

*Upskilling unemployed adults: The organisation, profiling and
targeting of training provision*

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EEPO Review Spring 2015: Upskilling unemployed adults

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Belgium

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1 Introduction

In Belgium, the vocational training of jobseekers is supported both by the option for jobseekers receiving benefits to keep those benefits during training, while being exempted from seeking employment, and by the organisation of training. Exempting jobseekers from seeking employment while maintaining their benefits is a federal power that was partly regionalised in July 2014. The organisation of training is a community power, except in the French-speaking area where the Wallonia-Brussels Federation has transferred its power over vocational training to the Walloon Region and to the French Community Commission (Commission Communautaire Française – COCOF)¹. The regions and communities are also supported in their training efforts by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF).

The exemption from seeking employment while maintaining benefits can be granted to jobseekers receiving benefits from the Belgian Employment Office (Office National de l'Emploi – ONEM) and to jobseekers receiving a social integration income payable by the public social assistance centres (centres publics d'action sociale – CPAS).

The obligations of **jobseekers receiving ONEM unemployment benefits** include being registered as jobseekers with the relevant regional employment service (Forem, Actiris, ADG or VDAB) and being available for work, i.e. accepting any suitable job offered. However, under certain conditions, they can be exempted from these obligations if they pursue education or training delivered on weekdays. In this case, they keep their right to unemployment benefits throughout the training period, despite the fact that they are no longer available for work.

There are four types of 'exemption': (1) the exemption to pursue vocational training is the most substantial in terms of both beneficiaries and costs, and can be granted to all jobseekers receiving benefits; (2) the exemption to return to full-time education applies to jobseekers who have been receiving benefits for at least a year and who have not completed higher education² - for studies leading to occupations in which there is a shortage of labour, the exemption also allows the digression of unemployment benefits to be suspended; (3) the exemption to pursue self-employment training, which is aimed at those jobseekers who have been receiving benefits for at least a year - this exemption also allows the digression of unemployment benefits to be suspended; (4) the exemption to return to other education or training allows low-skilled or unskilled jobseekers in receipt of benefits³ to pursue training other than that mentioned above, by prior arrangement with the head of the unemployment office.

The power over exemptions was partly regionalised in July 2014 under the Sixth Reform of the Belgian State. Unemployment benefits granted to exempted jobseekers remain payable by the Federal State, but the exemption rules and their granting have been regionalised⁴.

¹ However, the French Community has retained power over social advancement training.

² More specifically, jobseekers in receipt of benefits must have left education at least two years earlier and have been receiving unemployment benefits for at least a year, except in the case of studies leading to occupations in which there is a significant shortage of labour. Furthermore, they cannot have completed higher education and must resume their studies at a level at least equivalent to those already pursued.

³ This means those who do not have a higher secondary education certificate or a lower secondary education certificate respectively.

⁴ With regard to the exemptions for the resumption of education and training, federal funding has been allocated to each region, and the regions will be financially accountable if this funding is overspent, i.e. when the percentage of days exempted during a year due to training, education or work placements in relation to the days of unemployment for which benefits are received in the

For **jobseekers receiving a social integration income payable by the public social assistance centres (CPAS)**, a similar 'exemption' measure allows them to pursue education or training while receiving their replacement income. This measure forms part of the Individual Social Integration Projects (Projets Individualisés d'Intégration Sociale – PIIS). The PIISs are mainly aimed at people under the age of 25, but those over this age can also benefit.

Lastly, **jobseekers not in receipt of benefits** who have not completed higher education and who pursue vocational training in enterprises can benefit from a training allowance. In 2014, 2 406 jobseekers received this training allowance, with 22 % of these being over the age of 25⁵.

Table 1 shows the total number of jobseekers receiving ONEM or CPAS benefits who were exempted from seeking employment due to training between 2008 and 2014. The number of beneficiaries by type of exemption and by home region, as well as the associated costs, are set out in Annex 2.

Table 1. Trend in the total number of jobseekers receiving ONEM or CPAS benefits who were exempted from seeking employment due to training between 2008 and 2014 (ONEM figures in physical units⁶ and CPAS figures in units, and proportion (%))

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
ONEM training exemptions and allowances	37,908	36,719	36,987	39,043	38,282	38,729	40,938	42,885
< 25 years	n.a.	n.a.	28.1%	27.5%	26.9%	24.8%	24.5%	23.6%
> 25 years	n.a.	n.a.	71.9%	72.5%	73.1%	75.2%	75.5%	76.4%
Individual Social Integration Projects (CPAS)	15,926	16,962	18,584	20,127	20,424	21,136	22,062	22,750
< 25 years	87.5%	87.6%	87.5%	87.3%	87.7%	87.4%	87.2%	86.6%
> 25 years	12.5%	12.4%	12.5%	12.7%	12.3%	12.6%	12.8%	13.4%

Source: ONEM, SPP Intégration Sociale, DULBEA calculations

The number of jobseekers exempted due to training rose by 22 % between 2007 and 2014. This increase was lower for ONEM exempted jobseekers (+13 %) than for CPAS exempted jobseekers (+43 %). In 2014, the proportion of those aged over 25 years among ONEM exempted jobseekers was 76.4 %, with this figure being 13.4 % among CPAS exempted jobseekers.

