

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 2015-18

Cedefop (2020). *Developments in vocational education and training policy in 2015-19: German-speaking Community of Belgium*. Cedefop monitoring and analysis of VET policies.

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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 ⁽¹⁾. However, only 5.9% of upper secondary initial vocational education and training (IVET) students were following work-based programmes in 2014, against 34% in the EU (Cedefop, 2017a, p. 29). The employment rate of recent upper secondary education graduates was also below the EU average: 67.4% in 2014 compared 70.8% in the EU (European Commission, 2015, p. 10). However, the rate was higher when taking VET graduates only: 75.6% in 2014, compared to the EU average of 73% (European Commission, 2016, p. 9). Adult participation in lifelong learning was low: 6.9% in 2015 compared to 10.7% in the EU (Cedefop, 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.

⁽¹⁾ Eurostat, data for 2015.

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

Indicator label	2010		Last available year			Recent trend (per year)		
	BE ^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

Indicator label	2010		Last available year		Recent trend (per year)			
	BE ^f	EU ^f	Yr	BE ^f	EU ^f	Range	BE	EU
Employment premium for IVET graduates (over general stream)			'15	10.7 ^b	5.3 ^b	'14-'15	▪ 1.9	▪ 1.0
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			

(^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 Belgium 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 ⁽²⁾. 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 ⁽³⁾, as set by the Director General for vocational education and training (DGVt), 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.

⁽²⁾ <https://www.iawm.be/>

⁽³⁾ According to a survey by Cedefop among Directors General for VET in early 2016.

1.3. Main actions taken in 2015-18

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 by themselves career search days;
- (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 and metal professions in 2017. 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 countries, one from Belgium and one from Germany. To receive the certificate from both countries, the apprentice needs first to complete successfully 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 (2 days) and in a company (3 days), with lessons' content adjusted to 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 ⁽⁴⁾

There is limited information on quality assurance arrangements for the German-speaking Community ⁽⁵⁾. Already at the beginning of the reporting period, an external evaluation agency for VET schools and VET competence centres was in place. VET schools used to apply ISO compatible quality management systems (ISO 9001, ISO 14001).

Transitions from VET to work were monitored. Public VET providers and employment services 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 regional 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.

In 2016, the public employment service of the German-speaking Community participated in the *Youth guarantee* monitoring activity. Data showed whether young apprentices between 15 and 24 who are registered with the regional public

⁽⁴⁾ Sources:

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop):

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en>

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

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

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

2016 compendium of EQAVET NRP *Erasmus+* funding;

Council recommendations on the 2016 national reform programmes:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-semester/2016/#>

Education and training monitor 2016 country reports:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor_en

⁽⁵⁾ The Community has not participated in the EQAVET surveys and information on its QA system is missing from the EQAVET website.

employment services (PES) were still pursuing their training activities after six months.

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) ⁽⁶⁾, and the communities aimed to provide adults with additional qualifications and recognise their skills ⁽⁷⁾. 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 ⁽⁸⁾. 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 ⁽⁹⁾.

Due to its federal structure, Belgium was faced with the challenge of developing and implementing more than one national qualifications framework ⁽¹⁰⁾. 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 ⁽¹¹⁾.

⁶ Education and Training Monitor, page 10.

⁷ Education and training Monitor 2015, page 3.

⁸ Education and training Monitor 2015, page 7.

⁹ Young people not in education, employment or training

¹⁰ The input is from the European inventory on NQF 2016: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/belgium-european-inventory-nqf-2016>

¹¹ The input is from the European inventory on NQF 2016 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

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 adults on the labour market was part of the legal mandate of the public employment service – ADG.

3.1. 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.

3.2. Main actions taken in 2015-18

3.2.1. Guidance

The BIDA project (see section 1.2.3) was started.

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

3.2.2. Transparency, recognition, validation

3.2.2.1. ECVET ⁽¹²⁾

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.

3.2.2.2. Validation ⁽¹³⁾

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. On that basis, an ESF-application is currently being developed.

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

3.2.3.1. 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) are cooperating 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

⁽¹²⁾ European credit system for vocational education and training. Source: the ECVET users' group members.

⁽¹³⁾ The input is from 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

information. From mid-2016, ADG counsellors have centralised access to weekly updated information on vacant apprenticeships, supporting them in planning measures for jobseekers' integration into the labour market.

3.2.3.2. Virtual enterprise training for access to employment

The VET centre in Sankt Vith introduced virtual enterprise as 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.

