



Youth Wiki national description

Youth policies in Belgium (French Community)

2021

The Youth Wiki is Europe's online encyclopaedia in the area of national youth policies. The platform is a comprehensive database of national structures, policies and actions supporting young people. For the updated version of this national description, please visit <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki>

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Belgium (French Community)

Youth Policy in Belgium (French Community)

Youth policy is a competence of the (three) Communities in Belgium which are federate entities in Belgium related to the language spoken on different parts of the territory. Youth policies are multiple and are not coordinated. For example, there isn't one univocal definition of youth in the French-speaking Community, as in Belgium. For example, policies defined at the Community level do not always target the same audience: the Youth Organizations ("organisations de jeunesse") concern young people below 30 years old, the Afterschool classes ("écoles de devoirs") are dedicated for children aged between 6 and 18 years old (15 years old to obtain grants), etc. At the Community level, we have to mention at least five other important competencies concerning young people that are embodied by other ministers: Childhood, Education, superior Education, Youth Welfare and Children's rights. Moreover, other levels of power are concerned with youth issues. At the regional level, we can especially mention departments such as employment, mobility, sport, etc. The Youth Department is responsible for implementing the youth non formal education policy of the French-speaking Community. The main purpose is to stimulate young people's active and collective participation by the learning of a responsible, active, critical and united citizenship.

1. YOUTH POLICY GOVERNANCE

Youth policy is a competence of the (three) Communities in Belgium which are federate entities in Belgium related to the language spoken on different parts of the territory. Youth policy affects youth non formal education policy and is part of the cultural policy of the French-speaking Community.

The main purpose of youth policy is to stimulate young people's active and collective participation by the learning of a responsible, active, critical and united citizenship. In order to foster this participation, the public administration through the Youth Department, recognises and grants youth organisations and youth centres mainly.

1.1 Target population of youth policy

There is **no unequivocal understanding** of young people in the French community of Belgium. There are many different conceptions due to the variety of sectors and Decrees that bear on the youth policy field.

Youth policies focus on the promotion of participation of young people by developing a responsible, active and critical citizenship, in a spirit of solidarity. This is implemented through youth associations working with and for young people. There are different kinds of youth associations with their own actions and objectives, working with different aged groups of young people.

With this in mind, **3 to 30** years old is the most commonly adopted age range. People aged:

- between 12 and 26 years old are the main target group for Youth Centres and Youth Information Centres according to the [Decree of 20 July 2000](#);
- between 3 and 30 years old are focused by Youth Organisations as stated in the [Decree of 26 March 2009](#);

- under 30 years old are defined as “young people” by the Youth Council as stated in the [Decree of 14 November 2008](#);
- between 13 and 35 years old are eligible for international mobility programmes organised by the International Youth Office. This is a one-stop service for young people who would like to receive support to realise a project abroad.

Some policies are **at the intersection of youth and childhood sector**:

- Homework schools are dedicated to children and youngsters aged 6 – 15. They provide after-school spaces and activities to support school work, to promote social integration and to carry out socio-cultural projects according to the [Decree of 28 April 2004](#);
- Holiday centres welcome kids from 30 months to 15 years old. Their mission is to contribute to the supervision, the education and the full development of children during school holidays according to the [Decree of 17 May 1999](#).

Others policy fields

Young people are allowed to vote from the age of 18 years old in Belgium according to a federal law.

Compulsory full-time schooling is up to the age of 15 years old.

Compulsory part-time schooling is until the age of 18 years old. In this case, young people can share their time between work and school when they turn 15.

Youth Welfare policies define young people as aged under 18 years old according to the [Decree of 4 Mars 1991](#). Youth Welfare can address young people aged until 20 years old when the aid is requested before the youngster turns 18.

The inventory of childhood and youth in the French-speaking Community 2016-2017 ([état des lieux de l'enfance et de la jeunesse en Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles 2016-2017](#)) offers complete information about the rights, duties and participation opportunities of young people (with ages) in the French-speaking Community.

1.2 National youth law

Existence of a National Youth Law

There is no National Youth Law and there is no public discussion about the need for a single law.

However, there are **5 Decrees** that concern youth policy implementation at the community level.

3 of them are completely managed by the Youth Department:

1. Youth Centres, Youth Hostels and Youth Information Centres are ruled by the decree “décret déterminant les conditions d’agrément et de subventionnement des maisons de jeunes, centres de rencontres et d’hébergement et centres d’information des jeunes et de leurs fédérations” ([Decree of 20 July 2000, revised in 2004 and 2008, which defines the general missions and the specific procedures to recognize and fund Youth Centres, Youth Hostels, Youth Information Centres and their Federations](#));
2. Youth Organisations are ruled by the decree “décret fixant les conditions d’agrément et d’octroi de subventions aux Organisations de Jeunesse” ([Decree of 26 March 2009 which defines specific procedures to recognise and fund youth organisations](#));
3. The Youth Council is ruled by the decree “[Décret instaurant le Conseil de la Jeunesse en Communauté française](#)” (Decree of 14 November 2008, revised in 2013, establishing the Youth Council in the French-speaking Community). This Decree concern the implementation of an independent association working on youth participation.

2 Decrees are at the intersection of Youth and Childhood sector:

4. Homework Schools are ruled by the decree "[décret relatif à la reconnaissance et au soutien des écoles de devoirs](#)" (Decree of 28 April 2004 related to the recognition and the support of Homework Schools);

5. Holidays Centres are ruled by the decree "Décret relatif aux centres de vacances" (Decree of 17 May 1999 related to the Holiday Centres). The Youth Department is in charge of the training section of the Decree.

Scope and contents

The 5 decrees organise and rule:

- the field of actions of every type of youth structure;
- the conditions to be recognised as a youth structure;
- the conditions to receive public support;
- the role of the Advisory Commissions;
- the schedule and framework in which the evaluation of the decrees takes place.

Revisions/updates

The Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth Welfare is charged to coordinate the evaluation of the decrees related to youth organisations and to youth centres (see section 1.4 youth-policy decision-making).

The [evaluation of the decree relatd to Youth Centres](#) and the [evaluation of the decree related to youth organisations](#) have been published in March 2017.

1.3 National youth strategy

Existence of a National Youth Strategy

No national Youth Strategy exists at the moment.

For the period 2019-2024, the Government has pointed out its priorities in the field of youth in the [Community's political declaration](#). This plan gives the Government's guidelines for various sectors affecting young people : education, youth work policy, youth welfare policy, sport and culture.

The Government is agreed on the need to step up measures aimed at younger generations through a "0-25 Child and Youth Plan". It aims at strengthen investments in children and youth affected by the pandemic. See [1.9 Current debates and reforms](#).

A Youth Strategy, "[Plan Jeunesse 12-25](#)" (Youth Plan 12-25) was discussed from 2010 to 2013 by the former Government of the French-Speaking Community. It is currently an unfinished project that aimed to:

- implement a global approach for youth policies in the French Community;
- foster cooperation between Ministers dealing with youth (Education, Employment, Sports, etc.).

Although the process was really interesting for participants and helped to create a global vision on youth policy, it didn't lead to the implementation of a National Youth Strategy.

Scope and contents

The priorities in the field of youth as pointed out in the political declaration 2019-2024 are the following:

- implementing an interministerial conference in order to further take into account young people in every policies;
- strengthening synergies between departments of the French-speaking Community;
- maintaining services and loan of scouting movements material (tents);
- make durable the confidence granted to youth associations in order to maintain youth work, citizenship and participation through non formal education;
- ensure youth participation in decision-making through youth work;
- Concrétiser les ajustements identifiés dans les évaluations des décrets « organisations de jeunesse » et « centres de jeunes » réalisées sous la précédente législature, avec notamment pour objectif la simplification administrative;
- supporting "non-organised" young people's projects and ensuring that "non-organised" youth is represented in the dialogue between decision-makers and the youth sector;
- fostering youth and senior projects;
- supporting the implementation of the Youth Forum.

Responsible authority for the implementation of the Youth Strategy

The responsible authority for the implementation of youth part of the Community's political declaration 2019-2024 is the Youth Minister.

Revisions/updates

There are no revisions or updates.

1.4 Youth policy decision-making

Structure of Decision-making

The institutional structure of Belgium shapes decision-making. 3 levels of competences co-exist:

- Federal level (social security, foreign affairs, defense, finance)
- Regional level (territory-related competences like economy, environment) and
- Community level (person-related competences such as culture, education or sports).

Youth policies take place at the Community-wide level.

The competences managed by the **French-Speaking Community** are:

- Culture

Youth policy is administratively included in the cultural sector but has a distinct Minister. Therefore, there is a Minister of Culture and a Minister of Youth.

- Education
- Youth welfare

Youth Welfare is a distinct sector within the French-Speaking Community. It has its own Minister and its own decrees. It focuses on the protection of minors in need and the support to their families.

- Sports
- Research and training
- Justice houses

Regional's competences include employment, health, social inclusion. Those policies affect the entire population including young people.

The **Federal level** establishes a legal frame of reference for voluntary activities in Belgium.

At the local level, municipalities are free to have a youth department and to implement their own youth policy. There is no legal framework to coordinate or organise the actions at the local level regarding youth. The Minister of Youth does not have any authority regarding youth policy lead at the local level.

However, the Minister of Youth has launched a call for projects in 2016 to articulate the youth policy at community level with the youth policy at the local level. It aims at offering a methodological support to municipalities in order to foster participative youth local policies.

Main actors

The main authority for youth policies-making is the [Minister for Youth](#) placed within the French-Speaking Community. It is responsible for youth work policy.

The [Youth Department](#) is the central public administration which is responsible for the implementation of the youth cultural policy by applying decrees. The Youth Department works closely with youth associations by providing them financial, institutional and training support.

According to the [Council of Europe peer review](#), "one particularity in the field of youth policy is its strong ethos of subsidiarity. Non-profit associations are the main service providers at the local level. The autonomous status of associations is indicative of their potential flexibility. Municipalities may implement youth policy priorities in various ways. This autonomy allows responses to local specificities. In this context, the national youth policy doesn't address specific target groups in the youth population. Associations are free to focus their action on specific target group".

There are two main types of **youth structures** approved by decree:

- [Youth Centres](#) are associations active on the local level and work with young people on temporary projects. The 222 associations are grouped into 3 categories:
 1. Youth Clubs (166): these associations host young people during out of school or non-work-related activities. They implement activities in a democratic way, co-decided by and for young people.
 2. Youth Hostels (27): they have the facilities to provide full accommodation for a minimum of 50 young people. They also organise short residential activities for individuals or groups;
 3. Youth Information Centres (29): they answer directly to questions raised by young people and they analyse and raise awareness about the issues and conditions of young people's life. Youth Centres are ruled by the [decree](#) of 20 July 2000, revised in 2004 and 2008, which defines the general missions and the specific procedures to recognise and fund associations that are active at the local level.
- [Youth Organisations](#) are associations active at the Community-wide level working with young people invested for a long-term period. All the modes of actions are decided "by and for" young people. The 108 OJ are grouped into 5 categories:
 1. Thematic Movements (14): volunteers analysing social issues and raising awareness on citizens' questions such as branches of trade unions, political parties, etc.;

2. Youth Movement (5) are composed of local groups of children and young people engaged in activities and animation projects such as camps, supervised by voluntary youth leaders (such as scouting movements);
3. Youth Services (68): contributing to the development of young people's sense of responsibility, through several actions such as animation, socio-cultural expression awareness raising, training, information, meetings and residential activities or international mobility;
4. Federations of Youth Centres (9);
5. Federations of Youth Organisations (5) which provide their members with technical and educational support such as training, coordination, networking, information and representation. Youth Organisations are structured by the [decree](#) of 26 March 2009 which defines the general tasks and specific procedures to recognise and fund associations active at the Community level.

Youth sector also includes the coordinating structures of the "Homework schools" ([écoles de devoirs](#)) which are homework support initiatives and "**Holidays Centres**" (Centres de vacances) which contribute to the supervision, the education and the full development of children during school holidays. There is an important role given to **Advisory Bodies**. The Minister for Youth and the Youth Department conduct regular dialogue and consultation with official representative bodies:

- La Commission Consultative des Organisations de Jeunesse – CCOJ (Advisory Commission of the Youth Organisations);
- La Commission Consultative des Maisons et Centres de Jeunes – CCMCJ (Advisory Commission of the Youth Centres and Youth Clubs);
- Le Conseil de la Jeunesse de la Communauté Française – CJCF (The French-Speaking Community's Youth Council).

The Minister is also assisted by two cross-disciplinary institutions:

- The [Observatory for Children, Youth and Youth Welfare](#) (see section [1.6 Evidence-based youth policy](#));
- The [General Delegate of the Rights of Children](#): his role is to ensure the protection of the Rights of Child mainly by referring to the International Convention of the rights of Children of 20 November 1989.

Main Themes

Youth policies are included in the **cultural sector**. Thus, youth policy focuses mainly on youth participation and expression. The main goal is "to promote individual and collective participation of young people by developing a responsible, active and critical citizenship, in a spirit of solidarity".

Youth associations are dedicated to promoting the development of critical, active and responsible citizenship (CRAC). They do so by raising awareness about social realities and by promoting responsible attitudes through social, economic, cultural and political participation and socio-cultural practice.

Regular consultation between youth authorities and youth actor's representatives is conducted.

The advisory Commission of the Youth Organisations meets at least 6 times a year. The advisory Commission of the Youth Centres and Youth Clubs meets at least 4 times a year. They issue notice out of own initiative or on the request of the authorities on policies affecting young people. Activity reports for the period of 2009-2013 are published on the website of the administration.

Youth policies address the following policy areas of the EU Youth Strategy:

1. Training;
2. Participation;
3. Voluntary activities;
4. Creativity and Culture;
5. Youth and the world.

The National Agency for Youth

There is no National Agency for Youth except for the "[Bureau International de la Jeunesse – BIJ](#)" (International Youth Office) which focuses on international matters for young people.

International Youth Office is a French-Speaking Community's service created and co-managed since 1995 by the General Administration for Culture and Wallonia Brussels International (WBI). The office is a one-stop service for young people who would like to **receive support to realise a project abroad**. It is also a space for reflexion and consultation on youth policy in the international arena.

Its main mission is to give all young people between **13 and 35 years old**, living in Wallonia or Brussels, the possibility to gain some experience of mobility, especially those who have fewer opportunities regardless of cultural, economic or social factors. The BIJ develops a proximity strategy with its audience and particularly with disadvantaged young people through three activities:

- an individual support within its *Espace Infos Mobilité* (Information and Mobility Space) where young people can receive information and counselling;
- through regular meetings and contacts with various project leaders all along their projects elaboration;
- through the organisation of awareness/information action to promote the disadvantaged young's participation to programme action, in collaboration with a range of specific associations (dynamo international, promo jeunes, solidarité...).

Wallonia Brussels International funds most part of the mobility programmes (1 081 000 euros in 2014) except for the "[Bel'J programme](#)" which is funded by the French-Speaking Community (15 000 euros in 2014).

The BIJ receives as well funds from the European Union for the implementation of the Youth section of the Erasmus + programme.

The [balance sheet for 2020](#) is available on the Agency's website.

Policy monitoring and evaluation

Youth policies

The Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth Welfare is charged to coordinate the evaluation of the decrees related to youth organisations and to youth centres as demanded in the decree of 12 May 2004 creating the Observatory and in the decrees related to youth organisations and related to youth centres. The Observatory published 2 evaluations in October 2017:

- the [evaluation](#) of the decree of 20 July 2000 related to youth centres;
- the [evaluation](#) of the decree of 26 March 2009 related to youth organisations.

The evaluation of the decree of 26 March 2009 related to the Youth Organisations is made every four years with the support of the Youth Organisations Advisory Body (CCOJ).

The evaluation of the decree of 20 July 2000 related to Youth Centres, the government is in charge of the evaluation every 5 years. However, the government assigns the

Observatory to manage the evaluation with the help of the Youth Centres Advisory Commission (CCMCJ).

These evaluations aim at improving the relation between the legal framework and youth work realities and at avoiding the institutionalisation of some negative effects according to the Observatory. In order to realise a participative evaluation, the Observatory created a steering group composed of representatives of the Ministry, representatives of the Minister of Youth and 9 representatives of the Advisory Commissions (the Youth Organisation Advisory Commission for the decree related to youth organisations and the Youth Centres Advisory Commission for the decree related to Youth Centres).

The Observatory based the evaluation on several sources: literature, administrative data, quantitative survey and "focus groups".

The Observatory is also charged of the external evaluation of the "Decree of 14 November 2008 creating the Youth Council of the French-Speaking Community". It collaborates with the Observatory of Cultural Policies. This work will be sent for information to the Government on the 31st of December 2017.

Voluntary activities policies

The Federal Ministry of social affairs and health charged the High Council of volunteers to evaluate the Law 2005 related to volunteer's rights. (More detailed information in 2.9 Current debates and reforms).

Employment policies

"Le Conseil supérieur de l'emploi" (the Employment High Council) is the advisory body of the "Federal Public Service Employment, Work and Social Dialogue". The Federal Minister of Employment chairs the Council. The body analyses the effects of employment policy, the situation of the labour market in Belgium and issue notices about employment.

1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries

Mechanisms and actors

There is **no legally based cross-sectorial approach** between the youth cultural sector and other sectors.

However, The Minister of Youth has highlighted in the Strategic direction notice 2014-2019 the ambition to foster an inter-ministerial collaboration aiming at maximizing the potential of youth policy.

At the initiative of the Minister of Youth, and of the Minister-President of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, the Government of the French-speaking Community has suggested the project of a creation of an Interministerial Youth Conference. This body will be able to bring together all the levels of power (federal, regions, communities) competent in areas affecting young people in order to respond in a coherent and transversal manner to the expectations and needs of young people. On November 24 2021, the belgian Consultative Committee gave the green light to the creation of this "CIM Jeunesse".

At the moment, concrete cross-sectoral measures exist at the level of the French-speaking Community in order to enhance the visibility of the youth sector (youth organisation and youth centres) and to promote cross-sectorial partnership in the field of culture.

1. The "Réseau de correspondants jeunesse" (Network of youth-correspondents) was created in 2014. It brings together resource and contact persons working in various administrations who are asked to be "sensitive" for the youth aspects in their sector. This network shares information that concern youth in their field and develops youth participation.

2. “[Histoires croisées](#)” (Crossed stories) is a specific fund based on a [cross-sectorial convention](#) between two departments of the Ministry of the French speaking Community of Belgium: Youth and Youth welfare. The purpose is to build bridges between the organisations recognised by the two Department and other organisations, in order to promote actions with and for youngsters and to give a better picture of youth in the civil society. Through the implementation of this measure, the Minister wants to enhance networking between the two sectors and to promote cross sectorial projects.

3. “Cellules bien-être” (Well-being cells) was a cross-sectorial [pilot-project](#) which brought together Youth, Health, Youth welfare and (formal) Education for the period of 2011-2014. Cross sectorial « cells » were initiated and developed by schools on the theme of health. At least three organisations (including a school and a youth organisation) had to develop together a project on a specific theme, chosen by the school (e.g. sustainable alimentation, empowerment and participation, fight against violence...). This programme is still used by several schools but there is no more financial support.

4. The “Plateforme Jeunesse Enseignement” (the platform on Youth and Formal Education) is exploring the possibility for youth organisations to use schools and their rooms for the development of their activities outside school time.

The only existing cross-sectorial legal framework is a **decree connecting education and youth welfare sector** to foster youth well-being in school and to prevent school dropouts: [the Decree of 21 November 2013](#).

1.6 Evidence-based youth policy

Political Commitment to Evidence-Based Youth Policy

There is **no formal political commitment** to evidence-based youth policy. The youth public authority can order studies on youth to support youth policies but this is not a systematic process.

As explained in the following point, the youth public authority is invited by the Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth Welfare to participate to the Committee in charge of the follow-up of their studies.

Cooperation between policy-making and research

The Minister of Youth maintains an institutionalised and regular cooperation with the [Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth Welfare](#). This is a cross-disciplinary service of the French-Speaking Community created in 1998 at the request of the government.

This body is placed under the authority of the Secretary General of the Ministry. [The missions of the Observatory](#) consist notably in:

- supporting [researches](#) and developing analysis and indicators about childhood, youth and youth welfare;
- compiling an [inventory of public policies and organisations and institutions](#) that concern these target groups;
- [evaluating decrees](#) related to these topics, delivering opinions and making recommendations in these fields of competences;
- [promoting children’s rights](#). The Observatory is charged by the government to implement the article 42 (promoting the principles of the Convention in the French-Speaking Community) and 44 (reporting to the UN the measures taken at national level related to the Convention) of the International Convention of 20 November 1989 related to the Rights of Children. In this context, it is notably in charge of the follow-up and the evaluation of the Children’s rights action plans adopted by the French-speaking Community Government and the Walloon Region.

The Observatory is independent regarding the themes of the researches that it supports. To ensure that the Government is aware and implicated about the processes and the results of these studies, Cabinets of Ministers are generally invited to be part of the Committee in charge of the follow-up of the studies. The Government has also the prerogative to ask the Observatory to focus research on specific objects

The decree "[Décret créant l'Observatoire de l'enfance, de la jeunesse et de l'aide à la jeunesse](#)" (Decree of 12 May 2004 creating the Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth Welfare) is the official document describing the role and missions of the Observatory.

Main themes

The Observatory must report on policies in the childhood, youth and youth welfare fields with regard to health, leisure's, participation, services for children and young, school dropout, and adoption according to the decree of 12 May 2004.

National Statistics and available data sources

There is no official institute working exclusively on national youth statistics. However, independent or public institutes realise occasionally statistical studies on youth.