The range of training delivered to jobseekers (whether or not in receipt of benefits) and organised by the communities and regions is set out in the next section.

2 Targeting provision to specific unemployed groups

This section sets out the main vocational training measures organised by the communities and regions.

same year exceeds 12 % in a region. Exemptions for training leading to occupations in which there is a shortage of labour are not included in this accountability mechanism.

⁵ These figures provided by ONEM are set out in an Annex 2.

⁶ The number of physical units corresponds to the average monthly payments made over a year.

2.1 Walloon Region

The Walloon Region aims to develop job skills through various vocational training measures. The 2014 Walloon register of services (training, career guidance, job search, business creation) intended for jobseekers shows that most services or places (88 %) involved vocational training.

I. Socioprofessional Integration Bodies (OISP)

Socioprofessional Integration Bodies (Organismes d'Insertion Socioprofessionnelle – OISP) provide training for adult learners to encourage the development of general skills. They form part of the Integrated Measure for Socioprofessional Integration (Dispositif Intégré d'Insertion Socioprofessionnelle – DIISP)⁷, which aims to coordinate public and private training providers. In conjunction with the public employment and training service in Wallonia (Forem), this measure helps jobseekers to obtain quality jobs. It is the Walloon Government that grants the OISP label⁸. To obtain approval, an OISP must sign a partnership agreement with Forem. There are 90 OISPs approved in Wallonia, which can be either non-profit undertakings or public social assistance centres (CPAS). The legal basis of the Walloon OISPs is the Decree of 1 April 2004⁹. Trainees must meet one of the following conditions:

- i. be unoccupied jobseekers who are registered with Forem, who are beyond their period of compulsory schooling and who do not have a higher secondary education certificate;
- ii. be registered with Forem as unoccupied jobseekers for at least 24 months;
- iii. be jobseekers re-entering the world of work (anyone who has not engaged in a professional activity during the three years prior to entering training and who has not received unemployment, intermediate or career-break benefits during the period of three years preceding their registration as jobseekers);
- iv. be foreign nationals legally residing in Belgian territory.

In the Walloon Region's budget for 2015, the amount of EFT/OISP operating subsidies approved for 2015 and for paying the balance of subsidies for 2014 has been set at EUR 39 754 000¹⁰. The amount of subsidies allocated to approved CPASs is EUR 2 240 000 for 2015¹¹.

II. ICT Mobilising Plan (PMTIC)

The Walloon Government's ICT Mobilising Plan (Plan Mobilisateur TIC – PMTIC) was introduced in 2002 and aims to raise awareness of the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) among unoccupied jobseekers, recipients of the social integration income (revenu d'intégration sociale – RIS) or social assistance, and

⁷ Decree of 1 April 2004 on the integrated measure for socioprofessional integration (Belgian Gazette of 1 June 2004).

⁸ The term 'OISP' does not have the same scope in Brussels as in Wallonia. In the Brussels Region, it is COCOF that grants approval to OISPs according to their type of action: providers of vocational training and work-linked training, literacy providers and access points for employment and social services, on-the-job training workshops. However, in Wallonia, the term 'OISP' refers to only one specific type of integration provider.

⁹ Order of the Walloon Government of 21 December 2006 implementing the Decree of 1 April 2004 on the approval and subsidisation of socioprofessional integration bodies (OISP) and on-the-job training enterprises (EFT).

¹⁰ This amount is set out in Article 33.12 of the 2015 Walloon budget.

¹¹ This amount is set out in Article 43.12 of the 2015 Walloon budget.

unemployed jobseekers receiving benefits. The Decree of February 2005¹² sets out the main features of this plan. PMTIC training is delivered by training providers such as non-profit undertakings, OISPs or CPASs. It is aimed at people meeting one of the following conditions:

- i. do not have a higher secondary education certificate or equivalent qualification;
- ii. have been unemployed for at least 12 months;
- iii. are re-entering the labour market after at least 12 months;
- iv. are over the age of 40, without any qualification conditions;
- v. foreign nationals legally residing in Belgian territory.

