wanted to participate in training but did not (%)	12.8 ^B	9.5 ^{eB}	'11	12.8	9.5 ^e		
Job-related non-formal education and training (%)	89.3 ^B	80.2 ^{eB}	'11	89.3	80.2 ^e		
Skill development and labour market relevance							
IVET public expenditure (% of GDP)			'13	1.18 ^b	0.56 ^b _{E4}		
IVET public expenditure per student (1 000 PPS units)			'13	10.9 ^b	6.4 ^b _{E5}	'12-'13	▪ 0.7 ▪ 0.0
Enterprise expenditure on CVT courses as % of total labour cost	0.9	0.8 ^e	'10	0.9	0.8 ^e		
Average number of foreign languages learned in IVET			'14	1.4 ^b	1.0 ^b _{E6}	'13-'14	▪ 0.1 ▪ 0.0
STEM graduates from upper secondary IVET (% of total)	A	A	'14	27.3 ^b	30.0 ^b _{E7}	'13-'14	▪ 1.2 ▪ -0.4
Short-cycle VET graduates as % of first time tertiary education graduates			'14	^b	9.3 ^{E8}		
Innovative enterprises with supportive training practices (%)	60.0	41.5 ^{E9}	'12	48.4	41.6 ^{E9}	'10-'12	▪ -5.8 ▪ 0.0
Employment rate for IVET graduates (20- to 34-year-olds)			'15	80.8 ^b	77.2 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 0.5 ▪ 0.3
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)			'15	10.7 ^b	5.3 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 1.9 ▪ -1.0

Indicator label	2010		2015 (*)		Trend in 2011-5 (per year)			
	BE ^f	EU ^f	Yr	BE ^f	EU ^f	Range	BE	EU
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over low-educated)			'15	28.5 ^b	23.7 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 3.2	▪ 0.1
Workers helped to improve their work by training (%)			'15	77.3	83.7			
Workers with skills matched to their duties (%)	61.2	55.2	'15	61.5	57.3	'10-'15	▪ 0.1	▪ 0.4
Overall transitions and labour market trends								
Early leavers from education and training (%)	11.9	13.9	'15	10.1 ^c	11.0 ^c	'10-'15	↘ 0.5	↘ 0.6
30- to 34-year-olds with tertiary attainment (%)	44.4	33.8	'15	42.7 ^c	38.7 ^c	'10-'15	↘ 0.2	↗ 1.0
NEET rate for 18- to 24-year-olds (%)		16.6	'15	15.5 ^b	15.8	'11-'15	↗ 0.1	↘ 0.3
Unemployment rate for 20- to 34-year-olds (%)		13.1	'15	12.6 ^b	12.9	'11-'15	↗ 0.5	↘ 0.1
Employment rate of recent graduates (%)		77.4	'15	79.5 ^b ^c	76.9 ^c	'11-'15	↘ 0.4	→ 0.0
Adults with lower level of educational attainment (%)	29.5	27.3	'15	25.3 ^c	23.5 ^c	'10-'15	↘ 0.8	↘ 0.8
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds (%)		68.6	'15	67.2 ^b	70.0	'11-'15	→ 0.0	↗ 0.4
Employment rate for 20- to 64-year-olds with lower level of educational attainment (%)		53.4	'15	45.6 ^b ^c	52.6 ^c	'11-'15	↘ 0.4	↘ 0.1
Medium/high-qualified employment in 2020 (% of total)			'16	85.3 ^d	82.8 ^d			

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

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

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

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

(^D) Forecast made in 2016.

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

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

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

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

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

(^{E6}) Partial information for NL.

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

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

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

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

(^u) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

(^z) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.

(^e) Eurostat: 'estimated'.

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

Source: Cedefop, 2017a, p. 29.

CHAPTER 1.