- "L'institut wallon pour l'évaluation, la prospective et la statistique – IWEPS" (The Walloon Institute for evaluation, prospective and statistic) published in 2010 a study about the [situation of young people in the French-Speaking part of Belgium](#). This was a one-time statistical study affecting the following themes: education, employment, poverty, health, leisure's and cultural activities, violence in intimate relationships. "L'institut Bruxellois de Statistiques et d'Analyse – IBSA" (The Brussels Institute of Statistics and Analysis) is the equivalent of IWEPS but for the Brussels region.
- The Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth Welfare publishes every year a "Memento" which collects [data on youth](#). The Observatory assembles existing and relevant data from international surveys, Belgian statistical studies, administrative data, etc. The figures of this publication aim at giving « indications ». They are the result of a selection among a set of available data and only partially reflects reality.

The services of the French-Speaking Community realise statistical studies in their own key area: education, sport, culture, youth welfare and court house. The statistics do not focus exclusively on young people except for the education and the youth welfare services.

- The General Administration of Culture publishes every year "[Focus Culture](#)" which indicates the financial support invested in the cultural sector by the administration and a quantitative assessment of cultural policies for the year. Information about youth policies can be found.
- The General Administration of Education of the French-Speaking Community publishes every year "Les indicateurs de l'enseignement en Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles" (The [indicators of education](#) in the Federation Wallonia-Brussels). This publication enables the analysis of statistical data and highlights the developments in the education sector. This analysis is requested by the authorities through the Decree of 27 March 2002 related to the management of the educational system of the French-Speaking Community.
- The Youth Welfare Department published a report in 2014 about the Youth Welfare sector status in 2012 including a chapter on the [young people affected by youth welfare policies](#).
- "La Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles en chiffres – édition 2015" (Federation Wallonia-Brussels into figures – edition 2015) offers a statistical perspective of the activities of the French-Speaking Community. The publication, released every year, does not focus only on youth. But the edition of 2015 develops a specific chapter on "the [trajectory of young people from 3 to 24 years old](#)". The Research service of the French-Speaking Community is responsible for the production of this study.

The French-Speaking Community participates every 4 years to the [HBSC study](#) (Health Behaviour in School-aged Children). The "Service d'Information Promotion, Education, Santé – SIPES" (Information, Promotion and Health Service) from the University of Brussels is [in charge of the research](#).

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is also undertaken in the French-Speaking Community. This triennial survey is realised by a service of the University of Liege (Service d'Analyse des Systèmes et des Pratiques d'Enseignement - aSPE).

Budgetary Allocations supporting research in the youth field

The budget allocated by the Government to the Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth Welfare amounts to 193 000 euros in 2016. Some researches on youth are funded by public authorities through research departments in universities but it is impossible to define the amount allocated to this specific topic.

1.7 Funding youth policy

How Youth policy is funded

The total amount affected to youth policies was :

- 45 822 000 euros in [2015](#)
- 48 068 000 euros in [2016](#)
- 52 902 000 euros in [2017](#)
- 60 985 000 euros in [2018](#)
- 72 191 000 euros in [2019](#)
- 72 720 000 euros in [2020](#)
- 76 182 000 euros in [2021](#)

Source: annual budget of the French-speaking Community.

Youth associations may receive funds from others public or private bodies. European funding from the youth section of the Erasmus + are monitored by the International Youth Office.

What is funded?

The budget allocated to youth policies is divided into 4 categories:

1. Financial aid for Youth Organisations, Youth Centres, Regional Coordination of Homework schools and the Federation of Homework schools. This category gathers the major part of the youth budget;
2. The running costs of the Youth Council of the French-Speaking Community.
3. Training of youth workers, support to extraordinary youth activities, cross-sectorial actions;
4. Youth service activities. This category includes as well the Belgian subsidy for the International Youth Office (15 000 euros for the Belgian exchange program "Bel'J").

Financial accountability

The accountability is ensured by the Youth Department which is the Central public administration. This service recognises and funds youth associations according to several decrees which point out, for each type of associations, the requirements and procedures to receive the subsidy.

A recognised youth association ([youth centre](#) or [youth organisation](#)) receives an annual “ordinary subsidy” composed of two main elements:

- functioning of the association (activities);
- employment (staff salary).

In order to receive the subsidy, Youth Organisations must submit every year:

- the activity report;
- the balance sheet;
- the General Assembly’s minutes approving the balance sheet.

Every four years, the youth association must renew the recognition by submitting a four-year action plan to the administration.

Use of EU Funds

The Youth Department didn't launch any calls for project for the youth sector in the framework of the ESF.

A [call for projects](#) has been launched in 2015 by the Minister of Education and the Minister of Youth Welfare with the financial support of the ESF. The aim is to develop partnerships to prevent school dropout.

The International Youth Office (BIJ) receives EU funds in order to implement the youth section of the Erasmus + programme.

1.8 Cross-border cooperation

Cooperation with European countries

To introduce this point, it is important to note that international relations are ruled by two different bodies, depending on the level of power:

- The Ministry for Foreign Affairs at the Federal level;
- The Agency Wallonia Brussels International (WBI) at the Regional and Community-wide level for the French-Speaking part of Belgium.

European Union

The Youth Department is also in charge of the definition of lines and priorities of the international youth policy in close relationship with the International Youth Office and the General Direction of international relations.

In the framework of the European Strategy for Youth, the Youth Department participated to experts groups and peer-learning seminars on the following thematics: youth work quality systems, cross-sectorial policy-making, non formal education, and transition to employment.

Cooperation with France

The Youth Ministers of France and of the French Community of Belgium have decided to organise meetings between their administrations to share about the issue of violent radicalism. The administrations of Flanders and of the German-speaking Community are also invited. The aim of the coordination is to discuss the youth work practices and the political and sectoral decisions taken in the youth field in response to violent radicalism. They plan to organise regular meetings for the period lasting from September 2016 until September 2017.

The Greater Region

The [Greater Region](#) this is a cross-border collaboration between the states of Saarland, Rhineland-Palatinate in Germany, the Lorraine Region in France, the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg and Wallonia in Belgium.

This institutionalised cooperation had taken concrete measures to foster an inclusive labor market, training, mobility, social cohesion in the area. In the youth field, the Greater Region promotes a multilingual, curious and open-minded youth.

Cooperation between the 3 Belgian Communities

The 3 Belgian Ministers for Youth finalised in 2009 an agreement about the creation of a programme "[Bel'J](#)". This aims to promote young volunteers mobility and youth exchanges between Belgian communities.

"Child on Europe"

The Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth Welfare is involved in the European network of National Childhood Observatories named "[Child on Europe](#)". The Observatory contributes to the organisation and the activities in order to organise the exchange of information and to promote good practices on the European level about childhood, youth or youth welfare policies.

Assembly of European Regions

The French-Speaking Community is one of the members of this European regions network.

International cooperation

Council of Europe

In the framework of the Belgian presidency, Belgium organised in 2015 the European [Youth Work Convention](#). It brought together over 400 policymakers, researchers and practitioners who debated challenges facing youth work at the local, national and European level.

According to the website, "the Convention resulted in a Declaration aimed at giving a new impetus to youth work policy in Europe. The Declaration touched upon the social situation of young people in Europe, challenges that the youth work currently faces, and offered recommendations on how to improve its quality".

United Nations

Each year, the Flemish Youth Council and the Youth Council of the French-Speaking community select several [youth delegates](#) (young people below 30 years old) to represent the points of view of Belgian youth at United Nations conferences and meetings. These youth delegates make sure that young people's voices are heard in international decision-making processes while contributing to the implementation of international commitments at national level. Environment and sustainable development are the main topic discussed.

Francophonie

The [Conference of Ministers for Youth and Sports of Francophonie](#): The French-Speaking Community is a member of the "Conférence des ministres de la jeunesse et des sports de la Francophonie" (Conference of Ministers of Youth and Sports of Francophonie - CONFESJES). This intergovernmental institution was created in 1969 and promotes the Youth, Sports and Leisure sector within the francophone space (41 French-speaking countries).

Its mission is to mobilise countries, resources and energies in order to promote youth participation and inclusion within the society. Its main objectives are supporting the Member States through reflection and creativity, training the trainers in the Youth, Sports and Leisure sector, supporting socioeconomic insertion initiatives, fostering community

life, helping the development of sportive elite in Africa, fostering youth meetings to enhance their participation within society.

1.9 Current debates and reforms

Reforms and current debates

The Government is agreed on the need to step up measures aimed at younger generations through a "[0-25 Child and Youth Plan](#)". This plan aims at strengthen investments in children and youth in various sectors such as education, sport, youth, youth welfare, digitalisation and media literacy, childhood, culture, women's rights, equality of chances and youth mobility.

A major consultation process was launched during the summer 2021 to hear the french-speaking belgian youth about their their feelings of the crisis, on their heavily affected mental health, but also on their vision of society, politics or citizenship. On their fears about the environment and employment as well. It lead to an appeal made by the Youth Forum, "being young in 2021" ([être jeune en 2021](#)) with several claims. Among the 66 claims, here are few examples :

- make psychological help free and sustainable for young people
- recognize culture as an essential player in the life and development of young people,
- develop reflection around male contraception,
- develop a policy of financial assistance and granting of bonuses for young people promoting the purchase of housing

The Youth Minister has responded whith the ambition to launch an Interministerial Youth Conference which will be the opportunity for the different levels of power to seize the word of young people.

In addition, almost 2 million euros have been made available to strengthen the structural financing of operators and develop their actions for the benefit of youth.

2. VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

Youth volunteering is organised within a wide-ranging structure affecting volunteering in general. A Federal Law sets out a legal common framework for everyone involved in volunteering throughout Belgium. Communities may set their own rules for volunteering by establishing decrees as long as it works within the framework of the Federal Law. Many youth structures within the youth sector work with young volunteers. The chapter illustrates the role and the organisation of these youth structures (youth centres, youth Council, etc.)

A specific policy aspects affects cross-border mobility. The International Youth Office points out a major issue regarding the access to the territory for foreign volunteers as part of the European Voluntary Service.

2.1 General context

Historical developments

At the end of the 19th century, Belgian society was characterised by the principles of subsidiarity and pillarisation.

The principle of subsidiarity means that state intervention was limited to the recognition and encouragement of the actions of essentially private operators, including associations.

This went hand in hand with a relatively compartmentalised society, or pillarisation, based on three major ideological movements: Catholics, Liberals and Socialists. Citizens evolved around these politically marked pillars and all their associations (school establishment, health care funds, workers federations, trade unions, leisure time and so forth), which organised social life according to the same ideology.

As a result, the state tended to delegate a large part of its policies to the pillars, especially concerning youth.

Voluntary activities were mainly developed through the catholic and the socialist movements.

Middle-class persons, part of the catholic movement, were volunteers in the social and medical sector. Charity associations were mainly developed in this traditional movement. The aim of this volunteering was to help poor or unfortunate people.

On the other side, the socialist movement was composed of secular and labourer population. They were contesting the charity work. According to them, the only way to help people was a radical transformation of the economic and social system. Throughout the 19th century, militant associations were created. The aim of volunteering was to commit to a cause.

After World War II, the Welfare State is setting up. A part of the voluntary activities usually organised by charity organisations gradually turned professional. The public authority became the organiser.

In the 1960's, decolonisation causes the appearance of development aid associations. Many of them were linked to Church and the catholic movement but they gradually became independent. At the same time, associations which refused to be linked to one of the pillars appeared (Amnesty International, etc.).

Youth associations were fully part of these structures and some of them still keep strong links to one of the pillars. Scouting movements are strongly incorporated in the Belgian society.

General and specific youth work

While "social and cultural work" was unified in a certain pillar, the detachment of social work and "regular" cultural work involved a separation between "deviant" and "regular" young people. This is also reflected in the distinction that has been made between "specific youth work", which involves social work targeting young people, and "general youth work", encompassing more traditional youth associations. The level of voluntariness differs between both forms of youth work.

A political evolution

The UN International Year of Volunteers 2001 was an important trigger in Belgium. Public authorities became aware of the interest of voluntary activities and the necessity to think about a legal framework. During this year, the federal level took formal initiatives to improve the social and legal situation of volunteers. In 2005, the law "Loi du 3 juillet 2005 relative aux droits des volontaires" (Law of 3 July 2005 related to volunteer's rights) has been adopted.

At the end of the 19th century, Belgian society was characterised by the principles of subsidiarity and pillarisation.

The principle of subsidiarity means that state intervention was limited to the recognition and encouragement of the actions of essentially private operators, including associations.

Main concepts

There is no specific definition of youth volunteering.

However, the law related to volunteer's rights of 3 July 2005 introduces a common definition to be shared by everyone involved in voluntary work. It defines **volunteering** as

follows: - Volunteering is unpaid; - It does not involve obligation; - It is undertaken for others or for society; - There should be always a distinction between volunteering and professional activities.

In the youth sector, there are various types of volunteers:

- Young people participating to volunteering projects abroad;
- young people participating to volunteering projects in Belgium;
- Young animators organising activities for youngsters in scouting movements;
- Young people participating to youth councils;
- etc.

Youth work such as coordinators and youth workers who organise and coordinate activities for young people in youth organisations or youth centres are paid.

2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering

Governance

Youth volunteering is organised within a wide-ranging structure affecting volunteering in general.

The legal framework of volunteering is set out at the Federal level. The [Law of 2005](#) establishes a common framework for everyone involved in volunteering throughout Belgium. The Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible for voluntary activities.

The Communities have the right to set their own rules for volunteering by establishing decrees as long as it works within the framework set out by the Federal legislation.

In Wallonia, the Ministry of the French-Speaking Community and the Federal Ministry of Social affairs and Health are the two main institutions involved in voluntary activities.

At local level, several cities have set up a permanent advice group on volunteering. However, these initiatives are still rather rare.

Main actors

The Federal Public Service for Social Security is responsible for all regulations on the legal status of volunteers.

The [High Council of Volunteers](#) is the Federal advisory body dealing with volunteering. It has been established at the end of 2002 by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Its missions are:

- To collect and analyse information related to volunteering and volunteers;
- To examine specific issues about volunteering;
- To issue notices about volunteering.

The High Council of Volunteers is composed of 25 members from the three communities.

La [Plateforme Francophone pour le Volontariat](#) (The French-Speaking platform for Volunteering) is the main organisation for volunteering in the French-Speaking Community. This non-profit association receives subsidy from the Continuing Education Department of the Ministry of the French-Speaking Community. It was created in 2002.

Its missions are:

- To inform society about volunteering evolutions, official documents affecting volunteering, main decisions taken in the sector, etc;

- To promote and encourage volunteering within the society through communication tools (website, newsletter) and awareness campaigns;
- Lobbying role.

The Plateforme supports general volunteering. But the association ensures youth representation through the presence of 4 young representatives from Youth Organisations in their Board of Directors.

[Youth Organisations](#) recognized and supported by the Youth Department of the French-Speaking Community, are volunteering associations dedicated to young people. All the modes of action are decided "by and for" young people. Among the 6 groups of OJ, 3 of them are working with youth volunteers:

- The Youth Movements (scouting movements) are composed of local groups of children and young people engaged in activities and animation projects supervised by voluntary youth leaders;
- Thematic Movements with volunteers, analysing social issues and raising awareness on citizen's questions (such as political parties, branches of trade union, etc.);

Youth Services contributing to the development of young people's sense of responsibility, through several actions such as animation, socio-cultural expression, awareness raising, training information, meetings and residential activities or international mobility.

Youth volunteering is specifically supported by two institutions:

- The [Youth Council](#) ensures the participation and representation of all young people of the French-Speaking Community. Each year, the Flemish Youth Council and the Youth Council of the French-Speaking community select several youth delegates to represent the points of view of Belgian youth at the European Union and the United Nations conferences and meetings. These youth delegates make sure that young people's voices are heard in international decision-making processes while contributing to the implementation of international commitments at national level. Young people can also participate to the General Assembly;
- The [International Youth Office](#) (BIJ) is a one-stop service for young people who would like to receive support to realise a project abroad. Most of them are volunteering projects.

Decision-making bodies such as General Assembly or Board request the presence of

- one third of young people aged under 26 for Youth Centres;
- one half of young people aged under 35 for Youth Organisations.

These young people are volunteers.

The "[holiday's centres](#)" work with volunteers specifically for the organisation of scouting camps. The "homework schools" are also working with young volunteers.

"L'association pour le volontariat" (the volunteering association) is a coordination body bringing volunteers and organisations into contact. It also offers assistance and training on voluntary activities and regulations to both parties.

The majority of volunteering support bodies are non-profit associations. This status gives them more autonomy in carrying out their activities. Several associations have focused their activities on youth volunteering.

An important non-governmental actor supporting volunteering in Belgium is the [King Baudouin Foundation](#). This independent public benefit foundation was created in 1976. The Foundation is active at the regional, federal and international level. It aims at improving living conditions of the Belgian population. With this in mind, the Foundation promotes and stimulates volunteering activities in Belgium.

Cross-sectoral cooperation

Mechanism of cross-sectorial cooperation exist as follows:

- The programme Bel'J supports volunteering projects between the 3 Communities of Belgium. This is due to a partnership between the 3 Belgian Ministers of Youth (More information in 2.6 cross-border mobility).

2.3 National strategy on youth volunteering

Existence of a National Strategy

There is no national Youth Strategy. The strategies and actions plans are run by associations.

Scope and contents

Not applicable.

Responsible authority

Not applicable.

Revisions/ Updates

Not applicable.

2.4 Youth volunteering at national level

National Programme for Youth Volunteering

There is no national programme for youth volunteering.

Funding

Youth volunteering associations (youth organisations working with young volunteers) are mainly funded by public subventions.

Characteristics of youth volunteering

The [King Baudouin Foundation](#) published in 2014 a [statistical study](#) about general volunteering in Belgium: "Le volontariat en Belgique: chiffres clés et analyse" (volunteering in Belgium: key indicators and analyse). Out of the total of volunteers, the group of youngsters aged between 15-29 years old represents 12.9 %. This percentage stays quite similar for every age group. A relation between age and intensity of volunteering commitment is observed. Youngsters aged between 20 and 24 years old are the one who give the most of their time to volunteering. Thereafter, the time devoted to voluntary activities decreases as young adults get more involved in work and family life.

Young people are mainly actives in the following activity fields:

- Youth associations (32.3% in 2014);
- Social services (19.7 % in 2014);
- Sports (14.7 % in 2014);
- Culture and socio-cultural associations (13.3% in 2014);
- Education, training and research (7.6 % in 2014);
- Defence of rights and interests (6.7 % in 2014).

Scouting movements are deeply integrated in the Belgian society. Many young people aged above 17 years old volunteer as youth leader every week end and during summer camps.

Support to young volunteers

The [Law of 3 July 2005](#) related to volunteer's rights establishes a clause related to the indirect expenses of participants (transportation, material, meals, etc.). The law specifies that the volunteer doesn't need to justify the total amount of the compensation as long as it doesn't exceed 24.79 euros per day.

The type of support is not established by law. Associations are free to organise it the way they want to.

However, there is a public aid for scouting movements. Public administration through the "Centre de prêt de Naninne" (the rental centre of Naninne) supervises the distribution and the renting of tents for summer camps.

The law of 3 July 2005 related to volunteer's rights establishes social security provisions to which every volunteer is entitled. There is no specific legal framework for young volunteers. The law authorises unemployed person to be volunteer if the person declares officially its activity to the National Office of Employment (ONEM).

The law of 3 July 2005 protects the young volunteer's right to receive family allowances as the compensation received by the young volunteer as part of its volunteering activity is not considered as an income.

All the organisations responsible in the civil law are bound to contract an insurance policy which covers at least the civil liability for their volunteers. They are not legally bound to contract any other insurance such as the physical injury insurance. The "Plateforme francophone du volontariat" has detailed the insurance topic in the document "étude de la loi de 2005 relative aux droits des volontaires: sa mise en pratique par le secteur associatif et son évaluation depuis sa mise en application" (study of the law of 2005 related to volunteer's rights: practical implementation by the associative sector and evaluation since the enforcement).

Quality Assurance (QA)

The Youth Department of the French-Speaking Community evaluates every four year the activity of youth associations. In order to receive official recognition and financial support from the administration, associations who organise youth volunteering must submit a report of their activities and get the approval from the department in regard to the decree's criteria (See section [1.7 Funding youth policy](#)).

However, there are no official mechanisms to collect young volunteers' feedback on their experience.

Target groups

As there is no specific national programme for Youth Volunteering in the DG, a specific target group hasn't been defined. Due to its nature, volunteering can be carried out by anyone, regardless of background, level of education, etc. Volunteering can be a pool for special target groups to develop experiences, to reintegrate themselves into society, to be a forum in which isolated people can establish social contacts.

2.5 Cross-border mobility programmes

EU programmes

The [International Youth Office](#) (BIJ) is the main agency in charge of implementing the Youth section of the Erasmus + programme. The BIJ publishes every year an evaluation with information on the evolution of youth participation to mobility programmes.

Regarding the action 1 of the Erasmus + programme in [2019](#) (youth exchanges and youth workers mobility)

- Youth exchanges: 39 projects were funded out of the 68 submitted to the BIJ in 2019. The number of projects increased significantly compared to 2013 (19 projects funded).
- Youth workers mobility: 14 projects were selected out of the 23 submitted to the BIJ in 2019.

The French-Speaking Community also participates to the EU Aid Volunteers programme.

Other Programmes

The International Youth Office organises and manages youth cross-border volunteering through the following programmes:

- “BEI’J” supports volunteering projects between the 3 Communities of Belgium. In 2019, 40 young people have been selected to participate. In [2019](#), it regards mostly young people aged under 20 years old (93%).
- “Axe Sud” aims to foster the exchange between groups of youngsters from the French part of Belgium and French-Speaking countries in Africa (Algeria, Benin, Burkina-Faso, Burundi, Morocco, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Senegal and Tunisia). In 2019, 150 young people from the French-speaking Community were supported and 168 African young people have participated.
- “Quebec” supports volunteering projects in communication, cultural and social sectors in the region of Quebec in Canada;
- Citoyens d'Europe (European citizens) supports exchanges and creation projects on the thematic of the European citizenship.
- “Jeunes Citoyens du Monde” (Young Citizens of the World) brings young people from all over the world together to discuss and think about thematic such as active citizenship, Human’s Rights and solidarity. This programme is the result of a multilateral cooperation with the Council of Europe.

