

3.1 General context

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previous page

[< 3. Employment & Entrepreneurship](#)

- [Up](#)
- [3.2 Administration and governance >](#)

On this page

1.

[Labour market situation in the country](#)

2.

[Main concepts](#)

Labour market situation in the country

Walloon Region

The Wallon Region is a relatively [small economy](#) in which non-profit sector takes an important place. Non profit sector is an important job supplier in Wallonia (administration, education, health or social action). As this sector is subsidised, employment is less sensitive to short-term changes.

But Wallonia has also the characteristics of an entrepreneurial and dynamic labour market: there is a strong entrepreneurship dynamic and the proportion of small and medium enterprises is large.

The labour market situation is analysed via [3 indicators](#):

- The activity rate for people of 15-24 years old was 27.3% in 2015 and 28.1% in 2014 ;
- The employment rate for people of 15-24 years old was 18.5% in 2015 and 19.0% in 2014 ;
- The unemployment rate for people of 15-24 years old was 32.2% in 2015 and 32.1% in 2014.

The unemployment rate regarding young people living in Wallonia stays high even if unemployment of young Walloons has [decreased](#) since 2013 due to:

- Favourable economic climate in 2014 and 2015
- Recovery of temporary activity: the sector of temporary work hires a lot of young people
- The number of young people aged under 25 years old registered as job seeker tends to decrease these past few years. This would express a later arrival on the labour market
- Young people (and specifically low qualified youngsters) are targeted as a priority by employment public services (Actiris and Forem). Young people receive individual support and guidance. In the framework

of the youth Guarantee, employment public service has for objective to support young people as fast as possible after they leave school

- Young people which are out of the statistics (not registered as job seekers, etc.)
- Impact of recent legislation changes. A part of young unemployed people are no longer eligible for benefits because of legislation modification. Therefore, they don't register in Employment Agency (Forem). There is a risk that these youngsters disappear from the statistics.

Region of Brussels-Capital

The Region of Brussels-Capital has a small, dynamic and strong labour market. The service sector represents more than 90% of the employment. Many services, including administrations (European, Federal, Regional) and headquarters of Belgian and foreign enterprises are located in Brussels.

Main concepts

In Belgium, the working age population is between 15 and 64 years old.

Youth employment lies within the general employment policy. There is no national definition of youth employment. The employment public service "Forem" considers youth population aged under 25 as a target group for statistics. Measures targeting young people in order to increase youth employment affect young people under 30 years old at most.

However, as every worker is protected by labour laws, specific rules aimed at protecting young workers exist. These rules appear in the [Labour Law](#) and the [Law related to well-being at work](#).

In Belgium, Law allows a person to work from the age of 15 years old. The Labour Law defines « young workers» as workers aged between 15 and 18 years old (this limit can be extended to 21 in some cases) who are not subject to compulsory full-time schooling anymore.

For information:

- Full-time schooling is compulsory up to the age of 15 and consists of maximum 7 years of elementary school and the two first years of secondary school.
- Part-time schooling is compulsory until the age of 18.

Young workers are allowed to work 8 hours a day at most and 40 hours a week.

"Young workers" as understood by the Labour Law can work, volunteer or do an internship on condition that specific protective measures affecting their security, well-being and occupational medicine are taken. These measures are more strict than the one applicable to average workers and are ruled by the Law related to well-being at work.