For each beneficiary, training can be for a minimum of 8 hours and a maximum of 48 hours. The budget for the Mobilising Plan has been set at EUR 1 500 000 for 2015¹³.

III. Vocational Training Centres for Disabled People (Centres de Formation Professionnelle pour les personnes handicapées – CFP)

These centres are approved and funded by the Walloon Agency for the Integration of Disabled People (Agence Wallonne pour l'Intégration des Personnes handicapées – AWIPH)¹⁴. They meet the needs of unemployed disabled people who cannot pursue vocational training through normal channels¹⁵. To be eligible for training, trainees must also have their disability recognised by the AWIPH and be at least 18 years of age. If they are unemployed jobseekers in receipt of benefits, they must obtain a signing-on exemption granted by ONEM.

This training seeks to develop the trainee's job skills and reinforce links with the world of work by alternating periods of training at the centre and in enterprises. The duration of the work placement depends on the trainee's professional development. The trainee receives a training allowance from the centre to cover travel costs and also childcare costs, where applicable.

Table 2 shows the number of beneficiaries and annual costs of vocational training within centres approved by the AWIPH. In 2013, the number of beneficiaries was 1 520 (965 men and 555 women). Again in 2013, the costs totalled EUR 13 975 984, which represented 2.09 % of the AWIPH's total expenditure.

Table 2. Trend in the number of beneficiaries and annual costs (EUR) over the 2008-2013 period

CFP training	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Var. 2008-2013
Beneficiaries	1293	1343	1369	1457	1483	1520	17.60%
Costs	12,536,825	12,789,041	12,713,449	13,318,539	13,749,280	13,975,984	11.50%

Sources: AWIPH (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013)

¹² Decree of 3 February 2005 on the information and communication technologies mobilising plan (Belgian Gazette of 25 February 2005). This Decree was recently amended by the Decree of 20 February 2014.

¹³ This amount is set out in Article 33.32 of the 2015 Walloon budget.

¹⁴ Walloon Regulatory Code of Social Action and Health, Part Two, Book 5, Title 9, Articles 905 to 990.

¹⁵ Normal channels are all public or private employers in Belgium outside Adapted Work Enterprises (Entreprises de Travail Adapté – ETA).

2.2 Brussels-Capital Region

I. Bruxelles Formation

As one of its responsibilities, the French Community Commission (COCOF) manages Bruxelles Formation, which is the body responsible for providing vocational training to Brussels workers and jobseekers in the French-speaking area. This body offers jobseekers over 200 free training courses, plus an allowance of EUR 1 per hour of training and free public transport. However, these benefits are granted only to unoccupied jobseekers who: have been registered for at least a year with the Brussels Employment Office (Actiris); require socioprofessional integration; are registered with Actiris and receive the social integration income or social assistance, or are registered with the Fund for the Social and Professional Integration of Disabled People (Fonds pour l'intégration sociale et professionnelle des personnes handicapées).

Table 3 shows, on an annual basis, the number of beneficiary jobseekers and the proportion of over 25-year-olds within Bruxelles Formation training centres. In 2013, the number of beneficiaries was 7 964, of which 79.8 % were over the age of 25.

Table 3. *Trend in the number of beneficiaries and annual costs (EUR) over the 2009-2013 period*

Bruxelles Formation	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Job Seekers	5,201	6,694	7,121	7,004	8,197	7,964
Proportion of over-25s	77.30%	83.10%	83%	87.60%	80.40%	79.80%

Sources: Bruxelles Formation (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013)

Bruxelles Formation offers a whole range of training to jobseekers with support from the Brussels-Capital Region, which, through the 'New Deal', funds training for sectors identified as priorities, such as the environment, international development, trade, hotel and catering, non-profit, public service, community services and innovation sectors. In addition, the Region also supports a wide range of language training through the 'Language Plan', which enables jobseekers referred by Actiris to pursue training in a trade-targeted language.

In addition to this regional aid, Bruxelles Formation is also supported by the European Social Fund (ESF), which funds skills training for the construction, electricity, ICT management and other sectors, as well as basic training, language training and training for disabled people.

The COCOF's budget for Bruxelles Formation was EUR 38 880 000 in 2014. The European Social Fund's involvement over the 2007-2013 period was EUR 54 436 965, i.e. EUR 7 776 709 as an annual average.

In addition to this role as a training provider, Bruxelles Formation also manages vocational training in Brussels. In this respect, it enters into partnerships with other training providers, which offer the training identified and specified by Bruxelles Formation.