Legal framework applying to foreign volunteers

Young volunteers from some countries taking part to a European Programme (Erasmus +, European Voluntary Service) need to require a visa.

There are two types of visa to access the Belgian territory for a volunteer coming from abroad:

- Short term visa (90 days or less out of 180 days):

Belgium, as part of the Schengen zone, exempts people from some countries to apply for a short-term visa.

Others volunteers must prove their eligibility by submitting the following documents:

A valid passport;

An official document stating that the hosting organisation is financially responsible for the volunteer;

The proof of the return (flight ticket).

- Long-term visa (90 days or more): to be eligible for this kind of visa, volunteers must submit the following documents:

A valid passport;

An official document stating that the hosting organisation is financially responsible for the volunteer;

A medical certificate (some countries only);

An extract of police record;

The licence fee of 215 euros (this is a new measure implemented in March 2016);

The handling fee of 180 euros.

The International Youth Office points out a major issue regarding the access to the territory for foreign volunteers as part of the European Voluntary Service. For 3 years, Non-European volunteers wanting to volunteer in Belgium as part of the European Voluntary Service have seen their visa application refused. They must now apply for a work visa which complicates and even makes impossible the access to the territory for these volunteers. The International Youth Office is concerned and tries to unblock the situation in collaboration with the others communities.

2.6 Raising awareness about youth volunteering opportunities

Information providers

The main information provider is the "[Plateforme francophone du volontariat](#)" (French-speaking platform for volunteering). This body is recognised and funded by the service of Continuing Education of the Ministry of the French-Speaking Community. This association has a dedicated website where volunteers can find all kind of information such as finding a voluntary activity or volunteering associations, etc. The association targets person of any age who wants to undertake a voluntary activity.

The International Youth Office is the main body to provide information to young people about volunteering programmes abroad. They work closely with young people and specific target groups to help them in the realisation of their volunteering project. The International Youth Office has a website and a helpdesk where young people can receive direct information.

Key initiatives

There are no main initiatives to disseminate information on youth volunteering activities. Recognised associations are responsible for their own campaign and awareness raising actions.

Besides, initiatives are taken at local level. For instance, the Province of Liege organises every year since 2008 the "[Salon des volontaires](#)" (Volunteering Fair) to foster the meeting between volunteers and associations.

The European Year of Volunteers 2011 developed many initiatives to promote volunteering in general. The city of Namur organises since then "[Rencontres Namuroises du volontariat](#)" (Namur Meeting of volunteering). The 5th edition will take place in 2016.

Volunteering associations are free to target specific group of people. There are no official recommendations.

2.7 Skills recognition

Policy Framework

Skills recognition for young volunteers in Erasmus + projects

Young volunteers, when participating to an Erasmus + project, may recognise their skills through the [Youth Pass](#).

Skills recognition for voluntary staff

Skills recognition affects mostly specialised voluntary staff such as leaders and coordinators in summer camps. [Holidays centres](#) must have a certain percentage of highly

qualified staff to supervise kids and teenagers. Young volunteers aged above 16 years old have the possibility to follow a training which may lead to the award of a certificate. This training must be undertaken in collaboration with recognised youth organisation or youth centres.

The [Decree of 17 May 1999](#) establishes the standards to get a certificate.

There are 2 authorities responsible for validation and recognition of competences:

1. The training operators which decides whether the certificate is awarded or not;
2. The Youth Department of the French-Speaking Community which approve the certificate.

Existing arrangements

Young volunteers can validate skills through a certificate. The latter is awarded by a training operator and approved by the Youth Department of the French-Speaking Community. There are 29 training operators recognised by the French-Speaking Community whose 17 are specialised in training in holiday's centres. Training operators have their own methods and tools to train young volunteers.

There are 2 others skills recognition mechanisms established in the Decree related to holiday's centres:

- Equivalence: the commission of holiday's centres examines on a case-by-case basis the professional path of the volunteer to determine if he/she is eligible for the certificate without doing the training. The commission takes its decision according to a reference document which gives common indicators to evaluate.
- Assimilation: the National Office of Childhood (ONE) assigns this status to volunteers if they meet the criteria (formal diploma in the education sector and professional experience).

The certificate is not a formal document valid in the official education sector but it still has a value on the labour market.

There are no synergies between national validation arrangements and European credit systems applicable to the formal education and training system.

According to the Decree related to holiday's centres, the Government organises the supervision and the educational support of holiday's centres.

The Youth Department is responsible for the recognition and the financial support of training organisations.

2.8 Current debates and reforms

The law of 2005 on volunteers' rights is currently revised as asked by the Minister of social affairs.

The [High Council of Volunteers](#) is currently finalizing the evaluation of the law of 3 July 2005 related to the volunteer's rights. It will be available online at the end of May. This evaluation includes two appendices about youth volunteering. The first one addresses foreign young people volunteering in Belgium and the second one focuses on Belgian volunteers abroad.

About young Belgian volunteers going abroad, the High Council observes the following issues:

- The upholding of family allowances and unemployment benefit while volunteering abroad.

- The clarifications of the terms used in the law about what can be considered as volunteering.

Regarding the issues about young volunteers coming from abroad, the High Council of volunteers discusses the following points:

- Volunteering doesn't confer the right to get a visa according to the law of 15 December 1980 related to the territory access. Volunteering in Belgium for a period longer than 3 months is then compromised regarding the rules to obtain a visa. The International Youth Office is also concerned by this problem as it is developed in the section related to Cross-Border Mobility Programme;
- The hosting organisation provides accommodation to the volunteer and is in charge of his/her daily expenses. In specific programme such as the European Volunteer Programme, the volunteer can also receive a small allowance. Two problems arise in the fields of tax and labour law:

If this amount (accommodation, meals) exceeds the yearly maximal sum allowed by the law of 2005, the fees must be justified. This is a tedious process especially when it comes to long-term volunteering.

The provision in kind can be considered so that it is taxed and the volunteer runs the risk of losing his/her volunteer status. The hosting organisation would then be considered as an employer with all the obligations it involves.

The law of 2005 must clarify that the provision in kind (accommodation, meals) is included in the volunteering activity and is not compensation.

3. EMPLOYMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Youth employment lies within the general employment policy. The Regions and the Federal Entity are both competent for employment policy with their own field of action. Initiatives to support youth employment are mainly taken at Regional level. This chapter illustrates the relevant initiatives and actors which support youth employment both in the Brussels Region and the Walloon Region. The unemployment of young people both in the Walloon Region and the Region of Brussels-Capital is concerning even if the rate [has decreased](#). The employment Agencies, Forem (Wallonia) and Actiris (Brussels), offer support measures to young people. The development of entrepreneurship competence is a really important policy both in the Walloon Region and the Region of Brussels-Capital.

3.1 General context

Labour market situation in the country

Walloon Region

The Walloon 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.

3.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Youth employment lies within the general employment policy.

The Regions and the Federal Entity are both competent for employment policy. These authorities have different responsibilities regarding this field:

- The Federal Government is in charge of labour laws, social security and the unemployment compensation. Federal level is also responsible for supervising the social dialogue. This institutional system gathers social partners (employers, employees and federal government) in order to negotiate “work conventions” in all activity sectors. They negotiate work conditions, salaries, etc. Social dialogue has an important place in the Belgian work system.
- The Regions are responsible for measures aimed at supporting employment of target groups, training, lifelong learning and local agencies for employment.

Therefore, there are 3 Ministers of Employment at the executive French-Speaking Community level:

- The Federal Minister of Employment and Economy
- The Regional Minister of Employment for the Walloon Region
- The Regional Minister of Employment for the Brussels-Capital Region.

Entrepreneurship lies within the portfolio of the Regional Minister of Economy. There are 2 Ministers responsible for specific entrepreneurship measures aimed at young people: one for the Walloon Region and one for the Brussels-Capital Region.

There are 3 Ministers of Employment at the executive French-Speaking Community level:

- The Federal Minister of Employment and Economy
- The Regional Minister of Employment for the Walloon Region
- The Regional Minister of Employment for the Brussels-Capital Region.

Federal level

The main authority responsible for employment at the Federal level is the [Minister of Employment and Economy](#).

The “[Federal Public Service, Employment, Work and Social Dialogue](#)” implements the federal employment policy. According to the [administration contract 2016-2018](#) of the Service, the latter is responsible for the labour relations between employers and employees. It ensures the protection of workers and promotes well-being at work. It participates to the development of social legislation. The service is in charge of social security, evaluation of employment policy and unemployment regulation.

The “[National Office for Employment](#)” (Office National de l’Emploi) is the public body for social security which manages the unemployment part of employee’s social security according to the [administration contract 2016-2018](#) between the Federal State and the Office.

Regional level – Walloon Region

The main authority responsible for employment in the Walloon Region is the [Minister for Employment and Training](#). The [General Political Note](#) of the Walloon Minister of Employment and training presents the 3 employment Walloon administrations. They implement the employment policy of the Minister and are under its responsibility:

- Direction of employment and work permits ([Direction de l’Emploi et des permis de travail](#)) has for mission to contribute to the implementation of the Walloon employment policy.

- [Forem](#) is the Walloon Employment Agency, a public service in charge of employment and vocational training. Forem provides guidance and counselling service on career development and on job search with job seekers. It offers as well training in order to foster the integration of job seekers in the labour market. It implements measures aimed at supporting employment. Forem is also charged of the Youth Guarantee Scheme. The Forem focuses some of its actions on young people, especially those without any diploma. The [decree of 6 may 1999](#) related to the Walloon Office for vocational training and employment institutes the Forem.
- Walloon Institute for Apprenticeship and Self-employed workers, small and medium Enterprises (Institut wallon de formation en alternance et des indépendants et petites et moyennes entreprises - [IFAPME](#)) provides training programmes such as apprenticeships or lifelong training programme. IFAPME coordinates a network of training centres located across the territory working at local level. Its missions are defined in the [IFAPME's management contract](#) 2012-2017.

Entrepreneurship lies within the portfolio of the [Regional Minister of Economy](#). The “[Agency for Enterprise and Innovation](#)” is a public service which supports creation and development of enterprises, the innovation and the development of new economic activities.

The “Walloon Institute for evaluation, prospective and statistics” (Institut Wallon de l'évaluation, la prospective et la statistique - [IWEPS](#)) is a scientific public service aimed at supporting decision making including in the field of employment. The Observatory provides policy makers and citizens with statistical information, analyses and studies in the field of social, economic, political and environmental sciences. It takes an active part in the promotion and the implementation of an evaluation and forecasting process in Wallonia. The [decree of 4 December 2003](#) related to the creation of the Walloon Institute for evaluation, prospective and statistics defines the missions of the Institute.

Regional level – Brussels-Capital Region

The main authority responsible for employment in the Region Brussels-Capital is the [Minister of Employment and Economy](#).

- The mission of the “[Brussels Public Service of Employment and Economy](#)” is to develop and to support sustainable economy and employment in the Region of Brussels.
- [Actiris](#) is the Brussels Employment Agency, a public service responsible for the implementation of the employment policy in the Region Brussels-Capital. The Agency provides job seekers and employers with support in order to meet supply and demand in labour market. The [Actiris management contract](#) 2017-2022 provides information on the Agency’s objectives and missions.
- Training Brussels ([Bruxelles Formation](#)) is the Brussels public service in charge of professional training for french-speaking job seekers and workers living in Brussels.
- [Impulse Brussels](#) is the public service in charge of supporting entrepreneurship. According to its [management contract 2012-2017](#), the Agency offers support to entrepreneurs in order to help them creating their own enterprise, launching their entrepreneurial project.
- “Training Service Small and Medium Enterprises” (Service Formation Petites et Moyennes Entreprises) is a Service of the French Community Commission of Brussels. It provides training programmes such as apprenticeships or lifelong training programme. Its missions are mainly defined in the [cooperation Agreement](#) of 20 February 1995 related to the continuing training for middle classes and small and medium enterprises.
- The Brussels Institute of Statistics and Analysis ([Institut Bruxellois de Statistiques et d'Analyse](#) - IBSA) is the equivalent of IWEPS but for the Brussels Region.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

Cooperation between the French-Speaking Community and the Walloon Region

The International Youth Office ([Bureau International de la Jeunesse](#)) is a one-stop service for young people interested in a project abroad. It offers programmes to support youngsters living in Brussels or Wallonia aged between 13 and 35 years old to work, volunteer or launch an entrepreneurial project abroad. This is a French-Speaking Community's service created and co-managed since 1995 by the General Administration for Culture (French-Speaking Community) and Wallonia Brussels International (Walloon Region).

3.3 Skills forecasting

Forecasting system(s)

Walloon Region

The missions of the Walloon public service for employment and training, Forem, are defined in the [management contract 2017-2022](#) between the Walloon Government and the Walloon Office for vocational training and employment.

One of the missions of the Walloon public service for employment and training, [Forem](#), is to analyse the labour market and the training supply.

The Forem's service in charge of this mission is the "service of analyse of labour and training market" which is working independently from others services in order to ensure objectivity.

The service conducts prospective studies on the evolutions of the labour market.

Every year, this service publishes a shortage occupations list ([2020](#)).

In 2016, Forem carries on the prospective process and meets some requirements of the [Marshall Plan 4.0](#) (the political strategy of the Walloon government for the period 2014-2019). One of the requirements is to support numerical innovation. The numerical transition affects industries, professions and skills. The Forem's prospective studies inform about the qualitative impact of numerical evolution on the Walloon economy in a time of 3 to 5 years.

As main outputs, the service:

- publishes its studies on the Forem's website;
- publishes "information papers" about occupations needed in the Walloon labour market on the Forem's website. It contains information about the job, the skills needed, the education or training leading to the job qualification;
- prepares recommendations for the Forem's board of directors and for the Minister of Employment and Training.

The Forem publishes its studies on its website and disseminates the occupation shortage list in the press.

The service has to cooperate with the "Walloon Institute for evaluation, prospective and statistic" ([IWEPS](#)) by sharing primary data's collected and by creating a cooperation programme. This programme aims at strengthening the common actions and developing useful collaborations with others specialised organisations.

Region Brussels-Capital

For Brussels, the body in charge of skills forecasting is the Brussels Observatory for Employment ([Observatoire Bruxellois de l'Emploi](#)). Its mission is to follow the employment evolutions and unemployment in the Region Brussels-Capital. The Observatory analyses topics related to changes and transformations specific to labour market.

One of its main objectives is to develop tools to identify the expected future skill or qualification requirements. It publishes the information on the Actiris website.

The Observatory was created in 1995 and is co-funded by the European Social Fund.

Skills development

The indications from forecasting system are used by Forem to adapt its internal and external services (training, coaching, etc.).

The Employment National Office (ONEM) grants “specific permission” to unemployed persons who undertake studies or training preparing for a job listed on the occupation shortage list. This measure allows job seekers to keep their right to receive unemployment compensation while being permitted to not respect some of their obligations (allowed to refuse a job offer, not being available for work, not being registered as job seeker).

3.4 Career guidance and counselling

Career guidance and counselling services

Regional employment agencies

[Forem](#) is the Walloon public service in charge of employment and training. It is the main tool for the implementation of employment and training policy in the Walloon Region. One of its main missions is to offer career guidance and counselling to every job seeker in Wallonia.

A job seeker must register at Forem in order to receive unemployment benefits. Forem provides counselling service to every job seeker but the public service focuses its actions to specific target groups:

- People under 25 not in education, employment or training (NEETS)
- Low qualified people under 25.

These specific profiles receive personal support directly after their registration. They must meet a counsellor once or twice a month until they find a training, an internship or a job. The method is to organise a personalised support in order to help every young job seeker separately with the appropriate solution. They offer information and advice about training, measures aimed at promoting employment.

Funding linked to the Youth Guarantee Scheme enable Forem to:

- reinforce and improve its structural actions with the youth public
- develop specific projects.

These projects revolve around 5 parts:

1. Jobs promotion (promotion des métiers)
2. Personal support (accompagnement)
3. Training (Formation)
4. Internships (stages)
5. Employment (Mise à l’emploi)

1. Jobs promotion (promotion des métiers)

A call for projects has been launched to organise specific “job days”. Several projects such as “kids days”, “jobs discovery days” or “visit a company” operated by associations and public services have been selected. The objectives of these days are to help children and youngsters to learn more about professions, work environment in a funny and concrete way.

The initiative “les métiers vont à l’école” (jobs are going to school) has been organised in schools of Hainaut (a Walloon province). The objective is to develop preventive support to facilitate the transition from school to work.

2. Personal support (accompagnement)

2 kinds of support exist:

- The personal support

The objective is to support young people from 18 to 25 individually, identify their needs regarding their professional profile and help them to find a job, a training or an internship. The intensity of the support depends of the youngster’s profile. If the youngster is highly qualified, the support is less intense. Forem works with professional counsellors. In order to organise this personal support, the use of social networks is important.

- The “sponsorship”

The global action plan also organises a support methodology based on “sponsorship”. Young job seekers from 18 to 25 registered as job seekers in the Province of Hainaut and Liege can receive the support of a mentor. The latter guides and counsels the young job seeker about its career path once or twice a month. An external society has been charged of the project. The mentor can be any volunteer eager to help.

3. Training (Formation)

This part aims to propose to every young people registered at Forem as job seeker a skills assessment and a training adapted to its needs. The training aims at developing key-competences such as calculating, reading, writing. This project is developed across Wallonia but more specifically in the Provinces of Hainaut and Liege.

This part offers also apprenticeships and professional training.

4. Internships (Stages)

The objective here is to help young people to find an internship which will help them to access the labour market. Several measures exist in order to facilitate the access to internships.

5. Employment (Mise à l’emploi)

The final objective is to increase the number of young people accessing the labour market.

Generally, Forem has developed a communication strategy targeting young people. Its aims to:

- promote Forem’s actions;
- increase the number of registrations as job seeker at Forem;
- motivate them to actively look for a job.

Forem uses communication tools such as flyers, promotion posters, a specific website for young people (jeunes.leforem.be), a strong presence on social networks, press papers in student’s magazines.

Associations are also involved in counselling and guidance service

Apart from Forem and Actiris, many youth associations ([Youth Information Centres](#)) focus their activity on disseminating information about various themes including labour market, jobs, training for young people. For instance, SIEP is a youth association which meets young people in schools to inform them about professional training and higher education.

Funding

Forem is a public service placed under the supervision of the Walloon Government represented by the Walloon Minister of Employment and Training. Forem is independent regarding its management. Forem operates with the regional allocations received by the

Minister of Employment and Training as part of the total budget of the Region voted by the Walloon's Parliament.

Forem concludes every 5 years an [agreement](#) with the Ministry of Employment and Training. It defines the rules and conditions on which Forem realises its missions. The current agreement covers the period 2011-2016. The yearly Forem's budget remains steady every year for the government's term (5 years).

Actiris is a public service placed under the supervision of the Brussels Government represented by the Brussels Minister of Employment and Economy. Actiris is independent regarding its management. The Agency signs an [agreement](#) with the Brussels Government. The current one is for the period 2013-2017. This contract plans the missions and objectives for the period covered. It receives allocations from the Government to implement its missions.

Quality assurance

Employment public services, Forem or Actiris, **are bound to an agreement** signed with the Walloon or Brussels Government. This agreement sets out the rules and conditions on which Forem or Actiris realise its missions and set out obligations of both parties.

Employment public services (Forem or Actiris) realise statistical studies to monitor and ensure the quality of their services.

3.5 Traineeships and apprenticeships

Official guidelines on traineeships and apprenticeships

Apprenticeship

The regulatory framework for apprenticeship is the decree of [8 January 2009](#) approving the cooperation agreement related to the apprenticeship, concluded in Brussels on 24th October 2008 between the French-speaking Community, the Walloon Region and the Brussels Community Commission (Décret portant assentiment à l'accord de coopération cadre relative à la formation en alternance, conclu à Bruxelles le 24 octobre 2008 entre la Communauté Française, la Région Wallonne et la Commission communautaire française).

In Brussels and Wallonia, apprenticeships are organised by 3 types of training operators. They are supervised by the French-speaking Office of Vocational Training (Office Francophone de la Formation en Alternance):

- Alternating Education and Training Centres (Centre d'Éducation et de Formation en Alternance - CEFA)

CEFA is secondary school alternating education and training. It offers an alternative to regular education. The [Decree](#) of 3 July 1991 organising secondary school alternating education and training is the regulatory framework to refer to.

- Walloon Institute of Vocational Training and Self-employed workers and Small and Medium Enterprises ([Institut Wallon de Formation en Alternance et des Indépendants et des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises](#) - IFAPME)

IFAPME is a public body created by the Walloon Region. The Institute coordinates the training centres situated in Wallonia. All together, the centres constitute the "IFAPME network". They organise apprenticeships, lifelong learning for everybody from the age of 15 years old. In the framework of the ESF Plan of 2014-2020, 2 projects target young people aged under 25 years old not in education, employment or training. These projects address either activities ahead the training (job discovery, key competences and soft skills, vocational guidance) or school attendance (remediation).

- Training Service of Small and Medium Enterprises ([Service Formation Petites et Moyennes Entreprises](#) - SFPME)

SFPME is the equivalent of IFAPME for the Region of Brussels.

Apprenticeships contracts used to be different according to the institution responsible for it.

Since the 1st of September 2015, a **new common contract** for young people has been created: the **apprenticeship agreement**. This new contract is the result of a [cooperative agreement](#) concluded in 2008 between the Walloon Region, the French-Speaking Community of Belgium and the French Community of Brussels.

According to the French-speaking Community [Gouvernement's order of 17 July 2015](#) related to the apprenticeship contract (arrêté du Gouvernement de la Communauté Française du 17 juillet 2015 relatif au contrat d'alternance), this new contract offers:

- Regulatory framework for apprenticeships
- Standardisation of apprenticeship status in the French-speaking Community
- A unique status for the young apprentice.