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

1.1. Baseline 2015

The German speaking community of Belgian has a long tradition of dual learning. At the beginning of the reporting period, dual learning programmes for young people could be accessed through two different channels, i.e. either schools (technical and vocational) or apprenticeship. To be allowed to offer apprenticeship training, companies had to be accredited by the Institute for work-based training in small and medium-sized enterprises – IAWM ⁽⁴⁾. Companies had to prove their legal status and activity and that the involved tutors possessed proper education, pedagogical skills as well as certificates of conduct. All these requirements were fixed in a decree of the Government of the German speaking Community.

Cooperation between VET and business had been a long-standing practice. Representatives from the business world used to participate in advisory boards of VET institutions and in the working group in charge of the creation of new training places in enterprises.

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

1.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20

For 2016-20, the Community's priorities in this area ⁽⁵⁾, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training (DGVET), are to:

- (a) further promote the European Social Fund (ESF) *Vocational integration* project;
- (b) develop relationships between VET providers (school-based and work-based) within the German-speaking Community.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://www.iawm.be/>

⁽⁵⁾ According to a survey by Cedefop among Directors General for VET in early 2016.

1.3. Main actions taken in 2015-19

1.3.1. Attracting learners to apprenticeship

To increase the attractiveness of apprenticeship, especially for certain professions which struggle to find enough candidates, various measures have been taken in the German-speaking Community since 2015:

- (a) an online apprenticeship exchange platform was set up to help learners find apprenticeship places;
- (b) in school year 2016/17, one-day tasters in companies were offered to pupils from secondary general education, to familiarise them with various IVET and apprenticeship programmes in different sectors (such as bank, health, transport and logistics). Different stakeholders are involved in organising these events, including enterprises, the study circle *School and business*, the Ministry of the German-speaking Community's department for pedagogy, and the German chamber of industry and commerce. The objective is to lead general education schools to organise career search days by themselves;
- (c) in 2016 and in 2017, a one-day event was organised to promote professions lacking apprentices. The focus each year has been on a different professional field: chemistry in 2016, metal professions in 2017, transport and logistics in 2018 and chemistry again in 2019. During the event, pupils and their parents receive varied information on the relevant IVET programme, on the further progression paths, and on insights into the job;
- (d) in 2017, a taster week on nutrition professions was organised for the first time;
- (e) in 2016, vocational training centres organised the so-called *Startech days*, which are qualifying rounds for the national vocational competition for auto-mechatronic specialists and carpenters.

1.3.2. Cabinetmaking apprenticeship programme certified by Belgium and Germany

In October 2016, an agreement was signed between the authorities from the German speaking Community (IAWM and the Ministry) and German authorities. This agreement offers cabinetmaking apprentices the opportunity to acquire a journeyman's certificate from both Belgium and Germany. To receive the certificate from both countries, the apprentice needs first to complete the apprenticeship in one country and then pass an additional exam in the other. This agreement was concluded to counteract future possible skill shortages and might be extended to other professions. This measure is expected to help attract more learners.

1.3.3. Supporting apprentices at risk of dropping out: the ESF project BIDA

On 1 January 2016, the Centre for Education and Training (ZAWM) in Eupen set up the two-year ESF project *Vocational integration through training guidance in dual education* (BIDA) for the German-speaking community. BIDA's goal is to support apprentices who are at risk of breaking their training contract or who have already dropped out of training, with the aim of getting them back into the dual vocational education and training (VET) system. This project is meant as a response to the increasing drop-out rate among apprentices in the first year of training (around 15% currently leave prematurely).

The BIDA project offers custom-made services to young people who, after starting their training, are thinking about dropping out early. Depending on the individual's needs, personalised help covers a wide variety of support: screening of the individual and personal career; analysis of strengths, interests and motivation; coaching in a new career or education path; preparation of an individual support and guidance plan; training modules to reduce personal anxieties and weaknesses; and referral to other support services. Participation in the project is voluntary in the sense that a young person must be willing to take up the offer. However, it is problematic that many young people tend to be unaware of, or fail to recognise, their own weaknesses and difficulties; this stands in the way of their early rectification.