II. Social Advancement Training Body (Enseignement de Promotion Sociale - EPS)

In addition to the socioprofessional integration measures, Bruxelles Formation also collaborates with the *Social Advancement Training Body* (Enseignement de Promotion

Sociale) through a framework agreement signed in 2009¹⁶. This allows the training offer to jobseekers to be expanded.

Table 4 shows the annual number of beneficiary jobseekers and the proportion of over 25-year-olds within social advancement training establishments. In 2013, the number of beneficiaries was 736, whilst the proportion of over 25-year-olds was 79.6 %.

Table 4. *Trend in the number of jobseekers benefiting from training and proportion (%) of over 25-year-olds over the 2009-2013 period*

EPS	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Job Seekers	617	740	582	677	736
Proportion of over-25s	76.80%	77.10%	76.40%	77.40%	79.60%

Sources: Bruxelles Formation (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013)

III. Socioprofessional Integration Bodies (OISP)

Socioprofessional Integration Bodies (Organismes d'Insertion Socioprofessionnelle – OISP) focus exclusively on low-skilled jobseekers (who have a lower secondary education certificate at most). Regulated by the Decree of 27 April 1995, OISPs must be approved by COCOF in order to be eligible for subsidies, which are granted in proportion to the number of training hours delivered and recognised by the COCOF. The socioprofessional integration scheme currently has 30 training providers, nine access points for employment and social services, and 10 on-the-job training workshops.

Six training actions are currently recognised. These are: literacy; basic training; pre-training (or training in work requirements); skills training, which are the prerogative of training providers; on-the-job training; and, finally, career guidance, which are reserved respectively for on-the-job training workshops and access points for employment and social services.

OISPs can also receive a subsidy from the public authority where they provide at least 9 600 training hours per year in partnership with Bruxelles Formation, the public body responsible for the vocational training of Brussels jobseekers. The subsidy amount varies according to the number of training hours delivered. Under these agreements, OISPs must comply with the specifications for each training action and the reference programmes established by the public institution.

Table 5 shows the annual number of beneficiary jobseekers and the proportion of over 25-year-olds within socioprofessional integration bodies. In 2013, the number of beneficiaries was 4 465, whilst the proportion of over 25-year-olds was 77 %.

Table 5. *Trend in the number of jobseekers benefiting from training and proportion (%) of over 25-year-olds over the 2009-2013 period*

OISP	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Job Seekers	3,984	4,304	4,103	4,385	4,267	4,465
Proportion of over-25s	74.90%	73.60%	74.90%	72.10%	76%	77%

Sources: Bruxelles Formation (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013)

¹⁶ Social advancement training will be examined in more detail in section 2.4.

The amount of subsidies in the COCOF budget for funding basic teams of OISPs is EUR 6 518 000 for 2015 (to be approved). OISPs may also benefit from subsidies totalling EUR 2 420 000 under partnership agreements with Bruxelles Formation, with these subsidies being shared with other bodies such as Enseignement de Promotion Sociale and vocational funds.

2.3 Walloon-Brussels Federation

Social Promotion Education (Enseignement de Promotion Sociale -EPS), which was established by the Decree of 16 April 1991, works within the context of lifelong learning and offers a range of training in collaboration with numerous institutional partners (CPAS, Forem, etc.) and business partners. This training is split into different modules allowing everyone, according to their profile and objectives, to find training leading to recognised certification. Among the potential beneficiaries are people wanting to improve in a particular area, young people enrolled in normal secondary or higher education, people wanting to acquire new skills for their personal enrichment, teachers, workers wanting to change profession, and skilled or unskilled jobseekers. For the latter, the training is free.

The 2014 Walloon register of training intended for jobseekers indicates that there were 91 741 places available, which represents nearly 55 % of the training offer in Wallonia in 2014.

The share of the adjusted budget of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation for EPS has increased by 36 % in nominal terms, from EUR 143 803 000 in 2006 to EUR 195 188 000 in 2014. The European Social Fund (ESF) contributed EUR 6 000 000 per year over the 2006-2014 period. For 2015, the budget for EPS will be EUR 194 967 000.

2.4 Flemish Region

Vocational training in Flanders is the responsibility of the Work and Social Economics (Werk en sociale economie – WSE) department, and more specifically two external privatised agencies (Extern Verzelfstandigde Agentschappen – EVA) governed by public law: VDAB and Syntra. Disabled people can receive vocational training through the Geïntegreerde beroepsopleidingen voor personen met een handicap (GOP), which provide vocational training for persons with disabilities.