The new apprenticeship agreement is a contract which identifies clearly the responsibilities of each party involved:

- the company commits to offer a practical training to the young apprentice
- the apprentice commits to learn under the authority of a supervisor, with a retribution of practical skills in the company
- the apprentice commits to follow the required training with a training operator.
- A third party involved in the contract is the training operator (IFAPME, CEFA, SFPME)
- The basis of the contract is a jointly agreed training plan
- This contract addresses young people from 15 years old up to the age of 25
- The company must be approved by the training operator
- The time of the contract must be fixed, depending of the training plan and for a time of 6 years at most
- The apprentice is paid.

A specific apprenticeship contract exists. It enables a youngster between 15 and 18 years old to learn a profession in the field of industry.

Since the 1st of July 2015, all young people in apprenticeships receive the same social status regarding social security. Apprentices are assimilated to regular workers according to the legislation related to apprenticeships.

- Apprentices are partially subject to social security until the 31st of December of their 18th birthday's year. They contribute to the following sectors of social security: accident at work, occupational disease and annual holidays.
- Apprentices become completely subject to social security from the 1st of January of their 19th birthday's year. They contribute to all sectors of social security.

Apprentices receive a pay which equals a percentage of the Social Integration Income.

Traineeship

A [royal decree](#) of 21 September 2004 related to intern's protection defines an intern as "a pupil or a student who, in the framework of a learning programme organised by an educational institution, works for an employer, in similar conditions as regular workers, in order to gain practical and professional experience". The internship is ruled by a contract signed between the student, the school and the employer. In general, this kind of internship is not paid. Most of the education programmes require an internship.

In addition, the legislator has developed a legal framework for young graduated people who want to undertake a traineeship in order to gain professional experience:

1. The professional immersion convention
 2. The traineeship convention for middle-classes.
- The “professional immersion convention” is defined by the Programme Act of 2 August 2002 ([loi programme du 2 aout 2002](#)). It offers a regulatory framework to young people who want to gain professional experience after their graduation. A contract must be signed between the trainee and the employer. The purpose of the convention is the practical training of the youngster.

The convention can be signed in the framework of an apprenticeship or in the framework of a traineeship not depending of an educative programme.

As this is not a work contract, the youngster doesn’t receive any salary. However, the youngster receives a compensation (615.80 euros at 18 years old; 751 euros from 21). The convention system is supervised by Actiris, the employment public service of Brussels. To be eligible for the convention, the young job seeker must require an exemption from the Federal public body in charge of social security (ONSS).

- The purpose of the “traineeship convention for middle-classes” is to ensure a practical training in the field of entrepreneurial or freelance activity to young people who are not at school anymore.

Promoting traineeships and apprenticeships

Apprenticeship

The Office of apprenticeship training is asked by [decree](#) to organise the global promotion of the apprenticeship training, including towards enterprises and, if necessary, towards professionals Federations. This is complementary to the promotion’s activities of apprenticeships operators (IFAPME, SPFME, CEFA). The Office is currently launching an interactive platform for apprenticeship. This tool aims, among others things, at informing and promoting apprenticeship according to the 2016 activity report of the Office. The Office of apprenticeship training was created in 2015 according to the 2016 activity report of the Office.

Operators in charge of apprenticeships such as IFAPME, CEFA or SFPME are responsible for the promotion of their own apprenticeship programmes.

General information about apprenticeships and traineeships can be found on different websites:

- Website of the Employment public Agency (Actiris in Brussels and Forem in Wallonia)
- Website of Youth Information Centres, Youth Centres, Youth Organisations, etc.
- International Youth Office for traineeships conducted abroad.

Recognition of learning outcomes

Apprenticeship

Skills acquired through apprenticeships are formally recognised in Belgium.

IFAPME and SFPME deliver a “certificate of apprenticeship” approved by the French-Speaking Community.

CEFA deliver a “certificate of secondary school” which mentions the apprenticeship option.

Traineeship

There is no official recognition.

Funding

Apprenticeship

IFAPME is a public body created by the Walloon Region. Therefore, the body receives public funds to implement its missions.

CEFA and SPFME are formally recognised as training operators by the French-speaking Community. They receive subsidies to fulfil their missions.

Quality assurance

The French-speaking Office for apprenticeship is charged of the steering of the apprenticeship training.

Among its missions, defined by the [decree of 8 January 2009](#), the Office is charged to:

- To proceed to a permanent quantitative and qualitative exam of apprenticeship training situation in the French-speaking Community and the bilingual region of Brussels-Capital in collaboration with the vocational training operators and with the support of the services and administrations of the Government or other actors involved in the sector. This permanent exam provides the sector with a system of indicators to evaluate;
- To address each year to the Government an activity report which includes an evaluation of the way the decree is implemented. Training operators provide the Office with statistical information.

The Office was created in 2015. It is launching an interactive platform for apprenticeship. This tool aims, among others things, at monitoring apprenticeship training according to the 2016 activity report of the Office.

A working group on statistics and apprenticeship overview has been also created.

The recognition of CEFA and SPFME as training operators is also a quality assurance.

3.6 Integration of young people in the labour market

Youth employment measures

The employment public services, Forem and Actiris, implement a range of youth employment measures:

1. Training-Integration Plan (Plan Formation Insertion)
2. first employment convention (Convention premier emploi)
3. Professional Integration Agreement (Convention d'immersion professionnelle)
4. Starting bonus and traineeship bonus (Bonus de démarrage et bonus de stage)
5. Impulsion 25 years old (Impulsion - de 25 ans)

Plan formation insertion (Training-Integration Plan)

This measure targets young job seekers and enterprises located on the Walloon territory. An enterprise concludes a contract with the employment public service Forem and the young job seeker. The plan is divided in 2 periods:

At first, the young job seeker gets a training period from 1 to 6 months in the enterprise and keeps its status as job seeker. He keeps receiving unemployment benefits, integration benefits and the enterprise pays a bonus exempted from social security contribution.

After that, the enterprise hires the youngster for at least the time of the training period.

The objective is to give the possibility to the enterprise to train a candidate to fit the professional profile needed while receiving financial advantages.

The same measure is implemented in the Brussels Region through Actiris: Formation Professionnelle Individuelle (Individual Professional Training).

Convention premier emploi (first employment convention)

The “first employment convention” aims to help young people to access the labour market as soon as possible after leaving school. It compels some employers (private and public sector) to hire a certain percentage of young people.

A “first employment convention” is a label which affects all young people under 26 years old who are bound to a regular work contract, a training contract or an internship convention.

Employers who hire young people can receive 3 financial advantages:

- targeted reductions in employer’s social security contributions for young recruits under 19 years old;
- targeted reductions in employer’s social security contributions for young recruits under 26 years old with low qualifications (Measure Start);
- a work allowance of 350 euros for young recruits with very low qualifications or low qualified foreigners (not EU nationality) or low qualified disabled youngsters. It is also called Activa Start measure. This work allowance is paid by the Employment National Office (ONEM) in charge of unemployment insurance. The employer can deduce this amount from the youngster’s net salary.

Convention d’immersion professionnelle (Professional Integration Agreement)

The “Professional Integration Agreement” is a traineeship convention concluded by the employer, the young recruit and the public service of employment. The aim is to favour the training of a young recruit. The “training plan” is the most important part of the agreement and it is concluded between the employer and the competent public service in charge of training.

This convention is not a regular work contract. Therefore, the employer doesn’t pay a salary to the young recruit. But the intern receives a compensation paid by the employer.

Bonus de démarrage et bonus de stage (starting bonus and traineeship bonus)

The “starting bonus” is a bonus addressing youngsters who start a practical training or gain professional experience while they are still attending school.

The starting bonus is granted for at most 3 years of training as part of a full training programme. The bonus amounts to 500 euros for the 2 first years and 750 euros for the third one.

The “traineeship bonus” is a bonus addressing employers who offer training or work to a young recruit who is still attending school. The conditions and amount of the bonus are the same as the starting bonus.

Impulsion 25 years old (Impulsion - de 25 ans)

A young Walloon job seeker aged under 25 may receive, under conditions, a work allocation for 3 years. It affects young people who don't have a degree.

Flexicurity measures focusing on young people

There is no legal framework for flexicurity measures focusing on young people.

Reconciliation of private and working life for young people

Youth holidays ([vacances jeunes](#)) are complementary holidays for young people. They are granted under conditions to young people who don't have access yet to "paid holidays" because they just start the working life according to the Federal Service for employment, work and social dialogue ([Service public fédéral pour l'emploi, le travail et le dialogue social](#)). During the youth holiday's period, they receive an allocation. The legal framework to refer to is the ministerial order of 14 June 2001 revising the ministerial order of 26 November 1991 on the unemployment regulation in the framework of youth holidays ([arrêté ministériel du 14 juin 2001 modifiant l'arrêté ministériel du 26 novembre 1991 portant les modalités d'application de la réglementation du chômage dans le cadre des vacances jeunes](#)) and the Royal Order of 25 November 1991.

Funding of existing schemes/initiatives

Employment public service (Forem and Actiris) charged to implement employment measures receive a consolidated budget by the Walloon Government (Forem) or the Government of the Region of Brussels (Actiris).

Forem concludes every 5 years an [agreement](#) with the Ministry of Employment. It defines the rules and conditions on which the Forem realises its missions. The budget of the Forem remains steady every year for the government's term (5 years).

Actiris concludes an [agreement](#) with the Brussels Government. The current agreement covers the period 2013-2017. It defines the missions and objectives of Actiris for the period covered.

Quality assurance

Employment public services, Forem or Actiris, are bound to an agreement signed with the Walloon or Brussels Government. This agreement sets out the rules and conditions on which Forem or Actiris realise their missions.

The agreements also plans a "yearly evaluation report". It is addressed to the Walloon or the Brussels Government respectively.

Forem and Actiris also commit to provide information to their respective Government according to the Law of 16 March 1954 related to the monitoring of some public bodies.

3.7 Cross-border mobility in employment, entrepreneurship and vocational opportunities

Programmes and schemes for cross-border mobility

The [International Youth Office](#) (BIJ) is the main public service [charged by decree](#) to coordinate [youth mobility](#). The Agency helps young people to fund their project abroad. Among all the programmes offered by the BIJ, some of them give the opportunity to young people to train and gain professional or entrepreneurial experience abroad:

1. "Quebec curriculum" programme supports young people from 16 to 35 to realise a professional project in Quebec, Canada.
2. Artichok programme supports young professional artists with their foreign project (e.g.: participation to a foreign festival, a contest abroad, etc.).
3. Entrechok programme aims at giving the opportunity to young entrepreneurs between 20 and 35 to realise an international mission in order to develop their entrepreneurial project (e.g.: participation to business fair abroad, participation to specific training which do not exist in Wallonia or Brussels, etc.).

4. Tremplin Job is a programme which enables young people to undertake a traineeship abroad. Tremplin + addresses young employees who want to change their career, discover a new professional activity.
5. Eurodyssée is a programme created by the Assembly of European Regions. It offers to young graduated aged between 18 and 30 years old the possibility to undertake a traineeship in Europe. The BIJ is in charge of the Walloon part of the programme. Actiris, the Brussels Employment Public Service, is responsible for young people living in Brussels.

Forem, the Walloon Employment Public Service, offers foreign programmes to young people as well.

1. Forem organises and funds traineeships in foreign countries for young job seekers:
 - in emerging countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China)
 - in Malta, Netherlands, Ireland.
1. Explort is a training and traineeship programme in the field of international trade developed in partnership with the skills centre "Forem Training Management & Trade" and AWEX (Walloon Agency of Exportation and Foreign Investments). The programme consists of a training of 1 or 2 months and a traineeship in a foreign enterprise from 2 weeks to 3 months.

[Actiris International](#) is the international placement service of the Brussels Employment Public Service, Actiris. Its main mission is to help young job seekers from Brussels to obtain a position or a traineeship abroad.

Legal framework

There is no legal framework regarding specifically incoming and outgoing young workers, trainees/apprentices and young professionals/entrepreneurs.

According to the International Youth Office, some obstacles to youth mobility regarding legislation exist.

- Young people receiving unemployment benefits are not allowed to keep them if they choose to undertake a traineeship abroad.
- Young people graduating after the age of 25 years old are not allowed to receive unemployment benefits (see section [3.11 current debates and reforms](#)). They must require financial support to "Public Centre of Social Action". People depending of this public social service must stay on the Belgian territory to receive the "Social Integration Income". This is an obstacle to mobility for young job seekers as it prevents young job seekers from gaining professional experience abroad.

3.8 Development of entrepreneurship competence

Policy Framework

The Walloon Government stated in the "**Mashall Plan 4.0**" (2015-2019) the importance "to raise awareness of sense of initiative and entrepreneurship". The Government, through the Minister of Economy, charged the [Agency Enterprise and Innovation](#), a public service, to implement this objective. Its missions are defined in the decree of 28 November 2013.

The Agency established a [strategic plan](#), "*entrepreneurship 3.15, 3 approaches 15 levers for enterprising generations*" for the term 2014-2020. It details the objectives and actions to implement in order to raise awareness of sense of initiative and entrepreneurship.

The 3 main approaches of the plan are complementary and consist in:

1. supporting an entrepreneurial education
2. investing in future entrepreneurs
3. increasing the number of young people who realise their entrepreneurial project.

The Agency targets students either directly through its communication or indirectly through teachers. It is a political choice to work with schools from primary schools to Universities.

The **first approach** aims at collaborating to the implementation of the European vision which considers “entrepreneurship” as part of one of the 8 key-competences for life-long learning.

The Agency understands “entrepreneurship” as a competence which includes soft skills and attitudes as well as more specialised knowledge and business skills (spirit of enterprise).

The Agency’s goal is to

- promote this competence in schools (from primary school to Universities),
- to share the philosophy of entrepreneurship and
- give the possibility to young people to think about entrepreneurial activity.

This position is in accordance with the objective of youth policies as developed in the French-Speaking Community. Youth policies through Youth Decrees focus on the promotion of participation of young people by developing a responsible, active and critical citizenship, in a spirit of solidarity. Young people are invited to have the sense of initiative in their life or at work.

With the **second approach**, the Agency identifies schools specialised in the entrepreneurial activity. The objective here is to develop the conditions for the appearance of entrepreneurial vocations specifically in these schools. For instance: intensive development of skills and attitudes, economic and entrepreneurial knowledge of students in lectures, connecting schools together, value student’s specific path to give value to a specific educational background which has developed entrepreneurial skills and attitudes.

Finally, the **third approach** of the Agency’s strategy is to “keep the flame alive”. The Agency creates the conditions to facilitate the development of young entrepreneur’s projects, provides guidance and coaching, highlights success stories and supports a Walloon network connecting young entrepreneurs and offering them opportunities.

The strategy grants importance to be inclusive and works with different school profiles in order to touch every young people. The Agency also pays particular attention to women’s entrepreneurship.

In 2007, the Agency launched for the first time the “Walloon Programme for Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship” as part of the first Marshall Plan. A call for “innovative projects” was launched. The Agency worked with students, teachers and schools (from primary school to Universities). The current plan 2014-2020 is the continuity of this first plan but it is adapted to new realities.

At federal level, the Minister of self-employed workers and middle classes has created the status “student-entrepreneur” for students under 25 years old. This law will come into effect the 1st of January 2017. This is a tax and social status which supports entrepreneur’s students who earn money thanks to their entrepreneurial activity while they are still at school. They used to be disadvantaged compare to the ones with a student job regarding the tax collecting.

The Agency charged to support Entrepreneurship in the Brussels Region is “Impulse”.

Formal learning

The Agency makes sure that each Walloon school ensures information about Walloon economy, entrepreneurial possibilities, and entrepreneurship awareness to every student. With this in mind, the Agency works with officers in charge of raising awareness about entrepreneurship. They encounter headteachers and teachers to raise awareness about entrepreneurship, promote the entrepreneurial teaching method and the importance to bring this competence into curricula across schools. They are the ambassadors of entrepreneurship in schools.

The Agency also launches “calls for projects” for activities for students to discover the “entrepreneurship world”. For instance, bringing a professional entrepreneur in school, role-playing, e-learning on the entrepreneurial thematic, etc.

Higher education is a chosen partner for the Agency. The strategy aims at developing more concrete activities with high schools and Universities dedicated to entrepreneurial activity and economy. The Agency supports these schools financially or with actions lead by associations or private operators. The objective is to create, develop or intensify lectures focused on entrepreneurship activity (how to make a business plan, accounting, etc.). These lectures are fully part of the academic programme and are part of the ECTS system.

The Agency intends to develop assessment tools to validate skills acquired through academic curricula or through non-formal or informal learning.

Walloon Universities have developed a status for students with a specific profile. It recognises entrepreneurial, disabled, sports and artist students a specific profile which offers them more flexibility with their timetable. It is an initiative of Universities and higher education schools themselves. Therefore, the status and its features differ depending on the University.

Non-formal and informal learning

The Agency Innovation Enterprise works mainly with formal and non-formal education.

However, the Agency cooperates with the International Youth Office. The programme “Entrechok” addresses directly young people. It offers them the possibility to travel abroad to develop their entrepreneurship project.

The International Youth Office is also a partner for a European project named “[programme AKI](#)” which aims at assessing and adding value to skills acquired by young people through an international mobility project.

Educators support in entrepreneurship education

The Agency considers the teacher as a key-person for the development of entrepreneurship. The teacher needs to be supported to take initiatives to develop the entrepreneurship skills and competences among its students. The AEI’s strategy focuses some of its actions in the training of teachers of formal and non-formal learning according to its strategic plan. AEI offers:

1. tools such as the [comic](#) 'Antoine and Laura create their company'. It is distributed to pupils with instructions for use to teachers. An other tool is a book '50 minutes to take action' which gives ideas to insert entrepreneurship in regular lectures, etc.
2. specific training like working groups about entrepreneurship teaching,
3. networking to connect teachers and enterprises.

There is no certification in entrepreneurship teaching.

3.9 Start-up funding for young entrepreneurs

Access to information

[Agency Enterprise and Innovation](#) makes sure to provide to students good quality information about the start-up creation, funding opportunities, specific professional guidance in Wallonia. The communication of these tools is made through education sector. Tools provided are:

1. a [website](#) with a specific chapter devoted to start-up creation
2. entrepreneurship guidance (chat between professional entrepreneurs and a young starter).

Since 2014, the Agency Enterprise and Innovation has implemented and coordinated a regional strategy delocalised in cities having superior education: "the student incubator". This structure offers students an individual coaching, co-working space, training, networking, information about a start-up funding to students and young graduated with an entrepreneurship project. Students have to apply individually. Once their project is selected, they receive support for 2 years maximum.

Access to capital

There is no specific policy measure to facilitate affordable funding for young entrepreneurs. Once they engage in a start-up creation, they have the possibility to submit to a Walloon grant addressing entrepreneurs of any ages.

3.10 Promotion of entrepreneurship culture

Special events and activities

The [Agency Enterprise Innovation](#) implements a strategy (see section 3.9) to support an entrepreneurial education aiming at promoting an entrepreneurship culture through formal and non formal education.

Networks and partnerships

There are no networks targeting specifically young people. Universities develop their own networks with private partners. These are youth-oriented, address an innovative, dynamic public but do not target specifically young entrepreneurs.

3.11 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

There are no forthcoming policy developments.

Ongoing debates

Youth unemployment has been particularly affected by the pandemic. With the cessation of student jobs in 2020, an increase of [5.3 %](#) of young job seekers has been observed.

4. SOCIAL INCLUSION

Initiatives to support young people's social inclusion are streamlined across various policy fields. The chapter illustrates the relevant parts of strategies, policy documents and actors pertaining to various policy topics such as poverty, education, youth welfare, immigration, employment and health. The Decree of 4 March 1991 related to Youth Welfare is currently revised. This is an important reform in the sector. The Government has decided, on the request of the Minister of Youth Welfare, to increase the budget of the Youth Welfare sector for 2017. The sector will receive 11.3 million additional euros in 2017. Youth Welfare is the [most refunded competence](#) in the 2017 budget.

4.1 General context

Main challenges to social inclusion

Poverty

According to Eurostat, the part of young people aged from 15 to 24 years old at risk of poverty or social exclusion was of 26.1% in Belgium in 2015.

In Belgium, the risk of poverty affects more single-parent families (34.2%). The risk of poverty is also quite high for families with 2 parents with at least 3 minors (19.9%) according to the [Memento 2014](#) "Life conditions of children and young people in the French-speaking Community" (Conditions de vie des enfants et des jeunes en Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles).

Education

In Belgium, the **dropout rate** regarding young people from 18 to 24 years old has been decreasing for the last 20 years: 18 % in 1992; 14% in 2000; 11 % in 2013. This rate is slightly lower than the European average according to the Memento 2014.

Professionals and young people report that the **educational context** is perceived as favourable to student's selection, school segregation and where the support of young people with learning disabilities is not well funded according to the "Inventory of Childhood and Youth in the French-speaking Community" ([état des lieux de l'enfance et de la jeunesse en Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles](#)).

Young people (18-24) not in training nor education with a certificate of lower secondary education are 17.7% in the Brussels region and a bit less than 15% in Wallonia according to the Memento 2014.

In 2012 in Belgium, the number of young people (25-29 years old):

- with low qualifications (at most the certificate of lower secondary education) : 18%;
- with medium qualifications (certificate of higher secondary school) : 40 %;
- with high qualifications (graduated from High School or University) : 42 %.

Major differences regarding learning disabilities depending on the educational form (comprehensive school, vocational education, etc.) exist according to the "Inventory of Childhood and Youth in the French-speaking Community" ([état des lieux de l'enfance et de la jeunesse en Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles](#)).

Employment

In Wallonia, the **unemployment rate** of young people stays high even if it tends to decrease according to the Forem's analysis "young Walloons and the labour market" ([les jeunes et le marché de l'emploi](#)).

In 2015, the unemployment rate of

- young Walloons was 32.2 %
- young people from Brussels was 36.2 % (Eurostat).