The first round of ESF project BIDA came to an official end in December 2017. A new round (BIDA II) started in January 2018. It includes a new 'pre-apprenticeship' strand, targeted at young people not yet ready to enter the IVET-system in the German-speaking Community. The pre-apprenticeship strand consists of one-year special classes at school (two days) and in a company (three days), with lesson content adjusted to the individual needs of students.

CHAPTER 2.

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

There is limited information on quality assurance arrangements for the German-speaking Community ⁽⁶⁾. At the beginning of the reporting period, an external evaluation agency for VET schools and VET competence centres was already in place. VET schools used to apply ISO compatible quality management systems (ISO 9001, ISO 14001). The community's public employment service ADG also established ISO 9001 certification for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its mason and cleaning worker trainings.

Transitions from VET to work were monitored. Public VET providers and the employment service were bound to monitor graduates. Employment statistics covered the labour market integration of young people coming from different education streams.

Skills needs identification was also in place. It was carried out by the community's public employment service, ADG, based on directories of occupations and qualifications and data on occupations in demand. ADG had developed a model to identify labour shortages and set up a list of the occupations in demand. This list was also accessible to training operators and the wide public.

Since 2016, the public employment service of the German-speaking Community participates in the *Youth guarantee* monitoring activity. Data showed whether young apprentices between 15 and 24 who registered with the public employment services (PES) were still pursuing their training activities after six, twelve and eighteen months.

⁽⁶⁾ The Community has not participated in the EQAVET surveys and information on its QA system is missing from the EQAVET website.

CHAPTER 3.

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

3.1. Baseline 2015

At the beginning of the reporting period, all three regions/communities of Belgium were conducting major school reforms. At the same time, adult participation was below the EU average (7.1% compared to 10.7% in 2014) ⁽⁷⁾, and the communities aimed to provide adults with additional qualifications and recognise their skills (European Commission, 2015). The communities had announced measures to revise their education policies and improve basic skills for all, with particular attention to the employability and integration of migrants (European Commission, 2015). They had also committed to implement the recommendation on the 'Youth Guarantee', which had led to an increase in the offer of traineeships targeted at the NEETs ⁽⁸⁾.

Due to its federal structure, Belgium was faced with the challenge of developing and implementing more than one national qualifications framework (Cedefop, 2017b). The German-speaking Community had started developing its own framework (the *Qualifikationsrahmen der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft* – QDG) in 2011/12; the decree establishing the QDG had been adopted by the Parliament in 2013. Due to its geographical location, the German speaking community saw the QDG as a tool to ease cross-border mobility.

A strategy for introducing a validation system was outlined in 2015, and a validation system started being developed ⁽⁹⁾.

⁽⁷⁾ Education and Training Monitor (2015),

⁽⁸⁾ Young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs).

⁽⁹⁾ See the European inventory on NQF 2016 – Cedefop, 2017b – and the information provided in the report on future strategies for the German-speaking Community of Eastern Belgium (Ostbelgien Leben 2025 Regionales Entwicklungskonzept der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft). The information provided builds on the section covering the 'Bildungsregion DG' (the German-speaking education and training region).

http://www.ostbelgienlive.be/PortalData/2/Resources/downloads/rek/REK4-72dpi-KORR_23sept.pdf

As regards, ECVET, a National Coordination Point was in place in the Community. Discussions among experts and regional authorities on ECVET implementation at VET qualifications level were ongoing.

Guidance was also in place. A 2010 decree had introduced vocational guidance as part of the mission of schools. A career information and guidance portal was available, covering training, jobs and subsidy opportunities. Guidance and counselling for young people and adults on the labour market was part of the legal mandate of the public employment service – ADG.

3.2. Policy priorities for 2016-20

The Community's priorities in this area for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, are two-fold:

- (a) for young people:
 - (i) further promote the ESF project *Vocational integration*;
 - (ii) sensitise young people to vocational occupations;
 - (iii) release young people from jobseeker duties while following an educational programme;
 - (iv) develop a certification system for social competences;
- (b) for adults:
 - (i) extend the opportunities for double certification in common craftsman masterclasses in cooperation with North Rhine, Westphalia (Germany);
 - (ii) implement a general system for the recognition/validation of non-formal and informal learning in the German-speaking Community;
 - (iii) achieve the ADG training programme targeted at smoothing the transition from an integration programme (preparing for labour market demands) into actual employment.