I. Flemish Employment and Vocational Training (Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding - VDAB)

Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding or VDAB is a Flemish public service active in Flanders and Brussels that aims to help people improve their career plan, obtain more qualifications and find a job. It also helps businesses to recruit and train their employees and provides support to any participant in the labour market in Flanders, while also managing and disseminating information. In addition to these employment tasks, VDAB is responsible for providing training to the unemployed in general, to the self-employed and SMEs (Kmo-portefeuille or SME portfolio), and to employees (Opleidingscheques voor werknemers or training cheque).

For the unemployed, this involves individual vocational training (Individuele beroepsopleiding – IBO) for one to six months. In order to be eligible, they must be registered as jobseekers with the VDAB, they must not have left their previous job to pursue training, and they must not have worked for the business in which the training is carried out. In 2013, 13 012 individual training courses were delivered.

II. Flemish Agency for Entrepreneurial Training (Vlaams Agentschap voor Ondernemersvorming - Syntra Vlaanderen, Syntra)

The Flemish Agency for Entrepreneurial Training (Syntra or Vlaams Agentschap voor Ondernemersvorming - Syntra Vlaanderen) is responsible for work-linked training (of one to three years) and for self-employment preparation training (two to three years). Syntra therefore offers over 500 daytime and evening training courses in 28 different sectors. Syntra is also supported by Kenniscentrum Ondernemersvorming, which aims to promote entrepreneurship through training.

In 2013, the Syntra budgets for the various regional sections were EUR 550 000 for 'Syntra-AB' (Anvers and Flemish Brabant), EUR 350 000 for 'Syntra Brussel' (Brussels), EUR 450 000 for 'Syntra Midden-Vlaanderen' (East Flanders and Flemish Brabant), EUR 550 000 for 'Syntra Limburg' (Limbourg) and EUR 600 000 for 'Syntra West' (West Flanders), i.e. a total of EUR 2 500 000.

III. Specialised counselling and provision for persons with disabilities (Gespecialiseerde trajectbegeleiding en bepaling van personen met een arbeidshandicap - GTP)

Disabled people can contact GTP, which will assist with their employment. In order to receive vocational training, they can then join the integrated vocational training for persons with disabilities (geïntegreerde beroepsopleidingen voor personen met een handicap - GOP), which provides vocational training for persons with disabilities and, which is answerable to the VDAB. The budget for the years 2007-2013 was EUR 131 310 000.

For the VDAB training, the European Social Fund (ESF) has contributed EUR 3 000 000 out of a total of EUR 6 600 000 (i.e. 45 %) per year. For the GOPs, the ESF contributed EUR 64 550 000 over the 2007-2013 period.

2.5 German-speaking Community

Vocational Training in the German-speaking Community is organised in the same way as in the other two communities. The Labour Office of the German language Term Community (Arbeitsamt der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft - ADG) is the body responsible for providing vocational training to workers and jobseekers in the German-speaking area.

Table 6 shows, on an annual basis, the number of jobseekers following a vocational training via ADG and the proportion of over 25-year-olds. In 2013, the number of beneficiaries was 1 012, of which 71.1 % were over the age of 25.

Table 6. Trend in the number of jobseekers benefiting from training and proportion (%) of over 25-year-olds over the 2010-2014 period

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Jobseekers	1,030	1,002	984	1,012	1,032
Proportion of over-25s	65.7%	60.9%	66.1%	71.1%	n/a

Sources: Arbeitsamt der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft

The budget from the German-speaking Community for ADG was EUR 5 713 000 in 2013 and the ADG expenditure related to vocational training are amount to EUR 1 704 603 in 2013 (including EUR 323 000 from the European Social Fund).

3 Most significant practice: case study box

Country: Belgium
Name of training programme: Socioprofessional Integration Bodies (Organismes d'Insertion Socioprofessionnel -

OISP) in the Walloon Region and in the Brussels-Capital Region.

Short description and aims of the training programme:

Assists with the professional integration of adult trainees through the acquisition of general skills via a range of training courses.

Number of participants/places:

The 2014 Walloon register of services intended for jobseekers indicates that the number of places available through socioprofessional integration bodies (OISP) and on-the-job training enterprises (EFT) was 13 225 places for 2014 as a whole.

For the Brussels-Capital Region, the number of beneficiary jobseekers in 2013 was 4 465, whilst the proportion of over 25-year-olds was 77 %.

Target group or educational level targeted:

Unoccupied and low-skilled jobseekers who are registered with Forem or Actiris, who are beyond their period of compulsory schooling and who have a lower secondary education certificate at most.

Duration of programme for the beneficiary:

As a general rule, the training courses last six months, but this is not set in stone. It will depend on the type of training pursued and the trainee's personal development.