According to Eurostat, the percentage of young people living in Belgium “**neither in employment, education nor training**” amounted to 12.2 % in 2015.

17.5% of NEETS in Brussels and 15.0% in Wallonia.

Main concepts

The definition of social inclusion and social cohesion used in the French-speaking Community of Belgium are the ones used by the **Council of Europe**:

Social Inclusion is defined as “*the process of promoting the values, relations and institutions that enable all people to participate in social, economic and political life on the basis of equality of rights, equity and dignity*”.

Social Cohesion is defined as “*the capacity of a society to ensure the well-being of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding marginalisation. It characterises interdependence between members of society, shared loyalties and solidarity, common identities and sense of belonging to the same community*”.

Social cohesion mainly incorporates two societal goal dimensions:

- *Degree of disparities, inequalities and social exclusion. Societies characterised by a higher level of social cohesion have lower levels of it.*
- *Degree or strength of social relations, interactions and ties (societies characterised by a higher level of social cohesion have also higher levels of it).*

This, however, is an analytical distinction. In real life, different aspects may be related to each other, either positively or negatively”.

4.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Poverty

Policies related to the support of vulnerable persons (poverty issues, access to housing, to decent income, etc.) lie at the Federal, Regional and local level mainly through the action of Public Centres for Social Action.

Education

The French-speaking Community through the [Minister of Education](#) is responsible for education policies.

On [Eurypedia](#), there is a description of the structures of the educational system in the French-speaking Community.

Youth Welfare

The [Minister of Youth Welfare](#) at the French-speaking Community level is responsible for Youth Welfare.

The [Youth Welfare General Administration](#) develops mechanisms of cross-sectorial cooperation with different authorities at different level of power in order to help vulnerable young people in various field of action (health, disability service, social action centres, etc.).

Youth Work

The [Minister of Youth](#) at the French-speaking Community level is responsible for youth cultural policies (see [section 1.4 Youth Policy Decision-Making](#)).

Employment

Youth employment is part of the general employment policy. The Regions and the Federal Entity are both competent for employment policy. (See section [3.2 Administration and Governance](#))

They have different responsibilities regarding this field:

- The Federal Government is in charge of labour laws, social security and unemployment compensation;
- The Regions are responsible for measures aimed at supporting employment of target groups, training, lifelong learning and local agencies for employment.

Health and well-being

Since the 6th reform of the State, Regions are responsible for [health and well-being policies](#).

Immigration

The Federal level is mainly in charge of Immigration policies. However, the Minister of Youth Welfare within the French-speaking Community is also competent to implement some policies regarding the [support of unaccompanied foreign minors](#).

Main actors

Poverty

“Public Centres for Social Action” are important actors lying at the federal (RIS), regional and local (field of action) level (depending on the specificities of the support). Each municipality must have a CPAS. Their mission is to ensure the social support in order “*to enable everyone to live a life with human dignity*” as pointed out in the Law of 8 July 1976 related to Public Centres of Social Action.

This social support might be financial, medical, psychological, etc.

Education

The General Administration of Education ([Administration Générale de l'enseignement](#)) is responsible for the implementation of educational policies. It is composed of 8 sub-administrations. Each one are in charge of a specific thematic.

Beside the administration, there are [actors directly in contact with young people](#).

Apart from the teaching staff (headmaster teachers, educators, etc.), other public bodies are implemented to offer support to pupils:

- [Centres for Psychological-Medical-Social Services](#) (Centres Psycho-Medico-Sociaux)

Those services are free public services belonging to a network organised and funded by the General Administration of Education. A centre is composed of psychologists, social and medical assistants working together to support young people at school. It's a place where young people and their parents can talk about matters related to education, family and social life, health, etc.

- [Services to promote health at school](#)

Their mission is to realise medical check-up, to prevent the spreading of transmitted diseases and to ensure a healthy environment at school according to the decree of 20 December 2001 related to health promotion at school ([relatif à la promotion de la santé à l'école](#)).

- Mediation services at school ([service de médiation scolaire](#))

According to the [decree of 21 November 2013](#), the mission of mediation services is to take in charge relational issues between pupils, between pupils and their parents, teaching staff and pupils, etc. There are 2 services in charge at the French-speaking Community level.

One for the region of Brussels and one for the Walloon Region. In the Region of Brussels, mediators are part of the school. In the Walloon Region, mediators are external to the school according to the [circular n°1884 of 24 May 2007](#).

- “[Service des équipes mobiles](#)”

According to the [decree of 21 November 2013](#), this service is composed of external experts specialised in crisis management. Their missions are to take action when one of these situation happens within school (absenteeism in primary school; school dropout; to prevent or to solve a crisis situation at school level; to foster dialogue after a crisis situation at school level). This service is composed of 26 actors and 1 coordinator, appointed by the Government and placed under the authority of the General Direction of Compulsory Education (Direction Générale de l’Enseignement obligatoire).

- School attendance services ([Service d’accrochage scolaire](#))

According to the [decree of 21 November 2013](#), school attendance services provide social, educational and pedagogical support to pupils who tend to drop out school. These services are funded by the General Administration of Education and the General Administration of Youth Welfare. The work of the “School attendance services” is at the intersection of youth welfare, youth work and education sector.

Employment

See section [3.2 Administration and Governance](#)

Youth Welfare

The Minister of Youth Welfare is the responsible authority for Youth Welfare policies.

The [General Administration of Youth Welfare](#) is in charge of the implementation of the Decree of 18 January 2018 related to the prevention, youth welfare and youth protection. According to the latter decree, Youth Welfare is understood as child protection and addresses young people under 18 years old. The Decree organises the individual specialised care offered to vulnerable young people. This Decree gives a priority to prevention and the aid given in the living environment of the child. This Decree offers a legal framework in which the different actors presented below take action.

The Youth Welfare sector is composed of 2 branches:

- Public services:

The Administration, through the action of the Counsellor or the Director of Youth Welfare, provides a personalised support to young people in need and their families.

The Counsellor of Youth Welfare manages the Youth Welfare Service (Service de l’Aide à la Jeunesse – SAJ). The SAJ is a public authority which aims to protect young people in need and in social difficulties.

The aim of the SAJ is to find a solution to the problem of the youngster and its family without the intervention of justice. The Counsellor takes the final decision about the action to undertake in order to help the youngster. The support offered by the Counsellor is not compelling.

The Director of Youth Welfare manages the Service of Youth Protection (Service de Protection de la Jeunesse – SPJ). The SPJ takes action in two scenarios:

- when no solution of voluntary support measure has been found between the SAJ and the youngster in need;
- when the youngster has committed an offense and therefore a measure has been taken by the Youth Court;

In the two scenarios, the SPJ demands a compelling support measure.

- Private services:

The SPJ and the SAJ guide young people in need towards specific private services which are recognised, funded and supervised by the General Administration of Youth Welfare.

Those private services organise and implement the specific support as decided by the SAJ or the SPJ. In accordance with the objectives of the Decree of 2018, those private services must:

- work on the specific and written request of the Youth Counsellor or the Youth Director;
- give priority to prevention;
- favour a support implemented in the social environment of the youngster;
- adapt the service according to the young beneficiary;
- offer a local assistance.

The following actors have also an important role to play in the sector of Youth Welfare:

- Service d'Aide en Milieu Ouvert (AMO)

These structures offer support to minors in need in their social environment. The AMO's objectives are to offer preventive support in the living environment of the youngster. One of the main feature of this youth welfare service is that young people come in a voluntary way. They organise their action around 2 main axes: individual support (educative and social aid) and collective work (activities in the neighbourhood, etc.). They also organise homework school, creative workshop, etc.

- Youth Court (Tribunal de la Jeunesse)

The Youth Court is responsible for many matters regarding youth delinquency. It also takes action when no solution of voluntary support has been found to help a youngster in need or in social difficulties.

- General Delegate for the Rights of Child ([Délégué Général aux droits de l'enfant](#))

Its main mission is to ensure the protection of the rights and interests of every child and young people. He is an ombudsman and he has the moral authority to stop any social exclusion or marginalisation process he notices. He is delegated directly by the Government of the French-speaking Community.

- Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth Welfare ([Observatoire de l'Enfance, de la Jeunesse et de l'Aide à la Jeunesse](#))

See section [1.6 Evidence base policy](#)

Youth Work

See section [1.4 Youth Policy Decision-Making](#)

Health and well-being

Region

- The Agency for a Quality Life ([Agence pour une Vie de Qualité](#)) is the Walloon public body competent for health and well-being, family and disability policies.
- Family Planning Centres (planning familial) are services aiming at receive, inform and support persons, couples and families on the thematic of sexual and affective life. They are funded by the Regions (Brussels or Wallonia).

French-speaking Community

- Birth and Childhood Office ([Office de la Naissance et de l'Enfance](#)) This is a public body placed under the supervision of the government of the French-speaking Community. This body is the reference in the French-speaking Community regarding **childhood policies, medical and social support of the mother and her child**, host centre for children out of their social environment and support to parenthood. The Office must ensure the authorisation, the recognition, the funding, the support and the evaluation

of childcare facilities for children and youngsters (homework schools, holidays centres, specialised childcare facilities,...). The other missions of the Office are the support of children in relation with their social environment, the promotion of health, the implementation of actions to support parenthood.

Immigration

- Fedasil is the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers. This Agency has a specific service in charge of unaccompanied foreign minors.
- A service within the General Administration for Youth Welfare has been created in order to support Fedasil in the elaboration of its policy related to the reception of unaccompanied foreign minors. This service creation is due to a convention signed between the Federal authorities and the French-speaking Government.

The service within the Youth Welfare Administration is in charge of:

- guiding unaccompanied foreign minors towards housing services;
- the financial and the administrative management;
- offering a support related to the rights of foreigners.

Many associations also act directly to support unaccompanied foreign minors.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

The sector of education collaborates with the sector of Youth Welfare through the decree of 21 November 2013 organising policy cooperation between the compulsory education and the youth sector to enhance well-being at school, school reintegration, prevention of violence and vocational guidance (see section [4.3 Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Young People](#) and [6.3 Preventing early leaving from education and training](#)).

See also section [6.6 Social inclusion through education and training](#).

4.3 Strategy for the social inclusion of young people

Existence of a National Strategy on social inclusion

There is no single strategy for the social inclusion of young people in the French-speaking Community of Belgium. However, there are various strategies each depending on a separate action field.

Strategies targeting exclusively young people are:

1. National plan to tackle child poverty
2. Action Plan for the Rights of Child
3. [Decree of 4 March 1991 related to Youth Welfare](#)
4. [Decree of 21 November 2013 organising policies which are at the intersection of Youth Welfare and Education](#)
5. Anti-discrimination plan.

Strategy targeting the whole population including young people:

1. The Social Cohesion Plan for the Walloon Region.

Scope and contents

National plan to tackle child poverty

The Belgian Government adopted a national plan to tackle child poverty in 2013 for the period 2013- 2014. A new plan is currently [in progress](#) and will cover the period 2016-2019.

The plan addresses 140 actions aimed at reducing child poverty in order to meet the objectives set by the European Strategy 2020.

These actions are taken at various levels of power: federal, regional and community levels.

These 140 actions are constructed around 3 policy fields:

- access to adequate resources;
- access to affordable and good quality services;
- children's right to participate.

A final objective consists of concluding partnerships between various policy fields and level of governance.

Action Plan for the Rights of Child

The French-speaking Community and the Walloon Region have adopted a common Action Plan for the Rights of Childs in 2011. It sets out actions to promote the rights of child according to the UN convention on the Rights of Child. The Action plan has 3 main axes and 216 actions.

The 3 main axes are:

1. Governance of the Rights of Child
2. Information, training and education to the Rights of Child
3. To tackle social inequalities and discriminations.

The first plan covers the period 2011-2014.

Decree of 4 March 1991 related to Youth Welfare

The Decree of 4 March 1991 is a legal document which rules the individual specialised care offered to minors in need and their families. It presents a general philosophy integrating the major directions to be followed in the organisation of policy making on social inclusion of young people.

The Decree targets:

- minors in need or in social difficulties aged from 0 to 18 years old
- young people in need or in social difficulties until the age of 20 if the aid is requested before the youngster turns 18
- persons who encounter serious difficulties raising kids
- children whose health or security is compromised or whose conditions of education are compromised by the behaviour of the kid himself, its family or related.

This Decree points out that *"every young people as targeted by the Decree has the right to receive the specific aid as organised in the present Decree. This aid tends to enable these young people to develop themselves in the conditions of equal opportunities in order to live a life with human dignity"*.

This specific social support organised by the decree has the following philosophy:

- give priority to prevention
- favour a support implemented in the social environment of the youngster

- respect the fundamental rights of the youngster and its family
- the will to avoid the intervention of justice as much as possible
- promote a constant dialogue and a constant information
- the aid has a temporality of one year. The aid is reevaluated every year.

Decree of 21 November 2013 organising policies which are at the intersection of Youth Welfare and Education

Youth Welfare and Education Administrations cooperate to offer a global response to school dropout. The decree of 21 November 2013 organises that cooperation.

The measures implemented revolve around 4 objectives:

- well-being of young people at school;
- school dropout prevention;
- the prevention and the decrease of violence;
- the support for educational counselling.

Anti-discrimination Plan

The plan contains 53 measures to stop discriminations. These affect all competences of the French-speaking Community and engage all members of the Government. These measures focuses on young people. The Minister of Youth and of Equal Opportunities has elaborated the Plan.

Measures affect various sector including:

1. Schools

Measures to tackle hateful speech online, the introduction of a subject on education to citizenship, to tackle discriminations at school, train teaching staff for the promotion of a more inclusive school, etc.

1. Youth Centres

Train youth workers to radicalisation, support them with learning tools, release a standardised, objective and non for profit information about every study fields and about labour market's realities, support and encourage citizen activities, etc.

The plan covers the period 2014-2019.

At Regional level

The Walloon Social Cohesion Plan supports social cohesion plans implemented at local level. Each municipality must to achieve the 6 following aims related to the rights defined in the Belgian Constitution:

- right to a decent income;
- right to health protection and to social and medical assistance;
- right to a decent housing and to a healthy environment;
- right to work;
- right to training;
- right to cultural and social fulfilment.

Each plan must be constructed around the 4 following axes:

- socioprofessionnal insertion;
- access to decent housing;
- access to health care and treatment of substance abuse;

- re-establish the social, intergenerational and intercultural ties.

The first plan covered the period 2009-2013. The new one covers the period 2014-2019.

Responsible authority

National plan to tackle child poverty

The plan was at the initiative of the Federal Secretary of State for the Fight against Poverty. However, every level of governance has been included in the work process.

The work process takes place through the Interministerial Conference about the integration in society. This working group is composed of competent ministries at each level of governance (Federal, Regions and Communities). The conference is chaired by the Federal Minister for Social Integration.

Action Plan for the Rights of Child

The French-speaking Community and the Walloon Region are the responsible authority for the Action Plan for the Right of Child.

Decree of 4 March 1991 related to Youth Welfare

The main authority responsible for the Decree of 4 March 1991 related to Youth Welfare is the Minister of Youth Welfare which lies at the French-speaking Community-wide level.

Decree of 21 November 2013 organising policies which are at the intersection of Youth Welfare and Education

The Minister of Youth Welfare and the Minister of Education are both responsible for the Decree of 21 November 2013 related to well-being at school.

Plan anti-discrimination 2014-2019

The Government has approved the Plan which was elaborated by the Minister of Youth and of Equal Opportunities.

Walloon Social Cohesion Plan

The Minister of Local Authorities is responsible for the Walloon Social Cohesion Plan. Each Municipality is responsible for its own Social Cohesion Plan.

Revisions/Updates

National plan to tackle child poverty

The plan which covers the period of time 2016-2019 is still in process.

Action Plan for the Rights of Child

A [provisional evaluation](#) took place at the beginning of 2013. The Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth Welfare was in charge of the evaluation. It gathered information through an online survey from every administration in charge of the Rights of Child. The Observatory also organised a debate.

The evaluation report contains 3 parts:

1. An evaluation of the Action Plan
2. Evaluation of the implementation of the Action plan

It was based on indicators build in cooperation with administrations, Social Cohesion Direction of the Walloon Region and the Walloon Institute for statistics IWEPS.

1. Advices addressed to both Governments

Decree of 4 March 1991 related to Youth Welfare

The decree of 4 March 1991 has been revised. The Minister of Youth Welfare is the responsible authority in charge of the modification of the decree. At the moment, the [draft decree](#) has been approved by the government.

The first motivation to revise this decree is the 6th State Reform at national level. This reform has reorganised the allocation of competences between the different levels of power. The French-speaking Community has received new competences regarding youth offenders.

The second motivation is the will to adapt a text which is 25 years old in order to take into account social evolutions.

The new decree aims at including the following changes:

1. It aims at reinforcing prevention

General prevention has become the priority. It is now a specific policy. To support the prevention policy, a new body is created: the Prevention Borough Council (Conseil de prévention d'arrondissement). The role of this cross-sectoral body is to foster dialogue and collaboration between all actors involved in prevention matters on the Borough territory (arrondissement).

Regarding prevention, one of the measures debated concerns the age of young people affected by prevention measures. It will move from 18 to 25 years old. The ambition is to offer a continuous support to young people after they turn 18. Many reasons are highlighted to explain this decision (observers expressed the necessity to ensure the continuity during this period of change, the evolution of society with a delayed active life, youth cultural policies that agree to define young people until the age of 30 years old, European policies targeting young people focus on youth from 14 to 25 years old, etc.).

1. It aims at reinforcing the rights of young people in the framework of Youth Welfare
2. It includes a new section which relates to the care and education of young offenders (minors).

The French-speaking Community is now in charge of the determination of these measures while the Federal level is still responsible for the procedures. These measures were part of the law of 8 April 1965 related to youth protection (loi du 8 avril 1965 relative à la protection de la jeunesse, à la prise en charge des mineurs ayant commis un fait qualifié d'infraction et à la réparation du dommage causé par ce fait). The new decree includes the Law of 8 April 1965.

Decree of 21 November 2013 organising policies which are at the intersection of Youth Welfare and Education

There is no revision at the moment.

Plan anti-discrimination 2014-2019

The Plan anti-discrimination succeeds the Plan "equality" of the former term.

Walloon Social Cohesion Plan

The Walloon Social Cohesion Plan is currently revised. The new plan will focus more on the fight against poverty and a bigger support to single-parent families.

4.4 Inclusive programmes for young people

Programmes for vulnerable young people

European Social Fund (Fond Social Européen)

The European Social Fund is being used to support an intervention aimed at employment, initial and lifelong learning, social inclusion and stop discriminations.

There are 5 ESF plans: one at federal level, and one for each Belgian entity (Brussels, Flemish Community, Wallonia and German Community).

According to the [website of ESF Belgium](#), for the period 2014-2020, the French-speaking Community receives around 577 million euro from the ESF Fund and about 36 million euro for the Youth Employment Initiative. So, 614 million euro in total. Total amounts are available in the [partnership agreement](#) for Belgium, programme 2014-2020, version 8.1 of 24 October 2014. The French-speaking entities (Walloon Region, Brussels-Capital and the French-speaking Community) invest the same amount for the implementation of the projects.

The specific operational programme ESF for Wallonia-Brussels 2020 develops the ESF strategy for the period 2014-2020. It includes, as 4th priority objective, the sustainable integration of young people to work.

The list of all funded projects 2014-2020 (youth and non-youth) is available [here](#).

Education

According to the [Belgian Constitution](#), access to compulsory education (primary and secondary) is free of charge.

A number of top-level programmes aimed at keeping vulnerable young people engaged in education exist as follows:

- The French-speaking Community allocates [grants and study loans](#) to pupils in secondary and higher education under certain conditions (pupils from low income households).
- The Decree of 3 March 2004 organising specialised education ([Décret du 3 mars 2004 organisant l'enseignement spécialisé](#)). This Decree aims to insert disabled young people into regular education. According to Eurypedia, very early on (in the law of 6 July 1970), Belgium created a dedicated, well-structured organisation for the education of children who are "apt to be educated but cannot attend an ordinary school". Consequently, in addition to ordinary full-time education, the French Community organises or subsidises, at the nursery, primary, and secondary levels, specialised education for people between the ages of three and twenty-one (with possible age limit dispensations) with a disability. Such education has been adapted on several occasions (in the decrees of 11 March 1986, 3 March 2004 and 5 February 2009). More detailed information in Eurypedia. More information in [Eurypedia](#);
- The Decree of 18 May 2012 aimed at implementing a support to welcome and offer education to first generation immigrants in organised or subsidised education ([Décret du 18 mai 2012 visant à la mise en place d'un dispositif d'accueil et de scolarisation des élèves primo-arrivants dans l'enseignement organisé ou subventionné par la Communauté Française](#)). Pupils are then welcome in DASPA (specific classrooms) from one week to 12 months with a maximum period of 18 months. The objectives include the optimal insertion of young immigrants, an education adapted to the specific needs (language, culture), and a transition before the insertion in a regular classroom.
- The Decree related to Homework School ([décret relatif à la reconnaissance et au soutien des écoles de devoirs](#)). These structures welcome young people from 6 to 15 after school. They offer learning and social support.

Youth Work

- The [decree on Youth Centres](#) focuses a specific support to equal opportunities for all (Dispositif particulier d'égalité des chances). It gives specific support to youth centres working with young people with social, economic or cultural disadvantaged background. The admissible recognised Youth Centres receive an additional grant (3 205 euros) and a half-time additional youth worker (24 3016, 42 euros). In 2017, 41 Youth Centres received this specific support. The budget for this dispositive amounts to 1 128 378. 22 euros. The responsible authority is the Minister for Youth at the French-speaking Community. This specific support is ongoing since 2000.
- The [decree on Youth Organisations](#) also focuses a specific support to actions targeted at beneficiaries with specific needs (Dispositif particulier de soutien aux actions destinées à des publics spécifiques). It gives specific support to youth organisations working with vulnerable public (disadvantaged background, disabled young people, etc.). The admissible recognised youth organisations receive an additional grant (7 824.92 euros) and a half-time additional youth worker (24 316.42 euros). In 2017, 8 Youth Organisations received this specific support. The budget for this dispositive amounts to 257 130, 72 euros. The responsible authority is the Minister for Youth at the French-speaking Community. The budget amounted approximately 60 000 euro included in the global grant for Youth Organisations. This specific support is ongoing since 2009.