3.3. Main actions taken in 2015-19

3.3.1. Guidance

The BIDA project (Section 1.3.3) was started.

3.3.2. Transparency, recognition, validation

3.3.2.1. ECVET ⁽¹⁰⁾

A national coordination point is in place in the German-speaking Community. Transfer of learning acquired abroad is possible on a case-by-case basis. Qualifications and training programmes are expressed as learning outcomes (units, modules). Assessed learning outcomes are transferred at VET system level via an enabling framework. In the reporting period, discussions among experts and regional authorities on ECVET implementation at VET qualifications level are ongoing. Initiatives for internal use are on hold.

3.3.2.2. Validation ⁽¹¹⁾

A project addressing the validation challenge had started in 2014. In 2015, a strategy for introducing a validation system was outlined and, in October 2016, a public launch event on the recognition of competences took place. Stakeholders of the German-speaking Community were invited to participate in a debate. Subsequently, a steering group involving stakeholders relating to formal and non-formal education, as well as employment and the social partners, was set up. Between February and November 2017, the steering group developed a validation concept for the German-speaking Community; from this, an ESF-application is currently being developed.

In 2019, the ADG – in close cooperation with Germany's public employment service – has been training staff in using the vocational test procedure *MYSKILLS: identifying professional competences*. Aiming to integrate formally low-skilled job-seekers into the labour market, the tool attempts to capture and understand informal and non-formal professional knowledge applicable at the workplace. From the test results, it can be derived whether direct labour market integration can be envisaged (and in which operational fields) or whether qualification training should take place first.

⁽¹⁰⁾ European credit system for vocational education and training. Source: the ECVET users' group members.

⁽¹¹⁾ See the European inventory on NQF 2016 – Cedefop, 2017b – and the information provided in the report on future strategies for the German-speaking Community of Belgium (*Ostbelgien Leben 2025 Regionales Entwicklungskonzept der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft*). The information provided builds on the section covering the *Bildungsregion DG* (the German-speaking education and training region).
http://www.ostbelgienlive.be/PortalData/2/Resources/downloads/rek/REK4-72dpi-KORR_23sept.pdf

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

3.3.3.1. Tailored support for jobseekers in finding apprenticeships

The ADG (the employment office of the Community) and the institute for world-linked training in small and medium-sized enterprises (IAWM) cooperate in matching jobseekers fulfilling the minimum criteria to the apprenticeship places for young people aged 15 to 29. Jobseekers receive individual letters informing them about the available places and how they can express their interest and get further information. From mid-2016, ADG counsellors have access to weekly updated information on vacant apprenticeships, which allows them to plan measures for jobseeker integration into the labour market.

3.3.3.2. Reinforcing support to retraining jobseekers

In 2016, ADG staff were trained in 'supported employment', of which certain elements have since been implemented. This concept aims at professionalising the assistance to jobseekers facing multiple obstacles to integrate into the labour market. Some jobseekers start up an in-company professional training, which is one of the existing labour market policies. The main difference to the usual course of the training lies in the regular visits of the jobcoach to the workplace in order to record and tackle the jobseeker's and employer's needs, aiming at making the integration by professional training a success. Between 2019 and 2020, more ADG staff will be trained in this concept.

3.3.3.3. Virtual enterprise training for access to employment

In 2015, the CVET centre in Sankt Vith introduced the virtual enterprise *Vithalité* as a new learning scheme to allow a close-to-reality learning experience in a highly realistic training environment. From merchandise traffic to business relations, all procedures mirror commercial practice. The programme promotes integrated learning and aims at facilitating (re-)entry into employment. Since the launch of the programme, trainees have participated in various national and international fairs for virtual enterprises (e.g. the Belfair in March 2019).

CHAPTER 4.