Eligibility criteria:

In the Walloon Region, trainees must meet at least one of the following conditions:

- i. have been registered with Forem as unoccupied jobseekers for at least 24 months;
- ii. are jobseekers re-entering the world of work;
- iii. are foreign nationals legally residing in Belgian territory.

For the Brussels-Capital Region, training is offered to anyone who does not have a higher secondary education certificate.

Funding source and total budget:

In the Walloon Region, the amount of the OISP operating subsidies has been set at EUR 39 754 000 for 2015. The amount of the subsidies allocated to approved CPASs is EUR 2 240 000 for 2015.

The amount of subsidies in COCOF's budget for funding the basic teams of OISPs to be approved is EUR 6 518 000 for 2015. OISPs may also benefit from subsidies totalling EUR 2 420 000 under partnership agreements with Bruxelles Formation, with these subsidies being shared with other bodies such as the the Social Advancement Training Body (Enseignement de Promotion Sociale) and vocational funds.

Types of skills delivered and actors involved in the provision of training:

Six training actions are currently recognised: literacy; basic training; pre-training (or training in work requirements); skills training, which are the prerogative of training providers; on-the-job training; and, career guidance, which are reserved respectively for on-the-job training workshops and access points for employment and social services.

Reference:

Walloon OISPs are regulated by the Decree of 1 April 2004 on the approval and

subsidisation of socioprofessional integration bodies and on-the-job training enterprises. Brussels OISPs are regulated by the Decree of 27 April 1995 on the approval of certain socioprofessional integration bodies.

4 Conclusion

Vocational training measures are a very important tool for combating unemployment. They are all the more essential in the economic context of the Walloon Region and the Brussels-Capital Region, which both have a particularly high unemployment rate. The current situation of structural unemployment indicates that demand for jobs is higher than the supply of jobs. This mismatch increases competition between jobseekers, with the low-skilled being particularly badly affected. It is mainly to combat this situation that the use of vocational training has increased markedly. Both in Wallonia and Brussels, it is clear that the regional vocational training bodies and their partners have seen a rise in the number of vocational training beneficiaries and that associated costs have also tended to increase in recent years, with the economic crisis having led to a rise in the number of jobseekers. However, the increased offer of vocational training does not allow the actual impact of this training on employment to be effectively measured. Moreover, the public authorities tend to adopt a 'job-analysis' approach (Agulhon, 2010; Bruyère & Lemistre, 2010) to vocational training and its relationship with employment. This approach assumes that specific training delivers a number of specialised skills needed for a very specific job. In this respect, the public authorities are pushing jobseekers to acquire these skills. The exemption measures for jobseekers who pursue training, and the identification of critical jobs by regional employment services, are good examples of this. Various assessment reports either confirm or reject the validity of this type of approach.

In 2013 ONEM conducted a national study aimed at assessing the effectiveness of a number of training and activation measures that fell, at least partially, under its responsibility. The effectiveness of each type of exemption was measured in this study by comparing, for a target group and a control group, their respective probability of still being unemployed one year after the end of the training (giving entitlement to the exemption) pursued by members of the target group. The target group consisted of people whose training period ended during the second half of 2010. The control group consisted of jobseekers not having benefited from the exemptions, but with the same profile as members of the target group (region, age, period of unemployment, education level, etc.). For each type of exemption, the study shows a positive impact on exit from unemployment: for all the measures, the proportion of jobseekers after one year was lower in the target group than in the control group, as shown by Table 7, which indicates, for each type of exemption, the proportion of jobseekers in the target group and in the control group 12 months after the baseline observation. However, the net effect is better for some measures than for others. The ratio between the proportion of jobseekers in the target group and that in the control group (see Table 7) effectively shows that the exemption to pursue individual vocational training, the exemption to return to education leading to occupations in which there is a shortage of labour, and the exemption to pursue self-employment training seem to be the most effective measures¹⁷ These are followed by the exemption to return to full-time education, the exemption to pursue group vocational training, and the exemption to return to other education or training.

¹⁷ With regard to individual vocational training, this finding is, however, tempered by the fact that the result is heavily influenced by the employer's obligation to employ the trainee after the training, for a period corresponding to at least the period of the vocational training.

Table 7. Proportion of jobseekers in the target group and in the control group 12 months after the baseline observation (second half of 2010)

	Groupe-cible (1)	Groupe de contrôle (2)	Ratio (2)/(1)
Individual vocational training	16.4%	37.9%	2.3
Resumption of education leading to occupations with labour shortage	28.0%	44.2%	1.58
Self-employment training	32.8%	51.8%	1.58
Resumption of full-time education	33.6%	44.1%	1.31
Group vocational training	37.0%	47.2%	1.28
Resumption of other education or training	43.0%	50.9%	1.18

Source: ONEM (2013), page 60.