Health and well-being

- Walloon call for Projects to ensure transition for disabled young people from 16 to 25 years old (Projet "transition 16-25 ans")

The Walloon call for projects focuses on the **transition between school and working life** for disabled young people aged between 16 and 25 years old. The call for projects is organised by the Agency for a Life of Quality, the Walloon Agency responsible for Social Action, Health and Well-being. The Walloon Minister for Social Action has launched this call for projects which exists since 2010.

A similar call for projects has been launched in the framework of the European Social Fund and focuses on young disabled people from 15 to 24 years old. This call is also managed by the Public Agency for a Life of Quality.

According to the website of the [Agency](#), many social workers have observed that information about disabled people are not shared enough by the main actors involved (schools, frontlines services, support services). As a result, there is a lack of continuity regarding the care offered to disabled people and a difficulty to insert them in relevant activities in link with their life project. It has also been noticed that when they turn 18 or at the moment they leave school, young disabled people are more likely to lose their social network and entering a period of inactivity.

Child abuse

Yapaka is a programme to prevent child abuse initiated by the French-speaking Community in 1998. The legal framework is the [decree of 12 May 2004](#) related to the aid provided to children victim of abuses (décret relative à l'Aide aux enfants victims de maltraitance). It revises the initial decree of 16 March 1998.

Immigration

A convention has been signed the 16th February 2016 between the Federal authorities and the French-speaking Government regarding unaccompanied foreign minors. [According to the Youth Welfare Department](#), the objective of this convention is to support Fedasil, the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, in the elaboration of its policy related to the reception of unaccompanied foreign minors. This Plan is implemented by the Government of the French-speaking Community until December 2016. It will be renewed

on the basis of the evolutions related to funding possibilities and the evolutions of migration flows.

Within the French-speaking Community, the General Administration of Youth Welfare has been appointed to implement this convention.

There are 4 actions in the "MENA's plan" according to the Youth Welfare Department's publication "[reper'AJ](#)":

1. the housing of 130 unaccompanied foreign minors by services recognised and funded by the French-speaking Community. This action is co-funded by Fedasil. The aim is to offer to unaccompanied foreign minors small housing structures with an individual support;
2. the reception of unaccompanied foreign minors in host families. This action is fully funded by the General Administration for Youth Welfare and supervised by associations funded and recognised by the Administration;
3. An action to support the autonomy of unaccompanied foreign minors. This action is organised by an association Mentor-escale;
4. An action to ensure a socio-educational support for unaccompanied foreign minors who are not yet supported by associations. 4 AMO of Brussels, which are Youth Welfare associations, are in charge of this action ([SOS Jeunes Quartier Libre](#), [AtMosphères](#), [Inser'Actions](#), [l'Oranger](#)). It includes street work.

Fedasil, at the Federal level, also has a specific service in charge of unaccompanied foreign minors. They work in collaboration with the service of the General Administration of Youth Welfare.

Funding

Information related to funding are mentioned above with the description of the programme when available.

Quality assurance

The main mechanisms to monitor and ensure the quality of the programmes implemented are mainly statistical studies, surveys, annual reports. The Youth welfare publishes on its [website](#) various surveys and analysis to report on its activities and the situation in the sector. The Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth Welfare also provides statistical studies, analysis and evaluation of youth welfare and youth policies.

4.5 Initiatives promoting social inclusion and raising awareness

Intercultural awareness

Formal learning

In the official education system, the French-speaking Community has introduced citizenship education as a separate subject since 2015.

The main general aims of citizenship education are defined in the decree of 24 July 1997 on the missions of school. They are common for primary and secondary school.

1. Promote self-confidence and self-development of each pupil
2. Bring pupils to appropriate knowledge and acquire skills to be capable of learning and to take an active part in the social, cultural and economic life

3. Prepare every pupils to be responsible citizens, capable of contributing to the development of democratic, solidarity, pluralist society receptive to others cultures
4. Ensure for every pupils equal chances for social emancipation.

Further information in section [5.7 "Learning to participate" through formal, non-formal and informal learning](#)

Non formal and informal learning

- Call for projects for the Promotion of citizenship and Interculturality (promotion de la citoyenneté et de l'interculturalité)

The Minister of Youth, equal opportunities and women's rights has initiated in 2016 a [dispositive](#) to support actions aiming at strengthening harmonious cohabitation (vivre ensemble). The main topics addressed are:

1. Youth education to citizenship;
2. Promotion of intercultural dialogue and racism prevention;
3. Protection and promotion of the rights of migrant persons, in particularly women's rights.

It addresses associations and local powers. For the year 2017, the [budget](#) allocated amounts to 1 450 000 euros..

- International Youth Office's programmes

The [International Youth Office](#) funds [cross-border voluntary projects](#).

- The programme BEL'J

The 3 Belgian Ministers for Youth finalised in 2009 an agreement about the creation of a programme "[Bel'J](#)". This aims to promote young volunteers mobility and youth exchanges between the 3 Belgian communities.

- « Summer solidarity, I am a partner» ([Été solidaire je suis partenaire](#))

This programme aims at promoting citizenship education and bringing generations together, while providing a first employment experience. This operation allows local public services (municipalities, public centres for social action, public housing corporations) to hire young people to perform little work in their neighbourhood during summer holidays. The operation targets young people from 15 to 21, coming from the areas where the actions take place.

This programme is ongoing since 1994. The responsible authority is the [Walloon Minister of Social Action](#). The service in charge of the implementation of the programme is the [Department of Social Cohesion](#).

According to the [Social Cohesion Department's website](#), the total amount allocated was 1 208 000 euros. The total budget in 1994 (at the launch of the programme) was 115 920 euros.

As main outcomes, the Social Cohesion Department shares about the success of the programme on its [website](#). The increasing success is observed through statistics and annual reports: from 150 projects with 1268 young people in 1997 to 415 projects with more than 2769 young people in 2013.

• Youth associations

Many [youth associations](#) work as well on intercultural awareness. They develop punctual projects with young people to promote intercultural dialogue to facilitate understanding, acceptance and tolerance of others cultures. For instance, the youth organisation "[Les compagnons batisseurs ASBL](#)".

- **Gender equality**

The deconstruction of gender stereotypes and representation, from an early age, is a priority of the Government of the French-speaking Community. Through the "0-25 Child and Youth Plan", 105,000 euros are released to finance awareness campaigns to fight gender stereotypes. A part of this amount will be devoted to the training of operators from the various sectors of the Federation. This budget will also allow the establishment of an awareness campaign related to prevention and to make the helplines of victims of violence visible.

Young people's rights

The Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth Welfare

Belgium is a signatory of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth Welfare is charged by the Community's Government to promote this Convention to the population.

The Observatory is charged by the government to implement the article 42 (promoting the principles of the Convention in the French-Speaking Community) and 44 (reporting to the UN the measures taken at national level related to the Convention) of the UN Convention. In this context, the Observatory is notably in charge of the follow-up and the evaluation of the Action Plan for the Rights of Child adopted by the French-speaking Community Government and the Walloon Region.

The Observatory coordinates the Permanent Group for the follow-up of the UN Convention. The Group's missions include:

- The exchange of information and the share about initiatives which ensure the promotion and the implementation of the Rights of Child from local to international level
- The participation to the elaboration of the national report as aimed by the article 44 of the UN Convention
- Give importance to what children say.

The Observatory has also created a [database](#) listing all information, education tools or training processes related to the Rights of Child existing in the French-speaking Community and French-speaking countries (Switzerland, Canada, France). These materials may be books, exhibitions, plays, and websites. They are all related to subjects referred in the UN Convention (participation, minors in the migration, right for family life, etc.). This database addresses young people, youth workers or anyone interested in.

The Observatory has also published on its website 5 **"child-friendly" reports**. The aim is to inform children about decisions which affect them by offering them accessible and easy content.

The General Delegate of the Rights of Child

The General Delegate of the Rights of Child (Délégué Général aux droits de l'enfant) has for **mission** to ensure the protection of the rights and interests of every child and young people. He is an ombudsman. He has the moral authority to stop any social exclusion or marginalisation process he notices. He is appointed directly by the Government of the French-speaking Community.

Youth Sector

29 [Youth Information Centres](#) are recognised by the the French-speaking Community. Their aim is to **inform young people about their rights, their duties** and every subject that might interest youth (employment, health, international mobility, etc.). They use various communication tools (website, events, information folder, etc.). These youth associations are recognised and funded by the Youth Department. They don't target groups of young people but they sometimes work with a thematic.

Some Youth Organisations and some Youth Centres work also on youth rights. For instance, the Youth Organisation "Youth and Rights" ([Jeunesse et Droit ASBL](#)) work specifically on this thematic though 3 axes: edition of a monthly magazine, trainings offered to youth workers and animations.

Youth Welfare Sector

Services for Youth Rights are recognised and funded by the Youth Welfare Department. They are recognised as "support services opened to young people" (Services d'aide en milieu ouvert - AMO). They offer social and legal information about any problem a young people may encounter (access to social security, school dropout, etc.). They also offer social support to young people if requested.

Key initiatives to safeguard democracy and prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism

At the Community-wide level

The Government of the French-speaking Community developed in 2016 a global network to take in charge extremism and violent radicalisation. It offers to citizens and professionals a support regarding the prevention of any forms of extremism and violent radicalisation. 2 services are dedicated to this measure:

1. The Resource Center of the Network ([Le CREA](#) - Centre de ressources et d'appui du Réseau);
2. The Support Center for persons affected by extremism and violent radicalisation ([Le CAPREV](#) - Centre d'Aide et de Prise en charge de toute personne concernée par les Extrémismes et Radicalismes Violents).

The network also includes:

- [Le Service des équipes mobiles de l'Enseignement obligatoire](#) : this service is composed of external experts specialised in crisis management. They take action to support schools in case of problems or crisis, linked among others things to extremism or violent radicalisation.
- Points of contact within the various administration of the Ministry in order to bring responses and support to stakeholders in every field of competences (youth, education, etc.).

4.6 Access to quality services

Housing

Under the Belgian Constitution, everyone has the right to live a life with human dignity. The Belgian Constitution underwrites the social, economic and cultural rights of everyone which includes the right to decent housing. This right remains "declarative". There is no obligation of result.

The Walloon Accommodation Society ([Société wallonne du logement](#)) and the Brussels Region Accommodation Society ([Société du logement de la Région Bruxelloise](#)) have for main objective to provide accommodation to low income persons on their territory.

Minors who are forced to leave their home when under the age of 18 are likely to receive assistance from the Youth Welfare Service (voluntary aid) or the Youth Court (compulsory aid). These public services will guide the minor to the right aid service according to the nature of the problem.

Welfare services are ruled by the

1. the decree of 18 January related to youth welfare
2. the Civil Code

3. the UN Convention on the Rights of Child.

These legal texts encourage the upholding and/or the recovery of family ties. The housing of children outside the family environment must remain an exception and a temporary situation. Each social worker must keep that spirit in mind and work in order to reduce the placement time. The Youth Welfare Decree limits the time of any aid measure to 1 year. After 1 year, the situation is reevaluated and the aid measures can be renewed. In any cases, contacts with the family are maintained to concretize the belonging of the kid to its birth family.

Aid services (placement institutions) are recognised and funded by the Youth Welfare Administration. Each aid service has its own specificities (working with abused children, emergency centres, family placement, etc).

Aid services recognised by the Decree are also responsible for supporting young people to gain autonomy when they leave their placement institution. This aid must be requested by one of these 3 actors:

1. the youth welfare counsellor
2. the youth welfare director
3. the youth court.

The aid to support minor's autonomy revolves around 2 axes:

1. offering a support to young people who leave their placement institution.
This aid relates to the budget management, housing, energy saving.
2. offering a complementary financial support for security deposit and for furniture's.

Social services

Social services for every young people

Each family receives **family allowances** according to the [Law](#) of 4 april 2014 revising the Law of 19 December 1939 related to family allowances.

Family allowances increase with the number of dependent children. Until the age of 18, family allowances are granted without conditions. From 18 to 25, the family allowance is granted

- during the time of education of the youngster or
- once the latter has registered as job seeker.

Supplement can be granted in various cases such as single-parent families, orphans or disabled persons in charge of children, long-term unemployed persons or persons with a pension

Family allowances have been reformed with the 6th state reform in 2016 (see section 4.8).

Social services for young people with financial difficulties

According to the Belgian Constitution (Art 78), everyone deserves social integration. This right can be reached through social integration income or through employment according to the Law of 26 May 2002 related to the right of social integration updated on 1st June 2017 ([relative à l'intégration sociale](#)). The mission of Public Centres for Social Action (CPAS), local public services, is to ensure this right.

Public Centres for Social Action (CPAS), local public services, are charged to support low income persons or households who meet the eligibility criteria. These criteria are defined in the Federal Law of 8 July 1976 related to Public Centres for Social Action ([Loi organique des centres publics d'action sociale](#)).

Belgian minors with financial difficulties receive social support from their local Public Centre for Social Action. Social support can be medical, psychological, material, etc.

Belgian adults (18 or more) or minors assimilated as majors by law (for instance, young parents) with financial difficulties receive social support and are also eligible for the Integration Social Income.

To receive the Social Integration Income, young people aged between 18 and 25 must sign an "integration contract". This contract consists of an individual project for social integration. This can be, for instance, a professional project (find a job or a training). The youngster in need is supported by a referent social worker in the elaboration of the project.

Since the 1st September 2016, every new beneficiary (young adult or not) of the Social Integration Income must sign this integration contract to be eligible for the Integration Social Income.

Health care

Birth and Childhood Office is a public body placed under the supervision of the Government of the French-speaking Community. This body is the reference in the French-speaking Community regarding childhood policies, **medical and social support of the mother and her child** (free medical consultations for kids from 0 to 6), host centres for children out of their social environment and support to parenthood. The [decree of 17 July 2002](#) reforming the Birth and Childhood Office is the legal framework to refer to.

Birth and Childhood Office is in charge of the authorisation, the recognition, the funding, the support and the evaluation of childcare facilities for kids (homework Schools, holiday's Centres, specialised childcare facilities, etc.). Birth and Childhood Office must also ensure the support of children in relation with their social environment, the promotion of health, the implementation of actions to support parenthood.

Health insurance

In Belgium, **individual health insurance** is compulsory for everybody. People must affiliate to the health insurance of their choice.

The main **mission** of compulsory health insurance is to ensure the partial refund of medical and health fees and offer a complementary financial support in case of work incapacity. The related legal framework is the Law related to the compulsory health care insurance and compensation coordinated on 14 July 1994 ([Loi relative à l'assurance obligatoire soins de santé et indemnités coordonnée le 14 juillet 1994](#)).

Depending on the health insurance young people are affiliated to, they receive advantages (cheaper trips, financial intervention for dental treatment or contraception, financial intervention for participation to sports activities, etc.).

Young people aged from 0 to 25 still in education are entitled to their parent's health insurance. After 25 or at the moment they start to work, they must affiliate to their own health insurance.

Women under 21 years old are eligible for a complementary financial intervention for the reimbursement of contraception according to the [royal order of 16 September 2013](#) (arrêté royal). This intervention is complementary to the regular intervention which affects all women with the compulsory health care insurance. The aim of this measure is to improve the access of contraception and avoid the risk of unwanted pregnancy among young people according to the [website of INAMI](#) (Institut National maladie invalidité).

Financial services

See Social Services: [young people with financial difficulties](#).

Quality assurance

Social Services - Young people with financial difficulties

The Federal Public Service Social Integration (Service public fédéral de programmation Intégration sociale) is charged to defend the right for social integration. One of its action is to make statistical studies, surveys, analysis, satisfaction enquiries to [evaluate and monitor policies](#) and actions in the field of social integration. Local Centres for Public Integration also develop statistical studies, annual reports on various thematic linked to their field of action.

Health care

The INAMI (Institut National maladie invalidité) also makes annual report on its actions, statistics on various thematic linked to health care policies available on its [website](#). The Birth and Childhood Office publishes [annual report](#) on its actions available on its website.

4.7 Youth work to foster social inclusion

Policy/legal framework

Youth sector

[See section 1.4 Youth Policy-Decision Making.](#)

Youth Welfare sector

The decree of 4 March 1991 related to Youth Welfare organises and rules the youth structure "Service d'aide en milieu ouvert" (AMO)

These structures offer support to minors in need in their social environment. The AMO's **objectives** are to offer preventive support in the living environment of the youngster. One of the main feature of this youth welfare service is that young people come in a voluntary way. They organise their action around 2 main axes: individual support (educative and social aid) and collective work (activities in the neighbourhood, etc.). They also organise homework school, creative workshop, etc.

Main inclusive Youth-Work programmes and target groups

Youth Sector

Youth work programmes are at the initiative of **youth associations**. Their main objectives are "to promote individual and collective participation of young people by developing a responsible, active and critical citizenship, in a spirit of solidarity".

All the youth associations are dedicated to promoting the **development of critical, active and responsible citizenship** (CRAC). They do so by raising awareness about social realities and by promoting responsible attitudes through social, economic, cultural and political participation and socio-cultural practice.

This work participates to the inclusion of young people in the society.

Youth Welfare sector

The aim of "Service d'aide en milieu ouvert – AMO" is to **support vulnerable young people** with issues they encounter. Every young people is welcome. They come **voluntarily** to the "Service d'aide en milieu ouvert". Youth workers also organise activities with and for young people (school support, dancing lessons, outdoor activities, etc.).

Youth work providers in the field of social inclusion for young people

Youth Sector

[See section 1.4 Youth Policy-Decision Making.](#)

Training and support for youth workers engaged in social inclusion programmes

Youth sector

The ministerial circular of 1st September 2009 organising the support of training programmes related to animation, socio-cultural and socio-artistic action ([circulaire ministérielle du 1er septembre 2009 organisant le soutien des programmes de formation des cadres de l'animation et de l'action socioculturelles et socio-artistiques](#)) is the legal framework regarding youth work in the French-speaking Community.

The Youth Department within the General Administration of Culture implements this circular.

The circular organises the funding of training operators. These ones provide training to people interested in youth work and in socio-cultural action (learning tools, training programmes, etc.).

Youth Welfare sector

Formal education organises training to work in social sector (educator, social assistant, etc.).

Financial support

Youth Sector

[See section 1.7 Funding Youth Policy](#)

Youth Welfare Sector

The Government of the French-Speaking Community establishes an annual budget for all the policies the Government is competent for. The specific budget allocated to youth welfare policies amounted to 283 926 euros in 2016 according to the French-speaking Community indicators 2017 ([La fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles en chiffres 2017](#)). The amount allocated to prevention including the funding of AMO was 23 254 euros which is 8.2% of the total amount for 2016.

Quality assurance

Youth Sector

The [Youth Department](#) recognises and funds youth associations according to several decrees which point out, for each type of youth association, the requirements and procedures to receive the subsidy. [See section 1.7 Funding Youth Policy](#)

Youth Welfare Sector

The accountability is ensured by the [Youth Welfare Department](#). This service recognises and funds Youth Welfare structures according to the decree of 4 March 1991 related to Youth Welfare.

4.8 Current debates and reforms

Youth Welfare sector

Through the "0-25 Child and Youth Plan", additional structural means have been made available for Youth Welfare. The extra budget of 5.7 million euros are dedicated to support youth aid services which continue to provide assistance to children and young people in difficulty or in danger.

The decree of 4 March 1991 related to Youth Welfare was revised. This was an **important reform** in the sector. See section [4.3 Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Young People](#).

The Government decided, on the request of the [Minister of Youth Welfare](#), to **increase the budget** of the Youth Welfare sector for 2017. The sector received 11.3 million additional euros in 2017. Youth Welfare was the most refinanced competence in the 2017 budget.

5. PARTICIPATION

The French-speaking Community pays particular attention to youth participation. It is one of the main value of youth policies. The chapter illustrates how participation is highlighted in decrees in the sector of youth and in the sector of education. The French-speaking Community has recently introduced citizenship education as a separate subject at school.

5.1 General context

Main concepts

There is no official definition of youth participation.

But youth participation is one of the main value of youth policies in the French-speaking Community.

Youth policies through [youth decrees](#) focus on the promotion of participation of young people by developing a responsible, active and critical citizenship, in a spirit of solidarity. Youth associations are dedicated to promoting the development of critical, active and responsible citizenship (CRAC). They do so by raising awareness about social realities and by promoting responsible attitudes through social, economic, cultural and political participation and socio-cultural practice.

CRAC is a common term used in youth policies decrees. It means Responsible Active and Critic Citizen.

[Thematic movements](#) are a type of youth organisation.

Institutions of representative democracy

[Belgian Constitution](#) states that Belgium is a Federal state composed of 3 Communities

1. French-speaking Community
2. Flemish Community which has merged with the Flemish Region
3. German speaking Community.

and 3 Regions

1. Wallonia
2. Flemish Region which has merged with the Flemish Community
3. Brussels-Capital.

Each level of power is in charge of its own field of competences:

- Federal level is in charge of matters related to social security, foreign affairs, defence, finance
- Regions are responsible for territory-related competences such as environment, employment, economy
- Communities manage person-related competences such as cultural matters, education, sports, youth welfare, research and training, justice houses.

In Belgium, elections take place only at:

- the European level
- the Federal level
- the Regional level
- The local level.

At Federal level, the legislative power belongs to the King and the Parliament. The Parliament consists of 2 Chambers: the Senate and the House of Representatives. Elections take place every 5 years.

Regions have their own Government and their own Parliament. The deputies are elected directly every 5 years.