MTD 4 – Key competences in both IVET and CVET

4.1. Baseline 2015

In 2015, in Belgium, key competences were provided mainly by compulsory education (usually from age 6 to 18) including initial VET (ISCED levels 1-3). Key competences (languages, civic education, mathematics) were part of general courses. The learning outcomes expected from these courses were defined by each community.

In 2014, the German-speaking community had reviewed the 2008 decree⁽¹²⁾ that defined key competences and teaching frameworks for the general courses in the second and third stages of secondary education⁽¹³⁾. It also launched a plan for improving technical/vocational education (*Technisch-berufliche Ausbildung aufwerten*) in all schools (up to ISCED level 3) and in apprenticeship training centres, specifically addressing maths, digital and technological competences and natural sciences and crafts (MINT+H)⁽¹⁴⁾.

In 2015, all three Belgian communities were conducting major education and training reforms and have announced or taken measures to improve basic skills for all, including VET, where academic performance of learners was poor (European Commission, 2015). More attention to key competences was also being demanded by employers' unions, which were becoming increasingly concerned by the fast evolution of technology and its impact on upcoming competence requirements in languages and ICT⁽¹⁵⁾.

The context of key competences in 2015 was mainly characterised by an increasing share of young low achievers in reading, maths and science compared with 2012 (Figure 1). However, the share of low achievers in Belgium was lower than in the EU on average, where the trend was similar.

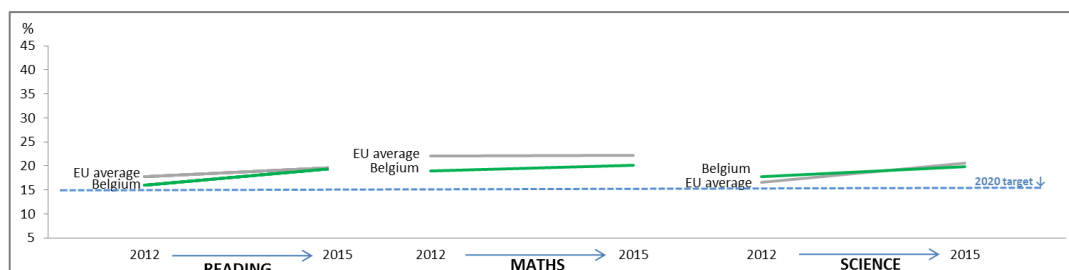
⁽¹²⁾ *Bildungsserver: Rahmenpläne*. Ministerium der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft, 2016. http://www.bildungsserver.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-2221/4415_read-31778/

⁽¹³⁾ See Bruxelles Formation (2016). *Key competences in vocational education and training – Belgium*. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series. http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2016/ReferNet_BE_KC.pdf

⁽¹⁴⁾ See Bruxelles Formation, 2016.

⁽¹⁵⁾ See Bruxelles Formation, 2016.

Figure 1. **Share of 15-year-olds with low achievement in reading, maths and science**



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

Source: OECD, 2014; OECD, 2016.

As VET enrolled 60% of all upper secondary learners in the country ⁽¹⁶⁾, this trend was likely to be reflected in the key competences trained for in VET programmes. These competences were central to compulsory education until age 18, including initial VET.

In 2015, the European Commission and the Council recommended the German-speaking Community of Belgium to address skills shortages ⁽¹⁷⁾. The recommendation referred to skills for the labour market, including key competences.

Another challenge to be tackled at the time was the evaluation of key competence policies. In 2015, the data on key competence policies were not exhaustive, given the extreme fragmentation of information ⁽¹⁸⁾.

4.2. Key competences addressed in the reporting period

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

⁽¹⁶⁾ Calculated from Eurostat table educ_uoe_enrs04; 2015 data.

⁽¹⁷⁾ See European Commission and Council (2015). *EU country-specific recommendations 2015*. https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2015-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-council-recommendations_en

⁽¹⁸⁾ See Bruxelles Formation, 2016.

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

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

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

Source: Cedefop based on ReferNet input.