The study also looked at the nature of the exit from unemployment (to an 'ordinary job' versus to a 'subsidised job'): with regard to the exemptions to return to education leading to occupations in which there is a shortage of labour and to return to full-time education, the net effect is a higher probability of exit to an 'ordinary job'. However, as regards the two types of exemption for vocational training (exemption to pursue individual vocational training and exemption to pursue group vocational training), they appear to act as a springboard to a subsidised job.

At regional level, we can refer to two studies, one more quantitative and the other more qualitative. First there is the 'Ulysse' report which is the main assessment of vocational training conducted by Bruxelles Formation. It studies the progress of trainees for 12 months after they complete skills training. The 2014 report shows that, after 12 months, the employment rate of trainees having completed their training in 2012 was 59.1 %. Among those trainees in employment, it is clear that permanent contracts accounted for the highest proportion at 55.6 %, although this figure was down on 2013 to the benefit of more precarious types of contract, such as fixed-term and temporary contracts. It also shows that, in 55.6 % of cases, there is a specific link between the first job and the training pursued, whereas 25.9 % of first jobs have no link with the training pursued. Second there is a qualitative study by De Rick and De Cuyper (2014). They conducted a telephone survey of 1 307 people who had completed a VDAB training as jobseeker six months before. They concluded that the most crucial element is the practical character of the training because on the one hand it reduces the gap between what is learned during the training and what is needed for the job and secondly it reduces the chances that the job seekers look for jobs not linked to the training provided. An internship during the training also makes a difference because it improves not only the effects of the training, but also the job search process. Finally, support to job search (information on the benefits of employment, information on the possible positions and jobs, help in applying and contacting the employers) must necessarily complete the training for those who need it.

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Annex 1: Measure Description Table

Main training programmes in BELGIUM

Name of training programme	LMP measure: the name and number of the relevant LMP measure, based on the list of LMP measures in the qualitative LMP report (if possible to attribute the training programme to the LMP measure)	Short description and aims of the training programme: e.g. basic skills(literacy, numeracy, ICT, other skills); general work experience and employability skills; initial vocational training oriented to a specific job; continuing training to up/re-skill in own occupation/sector; validation of prior learning and experience; tertiary education; preparation to start own business, etc.	No. of participants	Duration of programme for the beneficiary (and amount of subsidy, if applicable)	Target group or educational level targeted	Criteria for accessing the programme	Funding source and total budget	Types of skills (or qualification if relevant) delivered	Actors involved in training provision and their role	Evaluation results available (here, please provide detail on the method used, on the coverage, and on the evaluation findings)	If no evaluation is available, what is the expert's assessment of the impact of the measure?
Individuele beroepsopleiding (IBO)	2.1 Institutional training	Individual vocational training aims to improve general work experience and employability skills	13 012 (2013)	1 to 6 months	Unemployed	Registered as jobseekers + not have left their previous job to pursue training + not have worked for the business in which the training is carried out	Flemish region	Employability skills	VDAB: Flemish public service responsible for providing training to the unemployed	Telephone survey of 1 307 people who had completed a VDAB training as jobseeker 6 months before ¹⁸ Findings: importance of the practical character of the training, an internship and a support to job search	/
Plan Mobilisateur TIC (PMTIC)	2.1 Institutional training	To raise awareness of the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)	/	/	Unoccupied jobseekers, recipients of the social integration income or social assistance, unemployed jobseekers receiving benefits	Do not have a higher secondary education certificate or equivalent qualification; Unemployed for at least 12 months. People who are re-entering the labour market after at least 12 months. People who are over the age of 40, without any qualification conditions. Foreign nationals legally residing in Belgian territory	Walloon Region EUR 1 500 000 (2015)	ICT skills	Training providers with agreement of the Walloon Region	/	/

¹⁸ De Rick and De Cuyper (2014)