At local level, Belgium is composed of 10 provinces and 589 municipalities. Local and provincial legislation come under the Regions power. Each municipalities has its own representative bodies:

- The "bourgmestre" (mayor) is elected by the members of the municipal college.
- The municipal college is the executive body of the municipality. It is composed of the Bourgmestre, deputies and the President of the Public Centre for Social Action
- The municipal council is composed of 7 to 55 members elected directly by the inhabitants of the municipality. It is the legislative power at the level of the municipality.

Municipalities are the closest level of power for the population.

There are **no elections implemented at the French-speaking Community's level**. The members of the Parliament of the French-speaking Community are not elected directly.

The French-speaking Community has its own Government and a unicameral Parliament. Parliament's members are not elected directly. They are elected at the Regional level every 5 years. Parliament is the representative assembly of the population living in the French-speaking part of the Region of Wallonia and the French-speaking part of the Region of Brussels-Capital. It is composed of 94 deputies elected for 5 years:

- 75 elected members within the Parliament of the Walloon Region
- 19 elected members within the French-speaking group of the Parliament of the Region Brussels-Capital.

The Constitution states the **main principles of elections** in Belgium:

- Vote is compulsory
- Principle of universal suffrage
- The vote is secret
- Vote takes place at the municipality
- The principle of proportional representation is applied
- One person, one vote.

5.2 Youth participation in representative democracy

Young people as voters

Voting age limit

The minimum age to vote in Belgium is 18.

The Belgian Government announced in October 2020 that 16 and 17 year olds will be granted the right to vote in European elections.

There are no special provisions for young people in the electoral rules for young people.

Vote is compulsory in Belgium according to the Belgian Constitution.

Young people as political representatives

Young people as members of political parties

Political parties have a youth wing. These ones may be recognised as “thematic movements” under the [decree related to Youth Organisations](#). Thematic movements, which are one type of Youth Organisations, gather volunteers who analyse social issues and raise awareness on citizen’s questions. Among the 16 thematic movements, 6 are political parties’ youth wings:

1. Liberal youth movement (Jeunes MR). This organisation is composed of 102 local groups. 2. Ecologist youth movement (Ecolo-J). This organisation is composed of 10 local groups. 3. Socialist youth movement (Mouvement des Jeunes Socialistes). 4. Youth movement of Centre, democrat, Humanist (Jeunes cdh Centre démocrate Humaniste). This organisation is composed of 800 members. 5. Youth Labour party of Belgium (Mouvement de jeunes du PTB – COMAC). This organisation is composed of 21 local groups. 6. Defi youth (Défi Jeunes). This organisation is composed of 33 local groups.

These associations are recognised and funded as youth organisations by the Youth Department of the French-speaking Community.

Young people as elected representatives

Candidates for election must be at least 21 years old for:

- the European elections
- the Federal elections.

Since 2004, the age to be candidate for elections has been lowered to 18 years old for:

- the Regional elections
- the local elections.

There are no quotas for young people.

5.3 Youth representation bodies

Youth parliament

There are no official Youth Parliament. However, a non-recognised association organises every year a Youth Parliament. The [Youth Parliament Wallonia-Brussels](#) is a non-profit organisation set up in 1997 at the initiative of a Belgian student. The idea comes from Quebec where this project exists since 1949. A Board of Trustees, composed of former participants, organises every year a “parliament simulation” in the French-speaking Community’s Parliament. 120 young people aged between 17 and 26 years old are selected by the Board of Trustees as deputies or journalists. There is a will to diversify profiles (workers, unemployed, students, etc.). During 5 days, they will examine 4 fictional decrees and will take decisions following the same process as used in real life. The event is hosted in the French-speaking Community’s parliament during one week in February. Young deputies and journalists live together for one week and work together on fictional decrees as deputies and journalists of a fictional country. The event is highly broadcasted by Belgian medias.

Structure

The Youth Parliament is organised at the French-speaking Community's level. It is managed by an independent association. It is not part of the constitutional structure.

Role and responsibilities

The missions of this Parliament are mainly about learning how political decision works, political procedures, sharing citizen's value, give voice to young people.

Thematic areas are various and are not focused on youth topic. General political themes are approached such as prison system, discriminations, unemployment, etc.

Decisions taken are completely fictional. There is no official notice addressed to authorities.

The event is highly broadcasted.

Funding

The association receives subsidies from the French-speaking Community. It is also sponsored by Universities, Higher Education Institutions, private partners, etc.

Participation fees amount to 60 euros. This addresses the simulation week. It includes one week accommodation in a youth hostel, food, practical arrangements, etc.

Youth councils and/or youth advisory boards

The [Youth Forum](#) is the main and official advisory body for youth consultation in the French-speaking Community. The legislation governing the Youth Council is the Decree creating the Youth Forum ([Décret créant le Forum des jeunes du 03 mai 2019](#)).

This independent association takes place at the French-speaking Community-wide level. It is not part of the country's constitutional structure.

How does the consultation work?

In order to consult all the young people aged between 16 and 30 years old of the French-Speaking Community, the Youth Forum organises online consultations and decentralised forums. The Youth Forum members, supported by the team of permanent workers, meet young people in festivals, universities, schools on the territory of the Community. It works closely with some youth associations to foster the consultation of specific target groups such as disabled young people or young people lacking job security.

Role and responsibilities

Its role is to have young people (16-30 years old) participating in the democratic process, by collecting their opinion to then relay it to the politics. This body is active at regional, national and international level.

Its 4 missions are:

1. to issue advice on authorities demand or out of own initiative;
2. to promote civic participation of young people and their empowerment;
3. to consult young people on themes affecting them to build a collective speech to relay to the politics;
4. to represent young people and the youth sector at the national and international level.

Funding

The Youth Forum mainly receives funds from the French-speaking Community through. For its international projects (the European youth dialogue), the Forum is co-funded by the European Commission. It also receives other funding related to specific thematic projects.

Higher education student union(s)

Each Higher Education Institution or Universities in the French-speaking Community has a student's council.

The decree of 21 September 2012 related to the student participation and representation in Higher education ([relatif à la participation et la représentation étudiante dans l'enseignement supérieur](#)) has standardised the structure and functioning of student's council in any kind of Higher Education Institutions in the French-speaking Community.

Students of the school Institution elect their representatives within the school Institution every year or every 2 years. To validate the polls, the participation rate must amount at least 20%.

A student's council is composed of at least 7 members elected and must be composed of at least one representative of each faculty for Universities or field of study for Higher Education Institution.

An annual subvention is allocated to each representative organisation recognised at Community's level according to the article 36 of the decree of 21 September 2009. The total amount of subvention allocated annually by the French-speaking Community to student's council recognised by the Ministry is 105 000 euros according to the decree of 21 September 2009 (art 35).

Role and responsibilities

The student's council must:

- Represent the students of their education institution
- Defend and promote the student's interests related to the education, pedagogy or the institution's management
- Arouse the active participation of students in order to offer them the possibility to be active, responsible, critical citizen within the society and within their education institution
- Ensure the circulation of information between High School's authorities and High School's students.
- Participate to the training of student's representatives to ensure the continuity of the representation
- Designate their representatives for the representation at higher level
- Inform students about their rights, about the High School's daily life and about education possibilities within the Higher Education Institution.

There are no structural measures aimed at facilitating greater inclusiveness and diversity.

Student's council grouped into Federations

Student's councils are grouped into Federations depending on the values and ideologies. There are 6 Federations which are recognised and funded as youth organisations by the French-speaking Community according to the decree of 26 March 2009 related to Youth Organisations.

Thematic movements which are youth organisations gather volunteers who analyse social issues and raise awareness on citizen's questions. Among the 16 thematic movements, 6 are or include higher education student unions:

1. French-speaking Students Federation (Fédération des Etudiants Francophone). It is composed of 27 local groups.
2. French-speaking Community's Students Union (Union des Etudiants de la Communauté Française). It is composed of 12 local groups.
3. Interuniversity Committee of Medicine Students (Comité InterUniversitaire des Etudiants en Médecine)
4. Liberal Students Federation (Fédération des Etudiants

Libéraux). It is composed of 7 local groups. 5. Young socialists movement (Youth FGTB). It is composed of 15 510 members. 6. GLBT Student Federation (Les CHEFF – Fédération étudiante LGBTQI).

School student union(s)

The Committee of French-speaking pupils ([Comité des Elèves Francophones](#) - CEF) is a youth service recognised and funded as youth organisation by the French-speaking Community according to the Decree of 26 March 2009 related to Youth Organisations.

The Council receives subsidies from the Youth Department.

This non-for-profit organisation set up in 2009 is the pupil's unions for secondary school. It regroups pupil's union of many secondary schools. The Committee promotes pluralism and aims at raising awareness about citizenship issues at school level and at the Community-wide level. The Committee's actions revolve around 4 axes:

1. Act on issues linked to the education
2. Strengthen the pupil's role within the school
3. Represent the pupil's voice
4. Include the school in the society.

A team of permanent workers organised in a Board of Trustees manages the union. The Committee's members are generally aged between 13 and 20 years old. The Committee also addresses secondary school's directions, parent's associations, politics authorities, etc.

The membership is free. Any young people in the age group may join the Council.

For the school year 2012-2013, 344.747 pupils from 497 regular secondary schools and 8 896 pupils from 43 CEFA were represented.

Other bodies

Youth Organisations sector and Youth Centres sector have [official representative bodies](#):

- **Advisory Commission of the Youth Organisations** (Commission Consultative des Organisations de Jeunesse). This Commission requests the presence of one half of the young people aged under 35
- **Advisory Commission of the Youth Centres** and Youth Clubs (Commission Consultative des Maisons et Centres de Jeunes) requests the presence of one third of the young people aged under 26.

The Minister for Youth and the Youth Department conduct regular dialogue and consultation with these bodies.

Some **Youth Councils also exist at the local or provincial level** but these remain unevenly spread over the territory and are not part of a common legal framework. There are differences in the age of the target population, the number of youth representatives, various mechanisms of selection and consultation, various roles of the Youth Council, etc.

5.4 Young people's participation in policy-making

Formal Mechanisms of Consultation

The main advisory body for youth consultation in the French-Speaking Community is the Youth Forum. The legislation governing this body is the decree creating the Youth Forum ([Décret créant le Forum des jeunes](#))".

The Youth Forum was created to be the main tool to ensure young people to be heard by the Government and public opinion about every issue which affect them directly or indirectly.

The Youth Forum is the voice of the young people. Its role is to have young people (16-30 years old) participating in the democratic process, by collecting their opinion to then relieve it to the politics.

How does the consultation work?

See section [5.3 Youth representation bodies](#).

Main themes

The values of the youth forum are open-minded spirit; innovation; solidarity; participation; respect.

Actors

Youth actors

All young people are invited to participate to the Youth Forum.

Specific target group

There are no specific target group.

Public authorities

The Parliament or the Government of the French-Speaking Community are the key public authorities represented in the youth consultation process. The Youth Forum may be asked to issue notices at the request of authorities.

Additional stakeholders

Advisory Bodies such as the Advisory Commission of Youth Centres and the Advisory Commission of Youth Organisations are composed of experts and youth professionals who work directly with young people. This is a bottom-up approach and indirect consultation where these experts relay to the Minister of Youth young's opinion, recommendations, impacts of politics on youth reality.

Decision-making bodies such as General Assembly or Board of youth work associations request the presence of:

- one third of young people aged under 26 for Youth Centres;
- one half of young people aged under 35 for Youth Organisations.

Information on the extent of youth participation

There is no official and regular process of collecting data about young people's level of participation.

However, the **Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth Welfare** has been involved in a **participation project** initiated by the authorities. Both governments of the French-Speaking Community and the Walloon Region wanted to initiate a consultation process for the children about the elaboration, the follow-up and the evaluation of the "Plan d'actions relatif aux droits de l'enfant" (Actions Plan related to the Rights of Child). The Observatory charged CEMEA, a youth organisation, to implement this project in schools. Different groups of young people (some with social, economic background) were consulted in 2013 and 2014. The project ended up in 2015 with a final report presenting recommendations for the elaboration of the next Actions Plan related to Child Rights.

This [report](#) contains details about the age group of consultation, the social environment and the number of young people involved in the consultation project.

The **Youth Council** works closely with youth associations in order to foster the consultation of specific target groups with fewer opportunities regardless of cultural,

economic or social factors. For instance, the Youth Council has organised a one-time consultation in a school which practices positive discrimination with the help of a youth association "Teach from Belgium". This non-profit association aims to reduce scholar inequalities through the training of young graduates and professionals to become inspiring teachers for pupils from disadvantaged schools in collaboration with worldwide education actors.

Both Observatories (the Observatory of Cultural Policies and the Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth Aid) are in charge of an external evaluation of the Decree related to the Youth Forum. This evaluation must be based on an internal evaluation, itself based on a document "Etat de la participation des jeunes en Communauté française" (the Youth participation status in the French-Speaking Community).

Outcomes

Young people consult and are consulted about their opinion on youth related issues. They are also asked to describe their way of life, their feelings and opinion about different topics.

The Youth Forum has a real lobbying role to the decision makers in Belgium. It also participates in international conferences at the EU and UN level and maintains and fosters bilateral contacts in order to make its voice heard on the international scene.

The Youth Forum is the youth critical voice. Besides the consultation phase, the body serves as an essential formative, informational and consultative structure for the French-speaking Belgian youth.

The Youth Forum works thus on listening to young people's concerns and on having young people participating in civic life but it also wants to build a collective speech to support the voice of young people.

The main factor that contributed to the success of consultation is the good communication skill. They favour a proximity strategy, face to face consultation. They tailor the language depending on the group of young people they are addressing to. They use youth networks, meet young people in their own environment (schools, festivals, etc.).

Large-scale initiatives for dialogue or debate between public institutions and young people

The Walloon Region has set up a wide consultation process for the adoption of a new Air Climate Energy Plan (PACE).

The 2016-2022 Air Climate Energy Plan (PACE), initiated by Wallonia, sets Walloon objectives in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, energy and air quality. A new Air Climate Energy Plan for 2030 is in preparation. To do this, a consultation process, followed by work to update objectives and measures is implemented to meet Walloon commitments, including the achievement of -55% greenhouse gas emissions by compared to 1990.

As part of this participatory process, the Youth Forum was asked to consult young people. They created two activities and an online form aimed at collecting ideas from young people aged 16 to 30. The objective of this consultation is to ensure that the comments of the population of this age group are taken into account when updating the Air Climate Energy Plan for the Walloon Region.

5.5 National strategy to increase youth participation

Existence of a national strategy to increase young people's political and civil society participation

There is no national youth strategy to increase young's people political and civil society participation.

Scope and contents

Not applicable.

Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

Not applicable.

Revisions/Updates

Not applicable.

5.6 Supporting youth organisations

Legal/policy framework for the functioning and development of youth organisations

[See section 1.4 Youth Policy Decision-Making](#)

Public financial support

[See section 1.7 Funding Youth Policy.](#)

Initiatives to increase the diversity of participants

The decree on youth organisations points out the fostering of the encounter and the exchange between individuals, social groups, cultures in their diversity as part of youth organisation's missions.

Youth organisations are free to implement it the way they want to. They benefit from a high degree of autonomy as long as they respect the conditions of their recognition.

Increasing the diversity of participants is a challenge youth associations are facing in their daily functioning according to some youth workers interrogated.

5.7 “Learning to participate” through formal, non-formal and informal learning

Policy Framework

Formal learning

The legislation refers to the decree of 24 July 1997 on the missions of school and which organises the structures to implement them. It is also called decree Missions ([Décret](#) du 24 juillet 1997 définissant les missions prioritaires de l'enseignement fondamental et de l'enseignement secondaire et organisant les structures propres à les atteindre).

One of the school's mission is “to prepare each pupil to be responsible citizen, capable of contributing to the development of a democratic, pluralist society showing solidarity and receptive to different cultures”.

Non-formal learning

Learning to participate is the fundamental value of youth policies.

The legislation refers to [4 decrees](#):

1. Decree related to [Youth Organisations](#)

The decree states that one of the objectives of Youth Organisations is “to contribute to the development by young people of their responsibilities and personal skills in order to support them to become active, responsible and critical citizens within the society”.

1. Decree related to [Youth Centres](#)

The decree states that one of the objectives of Youth Centres "is to foster the development of a critical, active and responsible citizenship mainly for young people aged between 12 and 26 thanks to:

- the awareness and the understanding of society's realities,
- responsible attitudes and participation to social, economic, cultural and political life,
- the implementation and the promotion of socio-cultural and creative practices".

Decree related to [Youth Holiday's Centres](#)

One of the objectives of Holidays Centres is "to learn about citizenship and participation".

4. Decree related to [Homework Schools](#)

One of the missions of Homework Schools is "to learn about citizenship and participation".

Formal learning

There are various education networks in the French-speaking Community, all of them funded by the French-speaking Community:

1. the official education system
2. the free confessional education system.

In the official education system, the French-speaking Community has introduced recently citizenship education as a separate subject.

The legislation governing this decision is the Decree related to the organisation of a separate subject for citizenship education (Décret relatif à l'organisation d'un [cours et d'une éducation à la philosophie et à la citoyenneté](#)).

This new compulsory subject will be implemented in the official education system and in the non-confessional education system which already provides the choice between a 2 hours lesson of religion or moral:

- since the 1st September 2016 in primary schools
- from the 1st September 2017 in secondary schools.

The taught time is from 1 to both hour(s) per week. It replaces one of the 2 hours of religion subject or non confessional moral subject already taught in schools

1 compulsory hour of philosophy and citizenship + 1 hour of philosophy and citizenship
OR 1 hour of moral/religion.

In primary school of official education system, the main learning objectives are:

1. To build an autonomous and critical thinking
2. To know yourself and to open yourself to someone
3. To act in a socially responsible manner
4. To act democratically.

School programmes will be available in September 2017 for secondary school.

In the free confessional education system, citizenship education is a theme taught through a cross-curricular approach.

The main general aims of citizenship education are defined in the [decree on the missions of school](#). They are common for primary and secondary school:

1. To promote self-confidence and self-development of each pupil

2. Bring pupils to appropriate knowledge and acquire skills to be capable of learning and to take an active part in the social, cultural and economic life
3. Prepare every pupil to be responsible citizens, capable of contributing to the development of democratic, solidarity, pluralist society receptive to others cultures
4. Ensure for every pupil equal chances for social emancipation.

Non-formal and informal learning

Participative structures within formal education settings

The [decree of 12 January 2007](#) organises the setting up of participative structures for pupils within their educational institution. A class delegate is elected by his peers at its class level.

Every class delegates of the same education level are grouped to constitute the Council of class delegates. They analyse issues related to their educational institution. They centralise questions and opinion and relieve them to the School Participation Council and the Headmaster.

All Councils of Class delegates meets once a year to debate about main subjects and, if needed, to elect their pupil's representatives to participate at the School Participation Council.

The decree of 24 July 1997 "on the missions of school" sets out the composition and the missions of the "Participation Council". It is composed of the Headmaster and representatives of the Municipality, representatives of teachers, psychological, medical and social staff, representatives of parents, representatives of pupils and a representative of school's administrative or worker staff.

Measures to encourage student participation in the local community and wider society

National curricula is only based on the school time. Schools are free to organise, or not, extra-curricular activities. So, these kinds of activities are part of the school's project (projet d'établissement). Activities are different from a school to another.

But the decree of 12 January 2007 encourages this kind of initiative. According to the [European report on Citizenship education in Europe](#),

In Belgium (French Community), for example, there are various decrees for the promotion of civic and democratic principles within school. The Decree of 12 January 2007 recommends that school heads in primary and secondary education organise an interdisciplinary activity at least every two years.

Partnerships between formal education providers, youth organisations and youth work providers

- The [decree related to Youth Organisations](#) plans a specific support (dispositif particulier) for youth organisations organising actions in cooperation with schools.
- The "Plateforme Jeunesse Enseignement" (the platform on Youth and Formal Education) is exploring the possibility for youth organisations to use schools and their rooms for the development of their activities outside school time. This is a dialogue platform between education and youth sector which does not involve funding. This is currently in standby.
- Partnerships between school and civil society's organisations are encouraged to contribute to citizenship learning outside school. For instance, activities are organised in cooperation with the local powers:

1. At primary school's level and at the 2 first years of secondary school level

The cooperation is about projects regarding environment, activities to foster social inclusion and peace, to foster intercultural dialogue or activities related to political life. For instance, municipal council for children, the day of the tree, etc.

2. At the last 4 years of secondary school level

The cooperation concerns the same kind of projects, volunteering linked to local community or foreign exchanges to foster intercultural education. For instance, volunteering in a retirement home.

- Cooperation between the Administration of Education and the High Council for Media Literacy ([Conseil Supérieur de l'éducation aux médias](#)) is also organised.
- The Democracy or barbarism Service ([Démocratie ou barbarie](#)) is the public council for remembrance. Partnership is also organised with the Administration of Education to support extra-curricular activities to contribute to citizenship education.

Supporting non formal learning initiatives focusing on social and civic competences

- Education

Schools are free to organise events, plays related to learning citizenship. Each school have an individual project (projet d'établissement) which defines the main learning orientations choices of the institution.

School are invited to do activities through, for instance, ministerial circular. For instance, the [circular related to "UNICEF Belgium"](#) invites every classrooms of second and third degree of secondary school to receive the label "worldwide classroom". Teachers would then receive learning tools from UNICEF Belgium to learn about this thematic.

- Youth sector

The Youth Department recognises and funds youth associations. They are the main and closest actors which work with young people to develop social and civic competences. See section [1.4 Youth Policy Decision-Making](#).

However, decrees related to Youth Centres and Youth Organisations plan specific support to youth centres or youth organisations working with disadvantaged public. See section [4.4 Inclusive Programmes for Young People](#).

Quality assurance/quality guidelines for non-formal learning

Homework schools and hosting structures for young people under 12 years old

For structures hosting young people under 12 years old, it exists a "[quality code](#)" instituted by the [French-speaking government's order](#) (arrêté du gouvernement) of 17 December 2003. It defines a number of common objectives for structures which host regularly young people under 12 such as homework schools.