4.3. Key competences in initial VET

The priority of the German-speaking Community in this area for 2016-20, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, is to continue updating educational programmes and to improve the education frameworks for the general part of school-based VET. This is to be achieved through the identification of key competences for each training year according to changing labour market and society needs, and in cooperation with teachers/trainers.

A meeting of teachers (including VET) was held in the reporting period on how to work with the new teaching framework for science and the accompanying technology.

Educational frameworks for general courses in initial VET have been improved by specifying key competences for each training year in cooperation with education experts and the Ministry of the German-speaking Community in Belgium.

4.4. Key competences in CVET

The virtual enterprise *Vitalité* (Section 3.3.3.3) as a highly realistic training environment fully supports key competences like learning to learn. As all procedures mirror commercial practice, entrepreneurship competences are also integrally stimulated.

The ADG qualification department considers digitalisation as one of the key issues impacting the ADG CVET offer. Therefore, the training for office workers now comprises a workshop dedicated to this topic (*Digitalisierung/transformation numérique*). The learning platform Moodle is integral part of the training: both trainees and trainers are trained in order to exploit its potential fully. The ADG is also currently designing new modules on digital skills for jobseekers, based on the Europass tool for self-assessment of digital skills.

CHAPTER 5.

MTD 5 – Systematic initial and continuing professional development of VET teachers and trainers

5.1. 2015 Baseline

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

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

- (a) general subjects teachers;
- (b) vocational theory teachers (teaching vocational theoretical subjects);
- (c) vocational teachers of technical or occupational practice courses (e.g. in workshops);
- (d) trainers (teaching general and vocational courses in apprenticeship programmes that were not implemented by schools);
- (e) practical training instructors (accompanying learners during their workplace practical training);
- (f) in-company trainers (tutors, supervisors/ advisors).

There were also trainers at CVET institutions.

5.1.1. Access to VET school teaching: entry requirements and initial training

People wishing to become a VET teacher had to hold a relevant diploma: a teacher's diploma for upper secondary education (usually concerning general subjects); or a teacher's diploma for lower secondary education (in general, technical or practical occupational subjects); or a secondary or higher level diploma along with an additional higher level diploma in pedagogy. Professionals with another type of diploma (if deemed sufficient) and/or professional experience could also be recruited as IVET teachers.

In the German-speaking Community in particular, the training personnel of the Institute for work-based training in small and medium-sized enterprises (IAWM), was partly composed of trainers who were primarily active professionals, especially business leaders. Their remuneration was higher if they held an

additional higher-level diploma in pedagogy. A compulsory pedagogical course⁽¹⁹⁾ of 36 hours had been organised by the College of the German-speaking Community. On average, between 1996 and 2014, about 43 people per year participated in this course.

The German-speaking Community had no institution responsible for organising IVET teacher training programmes.

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

In Belgium, the tutor position had been gradually formalised and recognised. Tutors could benefit from waived social security contributions. Tutorship training courses existed throughout the country. In 2013, the federal government gave access to paid educational leave (32 hours maximum) for those wishing to follow a tutorship programme.

5.1.3. Trainers at CVET institutions: entry requirements and initial training

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

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

5.1.4. VET school teachers: main lines for CPD

The Autonome Hochschule, AHS (a higher education institution) was founded in 2005. It was responsible for organising continuing professional development for all categories of IVET teachers/trainers. In 2015, it provided training for teachers in a range of subjects including German, mathematics, French, history, geography and music. Staff could also apply for individual allowances for CPD.

5.1.5. In-company trainers: main lines for CPD

In the German-speaking Community, existing tutorship training courses had been valorised since 2010 through the introduction of paid educational leave and reductions in social security contributions.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Government Decree of 1 July 2010 .

5.2. CPD for teaching/training staff in VET schools 2015-19

For 2016-20, the Community's priority in this area, as set by the Director General for Vocational Education and Training, is to focus on encouraging teachers to participate regularly in further training.

To increase regular participation of VET teachers in CPD, the Institute for work-based training in small and medium-sized enterprises (IAWM) bears the costs for a substitute VET teacher for half-a-day per teacher per school year.