Bruxelles Formation	/	Vocational training aims to improve general work experience and employability skills	7 964 (2013)	/	Unemployed and workers	Registered for at least a year with Actiris (Brussels Employment Office) + jobseekers requiring socioprofessional integration + jobseekers registered with Actiris who receive the social integration income or social assistance + jobseekers registered with Actiris and with the Fund for the Social and Professional Integration of Disabled People	COCOF EUR 38 880 000 (2014)	Employability skills	Bruxelles Formation + Training providers with agreement of the COCOF	'Ulysse' report : assessment of vocational training conducted by Bruxelles Formation Findings : after 12 months, the employment rate of trainees having completed their training in 2012 was 59.1%	/
Measures specifically targeting the low-skilled											
Socioprofession-al Integration Bodies (OISP)	2.2 Workplace training	Assist with the professional integration of adult trainees through the acquisition of general skills	13 225 in Walloon Region (2014) 4 465 in Brussels-Capital Region (2013)	At least 6 months	Unoccupied and low-skilled jobseekers who are registered with Forem or Actiris, who are beyond their period of compulsory schooling and who have a lower secondary education certificate at most	Walloon Region: be registered with Forem as unoccupied jobseekers for at least 24 months; jobseekers re-entering the world of work; foreign nationals legally residing in Belgian territory Brussels-Capital Region: offered to anyone without a higher secondary education certificate	Walloon Region EUR 39 754 000 (2015) COCOF EUR 6 518 000	Employability skills	Training providers with agreement of the Walloon Region and the COCOF (for Brussels-Capital Region)	/	/

6 Annex 2

Table 8. Total number of jobseekers receiving ONEM benefits who were exempted from seeking employment due to training in 2014 (in physical units and proportion (%))

	Brussels	Flanders	Wallonia	Belgium
Exemption to pursue vocational training	1,999.3	13,189.7	12,998.1	28,187.1
< 25 years	12.3%	21.0%	21.1%	20.4%
> 25 years	87.7%	79.0%	78.9%	79.6%
Exemption to return to full-time education	672.7	1,849.0	1,721.8	4,243.4
< 25 years	11.4%	19.8%	22.2%	19.5%
> 25 years	88.6%	80.2%	77.8%	80.5%
Exemption to pursue self-employment training	113.7	124.0	539.6	777.3
< 25 years	15.6%	18.1%	25.3%	22.7%
> 25 years	84.4%	81.9%	74.7%	77.3%
Exemption to return to other education or training	890.2	2,138.9	4,241.7	7,270.8
< 25 years	10.5%	14.6%	19.7%	17.1%
> 25 years	89.5%	85.4%	80.3%	82.9%
Training allowance	106.4	1,642.7	656.9	2,406.0
< 25 years	48.8%	78.8%	79.8%	77.7%
> 25 years	51.2%	21.2%	20.2%	22.3%
TOTAL	3,782.2	18,944.2	20,158.1	42,884.6
< 25 years	12.8%	25.2%	22.9%	23.0%
> 25 years	87.2%	74.8%	77.1%	77.0%

Source: ONEM

Table 9. Total amount of ONEM benefits received by jobseekers who were exempted from seeking employment due to training in 2014 (in millions euros and proportion (%))

	Brussels	Flanders	Wallonia	Belgium
Exemption to pursue vocational training	22.1	153.2	134.6	310.0
< 25 years	8.9%	16.3%	14.9%	15.2%
> 25 years	91.1%	83.7%	85.1%	84.8%
Exemption to return to full-time education	7.1	19.4	17.0	43.5

< 25 years	9.8%	17.9%	18.6%	16.9%
> 25 years	90.2%	82.1%	81.4%	83.1%
Exemption to pursue self-employment training	1.1	1.1	4.9	7.1
< 25 years	12.6%	13.7%	21.0%	18.5%
> 25 years	87.4%	86.3%	79.0%	81.5%
Exemption to return to other education or training	9.4	21.1	41.9	72.4
< 25 years	8.3%	10.6%	15.4%	13.0%
> 25 years	91.7%	89.4%	84.6%	87.0%
Training allowance	0.6	7.4	3.0	11.0
< 25 years	44.0%	74.4%	74.6%	72.8%
> 25 years	56.0%	25.6%	25.4%	27.2%
TOTAL	40.3	202.2	201.4	443.9
< 25 years	9.5%	18.0%	16.4%	16.5%
> 25 years	90.5%	82.0%	83.6%	83.5%

Source: ONEM

Table 10. Total number of jobseekers receiving CPAS benefits who were exempted from seeking employment due to training in 2014 (in units and proportion (%))

	Bruxelles	Flandre	Wallonie	Belgique
PIIS 'Full-time education'	5,979	4,297	10,424	20,700
< 25 years	89.0%	92.8%	90.8%	90.7%
> 25 years	11.0%	7.2%	9.2%	9.3%
PIIS 'Training'	140	304	1,606	2,050
< 25 years	87.1%	44.1%	41.8%	45.2%
> 25 years	12.9%	55.9%	58.2%	54.8%
TOTAL	6,119	4,601	12,030	22,750
< 25 years	88.9%	89.5%	84.3%	86.6%
> 25 years	11.1%	10.5%	15.7%	13.4%

Source: SPP Intégration sociale

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