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 ⁽¹⁴⁾ that defined key competences and teaching frameworks for the general courses in the second and third stages of secondary education ⁽¹⁵⁾. 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) ⁽¹⁶⁾.

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 ⁽¹⁷⁾. 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 ⁽¹⁸⁾.

⁽¹⁴⁾ *Bildungsserver: Rahmenpläne*. Ministerium der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft, 2016.

http://www.bildungsserver.be/desktopdefault.aspx/tabid-2221/4415_read-31778/

⁽¹⁵⁾ 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

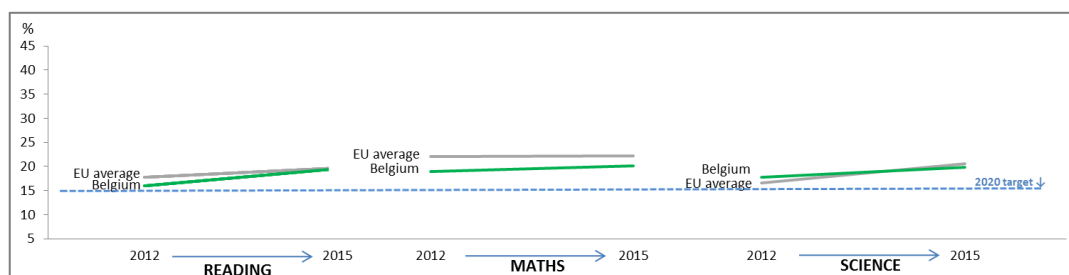
⁽¹⁶⁾ Bruxelles Formation (2016). *Key competences in vocational education and training – Belgium*. Cedefop ReferNet thematic perspectives series. http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2016/ReferNet_BE_KC.pdf

⁽¹⁷⁾ ET2020 monitor 2015, p.3

⁽¹⁸⁾ 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

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.

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 ⁽¹⁹⁾, 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 ⁽²⁰⁾. 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 ⁽²¹⁾.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Calculated from Eurostat table educ_uoe_enrs04; 2015 data.

⁽²⁰⁾ EC and Council (2015). EU country-specific recommendations 2015. https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2015-european-semester-country-specific-recommendations-council-recommendations_en

⁽²¹⁾ 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

4.2. Key competences addressed in the reporting period

Table 2 outlines / gives a summary of key competences in initial and continuing VET that were addressed in the reporting period. Description of policies is provided in the following sections.

Table 2. **Key competences addressed in 2015-18**

	IVET	CVET
Country language(s) and literacy		
Foreign languages		
Digital competence		
Maths		
Science	YES	
Technology		
Social and civic competences		
Learning-to-learn		
Financial literacy		
Entrepreneurship competence		
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 educational frameworks for general part of school-based VET. This is to be achieved through determination of key competences for each training year in light of changing labour market and society needs, and in cooperation with teachers/trainers.

A meeting for 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 determining key competences for each training year in cooperation

with education experts and the Ministry of the German-speaking Community in Belgium.

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:

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

There were also trainers at CVET institutions.

Access to VET school teaching: entry requirements and initial training

People wishing to become a VET teacher had to hold a relevant diploma i.e. either 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 an additional higher level diploma in pedagogy ⁽²²⁾. 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, (this

⁽²²⁾ Could be obtained by any person who already held a secondary or higher level diploma.

measure aimed to employ business leaders as trainers). Their remuneration was higher if they held an additional higher level diploma in pedagogy. A compulsory pedagogical course ⁽²³⁾ 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.

In the German-speaking Community, there was no institution responsible for organising IVET teacher training programmes.

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.

Trainers at CVET institutions: entry requirements and initial training

Requirements for CVET trainers were uniform nation-wide. They had to have either (a) a bachelor (or master) degree along with professional experience of three to five years; or (b) a certificate of upper secondary education with five to six years of experience in their occupation; or (c) professional experience of 10 to 12 years.

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 (CPD) 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.

In-company trainers: main lines for CPD

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

²³ Government Decree 1 July 2010

5.2. CPD for teaching/training staff in VET schools 2015-18

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 sensitising 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.

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 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 was also taken, although it is unclear whether this was during or prior to the reporting period.

As compared to 2015-2016, 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 (²⁴).

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. Also, information available to Cedefop suggests issues which could benefit from further consideration:

- (a) finalising the development of the qualifications framework of the Community and the implementation of ECVET;
- (b) supporting the development of key competences in CVET.

²⁴ See page 13.

List of abbreviations

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

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