Statistical overview: 2019 update

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

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

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

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

EU refers to EU-28, unless otherwise specified.

(D) Forecast made in 2018.

(ce) Cedefop estimate based on available country data

(b) Eurostat: 'break in time series'.

(u) Eurostat: 'low reliability'.

(z) Eurostat: 'not applicable'.

(e) Eurostat: 'estimated'.

(d) Eurostat: 'definition differs'.

Source: Cedefop, 2020.

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

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

In 2018, 8.5% of adults participated in lifelong learning activities. The EU average is 11.1%.

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

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

Conclusion

In the reporting period, the German-speaking Community of Belgium has taken measures to increase the attractiveness of apprenticeship and develop a six-month follow-up of apprentices' learning paths. Progress was made in preparing a concept for the validation of prior learning and work experience, and determining key competences in initial VET. Measures were put in place to support jobseekers in finding apprenticeships and training for employment. Action for the continuing professional development of VET school teachers continued.

The main change in 2017 has been the finalisation of the concept for the validation of non-formal and informal learning in the German-speaking Community, the preparation of which was initiated in 2014 (Section 3.3.2.2).

No new policy development was reported for 2018-19.

The actions carried out show that the main lines of the Riga conclusions and the Community's policy priorities for 2016-20 are being addressed. However, evidence is lacking that some of the Community's self-set 2016-20 objectives for MTD 1 ('develop relationships between VET providers') and MTD 3 ('develop a certification system for social competences'; 'extend the opportunities for double certification') were addressed. In future, finalising the implementation of ECVET could also be considered.

Acronyms

ADG	employment office
AES	adult education survey
CPD	continuing professional development
CVET	continuing vocational education and training
DGVT	Director General for Vocational Education and Training
ECVET	European credit system for vocational education and training
EQAVET	European quality assurance in vocational education and training
ESF	European Social Fund
Eurostat	statistical office of the European Union
GDP	gross domestic product
IAWM	Institute for work-based training in small and medium-sized enterprises
ISCED	international standard classification of education
IVET	initial vocational education and training
NEETs	not in education, employment, or training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PES	public employment services
PISA	programme for international student assessment
PPS	purchasing power standards
SMEs	small and medium-sized enterprises
STEM	science, technology, engineering and math programmes
UOE	UNESCO OECD Eurostat
VET	vocational education and training

Bibliography

[URLs accessed 20.11.2019]

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

http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2016/ReferNet_BE_KC.pdf

Cedefop (2015). *Stronger VET for better lives: Cedefop's monitoring report on vocational education and training policies 2010-14*. Cedefop Reference series; No 98. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/el/publications-and-resources/publications/3067>

Cedefop (2017a). *On the way to 2020: data for vocational education and training policies: country statistical overviews: 2016 update*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 61. <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/5561>

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

Cedefop (2020). *On the way to 2020: data for vocational education and training policies. Indicator overviews: 2019 update*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop research paper; No 76. https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5576_en.pdf

EEPO (2015). *Country fiches on skills governance in the Member States – Belgium*. Developed by the European Employment Policy Observatory for the European Commission. Brussels: European Commission. <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?langId=en&docId=15939&>

European Commission (2015). *Education and training monitor 2015: country analysis*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/87b59c67-c3f8-11e5-8d08-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search>

European Commission (2016). *Education and training monitor 2016: country analysis*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e9916271-ad65-11e6-aab7-01aa75ed71a1>

Eurostat. *Pupils enrolled in upper secondary education by programme orientation, sex, type of institution and intensity of participation* [database]. http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=educ_uoe_enrs04&lang=en

Lemaigre, T. (2016). *Supporting teachers and trainers for successful reforms and quality of vocational education and training: mapping their professional*

development in the EU – Belgium. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series.

http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2016/ReferNet_BE_TT.pdf

OECD (2014). *PISA 2012 results in focus: what 15-year-olds know and what they can do with what they know*.

<https://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results-overview.pdf>

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

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