The objectives address 5 fields of action:

1. Psycho-pedagogical principles;
2. Activities and health activities;
3. Access;
4. Supervision;
5. Relations between the structures, the persons who entrust the child and the environment.

The structures are invited to submit a project. The Birth and Childhood Office decides then if a quality certificate may be delivered or not according to the quality criteria addressing the 5 objectives defined by the code.

Youth Centres

Youth Centres are recognised and funded by the Youth Department of the French-speaking Community. In order to receive the recognition and the financial support from the administration, Youth Centres must submit a report of their activities every 4 years and get the approval from the department. This report must refer to several qualitative and quantitative criteria defined in the decree of 20 July 2000 related to youth centres. The [government's order of 5 December 2008](#) provides evaluation grid in which qualitative and quantitative criteria are identified. It exists 3 categories of recognition depending of the criteria met by the centres. Financial support depends of the category in which the centre belongs to.

Quantitative criteria address:

1. The age of the public;
2. Participation of young people under 26 in the board of directors;
3. Hosting time per week (from 10 to 18 hours per week);
4. Socio-cultural activities (from 10 to 26 activities per weeks);
5. The total number of hours (activities + hosting time per week);
6. Collectives actions (from 1 to 3 minimum);
7. Opening to local environment.

Qualitative criteria address:

1. Public;
2. Citizenship action;
3. Form of participation (consultation, information, involvement of young people in the conception and project's making, form of delegation of power for young people, etc.;
4. Hosting;
5. Socio-cultural activities (permanent and punctual activities, proposition and concertation with young people, activities elaborated by young people,;
6. Collective actions (internal collective action, use of internal and external resources, involvement of young people to some action's phases, promotion of youth involvement and action);
7. Opening to local environment;
8. Human resources management.

Youth centres must also provide an evaluation of the former four-year action plan in order to use this evaluation in the writing of the renewed one.

Inspection is another service of the General Administration of Culture which offers a complementary evaluation of the youth centre's projects. It checks if the report matches the reality (field inspection).

Outcomes of the quality assurance:

There is no obligation of result regarding the actions of the youth centres. As long as their action respect the methodology described in their action plan and the criteria related to their recognition's category, they receive the subvention.

If the youth centre's action does not meet anymore quality or quantity criteria, there are 3 possible actions:

1. Withholding of the subvention;
2. Withholding of the recognition;
3. Moving to a lower category with a lower subvention.

The final decision belongs to the Minister of Youth based on the complementary recommendations of the Youth Department, the inspection and the Advisory Commission for Youth Centres.

Youth organisations

Youth organisations are recognised and funded by the Youth Department of the French-speaking Community. In order to receive the recognition and the financial support from the administration, youth centres must submit a report of their activities every 4 years and get the approval from the department.

There are 5 types of youth organisations in accordance with their field of action (see section 1.4 [Youth Policy-Decision Making](#)):

- Youth services; - Youth movements; - Thematic movements; - Federations of Youth organisations; - Federations of Youth centres.

These youth organisations are classified according to various criteria. The classification they belong to defines the amount of subvention they receive.

The criteria for funding's classification:

- for youth services is the number of activities per year; - for youth movements is the number of members; - for thematic movements are the number of local groups affiliated and the number of activities per year; - for Federations of youth organisations is the number of youth organisations affiliated; - for Federations of youth centres is the number of youth centres affiliated.

Inspection is another service of the General Administration of Culture which offers a complementary evaluation of the youth centre's projects. It checks if the report matches the reality (field inspection).

If the inspection notices that the work of the organisation does not match anymore the criteria of the action plan and the missions defined by the decree, the inspection informs the youth department. It could lead to the suspension of the subvention for a maximum of 1 year.

The finale decision belongs to the Minister of Youth based on the recommendations of the youth department.

Educators' support

Teachers

Regarding the initial training of teachers for the new subject "education to philosophy and citizenship", a certificate of "didactic of philosophy and citizenship" will be implemented by the 1st September 2020 at the latest.

The ministerial [circular n° 5821](#) of 20 July 2016 organises the current conditions to be allowed to teach the new subject "education to philosophy and citizenship".

An increasing offer of continuous training on the thematic of citizenship are organised by many training operators from different educational networks (official, confessional).

The training institute "Institut de Formation en cours de carrière" is the national coordinating body for teacher training in citizenship education.

An online "citizenship" platform gathers learning tools to support teachers. There are many topics (philosophy and ethic, worldwide citizenship, Human Rights, etc.). In each topics, there are the presentation of active associations working on these thematics, press articles, etc. This platform is on the Education Administration's website.

A youth organisation, "Université de paix", also provides learning tools and trainings about citizenship education.

Youth workers

The [ministerial circular](#) organising the support of training programmes related to animation, socio-cultural and socio-artistic action (circulaire ministérielle du 1er septembre 2009 organisant le soutien des programmes de formation des cadres de l'animation et de

l'action socioculturelles et socio-artistiques) is the legal framework regarding the training in youth work in the French-speaking Community.

The Youth Department within the General Administration of Culture implements this circular.

The circular organises the funding of training organisations. These ones organise the training of workers in the youth sector (youth organisations, youth centres, holidays centres).

Training organisations offer training programmes, learning tools to support youth workers.

5.8 Raising political awareness among young people

Information providers / counselling structures

- **School**

School is an information provider. It provides information about democratic rights and democratic values according to the [decree of 24 July 1997 "on the missions of school"](#) through the implementation of the subject "education to philosophy and citizenship". It includes the learning of the functioning of democracy.

- **Youth Information Centre**

There are 29 Youth Information Centres in the French-speaking Community. Their aim is to inform young people about their rights, their duties and every subject that might interest youth (employment, health, political system, etc.). For instance, they give information about voting rights or duties and give practical information about voting (how to vote, how political system is working, etc.). In addition, they provide young people with keys to understand and analyse society with a critical mind. They use various communication tools (website, events, information folder, etc.). These youth associations are recognised and funded by the Youth Department at the Community level.

The legislation governing Youth Information Centres is the [Decree related to Youth Centres](#). They receive financial support from the Youth Ministry.

Youth-targeted information campaigns about democratic rights and democratic values

The role of the Youth Forum

One of the main mission of the Youth Forum is to make young people participate to society and practice their democratic rights by expressing themselves about issues that affect them directly or indirectly. Very often, this entails consultation campaigns linked to their democratic rights and related values.

The role of the General Delegate for the Right of Child

Since 2011, the General Delegate for the Right of Child has organised every year a festival for the right of Child, the Festival "zero > 18". This is a free festival addressing young people under 18 years old. The aim is to raise young people awareness about their rights in a festive and funny way. It also aims to put into practice the right of child to participate to cultural life, to practice measure activities and to play. The festival is organised in partnership with main actors of the French-speaking Community (the Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youthwelfare). The General Delegate for the Right of Child has for mission to ensure the protection of the Child's Rights mainly by referring to the International Convention of the right of Child of 20 November 1989. The [decree of 20 June 2002 institutes the General Delegate for the Right of Child](#). Both websites of the [festival](#) and of the [General Delegate for the Right of Child](#) provide information on the rights of child.

Promoting the intercultural dialogue among young people

The [Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth Welfare](#) has highlighted in [videos](#) the testimony of 4 young migrants. They explain the obstacles they encounter regarding the realisation of their fundamental rights.

The **Youth International Office** funds youth cultural projects which have for objective the intercultural dialogue among young people. See section [1.4 Youth Policy Decision-Making](#).

Many **youth associations** work with young people to foster the intercultural dialogue among young people. For instance, "Défi Belgique Afrique" is a youth organisation which develops solidarity and intercultural projects. With this association, young belgians can participate to an exchange project with young people from African countries to live an intercultural experience.

Promoting transparent and youth-tailored public communication

The French-speaking Community and the Walloon Region adopted a **common Action Plan for the Rights of the Child** in 2011. It sets out actions to promote the rights of child's according to the UN convention on the Rights of the Child. The Action plan has 3 main axes and 216 actions.

Among the **216 actions**, some of them affect youth-tailored public communication:

- the development of communication tools which are "child-friendly" in every policy sector
- the yearly organisation of a festival called "zero18". The main objective is to raise children awareness about their rights in a festive and enjoyable way.

The [Observatory](#) also published on its website **5 "child- friendly" reports**. The aim is to inform children about decisions which affect them by offering them accessible and easy content.

5.9 E-participation

Online consultation

The [Youth Council](#) organises online consultation to collect youth's opinion about many subjects. Every young people are invited to participate. There are no specific target group. Internet is the ICT tool used. This is a daily process with the objective to gather a large panel of answers.

5.10 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

There are no forthcoming policy developments regarding participation of young people.

Ongoing debates

In 2015, there was a proposal to lower the voting age limit to 16 instead of 18 for the municipality's elections. The political group ecole-groen (ecologist parties in the French-speaking Community and in the Flemish part) was at the initiative. According to a [Youth Council's consultation](#) among young people between 16 and 30 years old (1046 interrogated, they (8 out of the 10 consulted youngsters from 16 to 30) are against this proposition.

The consultation took place in July and August 2015. The 3 main arguments were;

1. the lack of maturity and the fact that young people aged between 16 and 18 would be easily influenced (53 %)

2. the lack of knowledge regarding the Belgian political system (30%)
3. the lack of interest regarding political issues (17%).

No legal framework for youth councils at local level

At the moment, no legal framework exists to organise youth councils at the local level. In its Action Plan 2014-2015, the Youth Council wanted to support the creation of youth councils at local level and to support widely every initiatives aimed at stimulating youth participation. **Articulation of Youth policies at local and Community levels**

See section [1.9 Current debates and reforms](#).

6. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Most powers related to education are exercised by the French-speaking Community. The chapter illustrates the relevant parts of strategies and policy documents pertaining to education in the French-speaking Community. The French-speaking Community is about to adopt a new reform regarding education: the "Teaching Excellence Pact".

6.1 General context

Main trends in young people's participation in education and training

According to the Education Indicators 2016 ([les indicateurs de l'enseignement 2016](#)):

Participation rate

In the French-speaking Community, the majority of young people aged between 3 and 17 years old are educated. The participation rate of the youth population aged between 12 and 17 years old in the French-speaking Community's schools amounts to 96 % in Wallonia and 76% in the Region of Brussels-Capital.

Evolution of school's population in specialised education

In 2014-2015, school's population of ordinary primary school is rather steady unlike the population of specialised primary school which tends to increase especially since 2008-2009. Since 2005-2006, the school's population of specialised primary school has increased by 14 % (from 15 469 pupils in 2005-2006 to 17 656 in 2014-2015). In the specialised secondary school, school's population has increased too (20%) (From 14 598 in 2004-2005 to 17 538 pupils in 2014-2015).

Socio-economic disparities in primary and secondary school

The disparity between pupils according to the socio-economic indicator appears early in the school background and it gets stronger all along the compulsory education. This disparity appears with the various education forms and degrees when they are linked to the socio-economic level of the pupil's neighbourhood. This indicator presents the public of primary and secondary education in 2014-2015 according to the socio-economic index (ISE). According to this indicator, specialised education hosts more pupils from disadvantaged economic background. A disparity exists also between various forms of secondary education.

Organisation of the education and training system

Compulsory education Compulsory part-time formal education ends at 18. Compulsory full-time education ends at the age of 15/16. It includes a maximum of 7 years of primary

education and at least 2 years of full-time secondary education. More detailed information in Eurypedia.

Overview of main organisation of formal education Report to Eurypedia to find a complete information about [education facilities and age group](#).

Main concepts

According to [Eurypedia](#), “**freedom of education** is enshrined in the Constitution: the organisation of schools may not be subject to any restrictive measures. It is therefore possible to organise schools that have no links to the public authorities. However, schools that wish to confer recognised qualifications and benefit from subsidies from the Community must comply with the provisions of laws, decrees, and regulations”.

High degree of autonomy According to [Eurypedia](#), since most powers with regard to education have been transferred to the Communities, a twofold shift has been taking place in the French Community: on the one hand, an increasing degree of management autonomy is being granted to institutions, in addition to the high degree of freedom which was already theirs in terms of educational methods; on the other hand, this increasing autonomy has been accompanied by the introduction of new regulatory mechanisms to ensure the development of fairly run schools that perform to a high standard. **Early school leaving** The decree adopted on 21 November 2013 defines “[school drop-out](#)” 1) as the situation of a pupil who is under compulsory schooling and: - who is registered in a school but does not attend courses without a valid reason; - who is not registered in any school and who is not educated at home; 2) as the situation of a pupil who is under compulsory schooling, registered in a school but who didn't attend courses, without a valid reason, for more than 20 half-school days. The decree adopted on 21 November 2013 defines “early school leaving” as a situation in which a pupil leaves school or training without having graduated from the first cycle of secondary school and who is no longer in education or training.

6.2 Administration and governance

Cross-sectorial cooperation

Administration and Governance at Federal, Regional and Community level Most powers related to education are exercised by the French-speaking Community according to the study “the French-speaking Community indicators 2017” ([La Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles en chiffres 2017 p 123](#)). However, specific aspects concern others level of power: The **Federal State** is still responsible for defining: - when compulsory schooling begins and when it ends; - the minimum requirements for issuing diplomas; - the pension scheme. Those prerogatives are part of the Constitutions. The **French-speaking Community** The [Government and the Parliament](#) of the French-speaking Community are responsible for policy on pre-school, primary, secondary, higher education, specialised education, social advancement education and distance education. The [Minister of Education](#) is the member of the Government in charge of education policy. Within the Ministry of the French-speaking Community, the General Administration of Education (AGE) implements ministerial decisions. It is also involved in the technical study of new regulations (laws, decrees, etc.). 6 general services compose this administrative body: 1. The Administrator's General Service 2. The General Service for the Steering of the Education System 3. The General Service for Education organised by the French Community 4. The General Directorate for Compulsory Education 5. The General Directorate for Non-Compulsory Education and Scientific Research; 6. The General Inspection Service. There are 10 advisory bodies for compulsory education. Their main mission is to issue notices to the Government on educational policies orientations regarding their field of action. 1. General Council for Pre-Secondary Education; 2. General Council for Dialogue in the Ordinary Secondary Education; 3. High Council for Specialised Education; 4. General Council for Dialogue in the Specialised Education; 5. High Council of Centres for Psychological-Medical-Social Services; 6. « Instances Zonales de pilotage

inter-réseaux de l'enseignement qualifiant » 7. Schooling Mediation Council (Conseil de la médiation scolaire); 8. Commission related to compulsory schooling; 9. Commission designated by article 41 and 42 of the School's Pact – advertisement at school (Commission issue des articles 41 et 42 du Pacte Scolaire – Publicité à l'école); 10. Positive discriminations Commission (Commission des discriminations positives). The **Region's** powers relate to: - School's transport; - Adult training and apprenticeships operators; - School buildings (shared responsibility with the French-speaking Community). Regions are also responsible for [vocational training policy](#). It is provided by 2 public bodies: - IFAPME in Wallonia (Walloon Institute of Dual Vocational Education and Training for Small and Medium-size Enterprises); - SFPME in the Brussels-Capital Region (Small and Medium-size Companies Training Service). Regions are also in charge of [adult's training outside school system](#): - "Forem" in Wallonia; - "Bruxelles Formation" in the Brussels-Capital Region.

Administration and Governance at local level Education networks According to [Eurypedia](#), the education system is made up of 3 major categories of educational institution, called 'education networks' (as well as a number of private schools). These education networks are either completely funded by the Community or either grant-aided. Each educational network consists of one or more controlling authorities, each of which runs one or more schools. **Education institutions** Every school has a local committee. Its distinctive features and missions depend on the education network the school belongs to: - A local consultation committee in the public education institutions; - A local joint committee in the grant-aided public education institutions; - A work council, a local consultation body or a trade union delegation in the grant-aided independent education institutions. Participation councils were created in each pre-secondary and secondary school in the different networks following the decree of 24 July 1997 on the missions of school. It gathers pupil's representatives, parents, schools and local actors. A number of councils exercise various responsibilities in higher education institutions.

Governance

Many collaborations exist between the sector of education and others sectors such as [culture](#) or [youth welfare](#).

6.3 Preventing early leaving from education and training (ELET)

National strategy

The [Teaching Excellence Pact](#), the education reform not yet implemented, plans to set up a global plan to tackle school dropout. This plan will be complementary to the youth guarantee dispositive. It sets the objective of decreasing by 50 % the school dropout by 2030 according to the 3rd recommendation of the Central Group for the Teaching Excellence Pact. The measures are to:

1. Get an efficient system to collect data and information to assess the development of the plan's objective;
2. Redefine the role and missions of actors and dispositives;
3. Redefine the current dispositive of coordination and dialogue in which actors take action;
4. Clarify numerous procedures including exclusion procedures.

The Minister of Education is responsible for the Pact.

Formal education: main policy measures on ELET

At the moment, the following measure is applied through the [decree](#) of 21 November 2013 organising policy cooperation between the compulsory Education and the Youth Welfare sector to enhance well-being at school, school reintegration, prevention of violence and vocational guidance. The decree's objective is to, among others things, foster school

integration by preventing school dropout, absenteeism and exclusion. it defines the role and the articulation of 8 school's actors: 1. The headmaster; 2. Centres for Psychological-Medical-Social Services and Health Promotion Services at school; 3. The School Mediation Services; 4. Mobile team; 5. Pupils through pupil's mediation training in order to foster [peer-to-peer exchanges](#); 6. The Observatory of School violence and drop-out; 7. Administrative Service for the coordination of prevention actions for school violences, absenteeism, school drop-out and early school leaving (coordination des actions de prévention de la violence en milieu scolaire, de l'absentéisme, du décrochage scolaire et de l'abandon scolaire précoce); 8. School attendance services (Service d'accrochage scolaire). This decree is at the intersection of Youth Welfare and Education sector. The Minister of Youth Welfare and the Minister of Education are both responsible for it. More detailed information on main measures and policies in [2014 Eurydice report](#). (p 146)

Addressing ELET through non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work

Homework schools have an important role to play at preventing and reducing school dropout. They are dedicated to children and youngsters aged 6 – 15. They provide after-school spaces and activities to support school work, to promote social integration and to carry out socio-cultural projects. The diversity of projects and actions is large (health, sport, youth welfare, social cohesion, etc.). Therefore, homework schools target various public even if disadvantaged young people are mainly targeted. They are ruled by the [decree of 28 April 2004](#). They are funded partly by the Youth Department and by the Birth and Childhood Office.

Cross-sector coordination and monitoring of ELET interventions

The decree adopted on [21 November 2013](#) organises policy **cooperation between compulsory education and youth welfare sector** to enhance well-being at school, school reintegration, prevention of violence and vocational guidance. This decree makes cross-sectorial cooperation a legal obligation. **School attendance services** provide social, educational and pedagogical support to pupils who tend to drop out school. The work is done also with families. Every Service develops its own actions and specificities. The responsible authority is the Minister of Education but the work of the school attendance service is at the intersection of youth work, youth welfare and education. The legal document related to this programme is the decree of 21 November 2013. The **website "Accroch'AJE"** implements one objective of the decree of 21 November 2013. It aims at **facilitating contacts and collaborations between actors from both sectors** (education and youth welfare).

6.4 Validation of non-formal and informal learning

Arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning

The national system description is to be found in the [Cedefop report](#). Cedefop is one of the EU's decentralised agencies. It supports development of European vocational education and training (VET) policies and contributes to their implementation. According to this report, validation is divided into different systems or "dispositives":

- Validation of competences is carried out by continuous vocational training centres under the remit of a Consortium. Validation of Competences leads to the award of a Skill Certificate (Titre de Compétence);
- Valorisation of experience is used to grant admission into education pathways or exemptions and does not lead to the award of a certification or qualification. [...] In Belgium, different "valorisation of competence" procedures are in place in:

1. Adult education;

2. Universities;
3. Higher Education level.

On July 24 2003, a [cooperation agreement](#) was signed between the authorities of the French-speaking part of Belgium (Walloon Region, the French-speaking Community and the French Community Commission of Brussels). This agreement aims at implementing mechanisms which will allow for skills acquired by individuals through experiences in daily life, at work or during vocational training to be recognised according to the Cedefop report. [Arrangements for validation scheme](#) are described on Eurypedia. See section 2.8 for information about the validation of competences acquired through **voluntary activities**. See section 3.5 for information related to the validation of competences through **apprenticeships**.

Information and guidance

The "Validation of Competences Consortium" manages a website to inform the public about possibilities [to validate competences or add value to professional experience](#) (valorisation de l'expérience). This website was launched with the "2013 Year for competences" with the support of the European Social Fund in the framework of a collective work between vocational training, High Education Institutions, Universities and the Validation of Competences Consortium. According to the cooperation agreement of 24 July 2003, the **Consortium is composed of** representatives of Forem as a training operator, "Bruxelles Formation", the Walloon Institute for apprenticeship training "IFAPME", the Brussels Institute for apprenticeship "SFPME" and the Minister of social advancement education (promotion sociale). The Consortium is responsible, among others things, for issuing skills certificates.

Quality assurance

According to the [Consortium's website](#), various points enable the quality assurance of the arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal competences: - The "Competences Validation Consortium" works in a framework in which the missions, visions and the values are defined ahead. The Consortium has elaborated a strict method to translate the skills needed for a job in validation schemes; - Validation Centres receive an official recognition. It guarantees the reliability of the competences titles delivered and recognised by the 3 Belgian French-speaking Governments; - Social partners are associated to the implementation of processes for the validation of competences. Social partners participate by sectors to the production and the update of validation competences schemes. It is a quality assurance for the employment market.

6.5 Cross-border learning mobility

Policy framework

Higher education and universities

The legal text referring to Higher Education and Universities is the [decree of 31 March 2004 commonly named "Bologna"](#), "defining higher education, fostering its integration in the European area of higher education and re-funding universities (Décret définissant l'enseignement supérieur, favorisant son intégration dans l'espace européen de l'enseignement supérieur et refinançant les universités).

Its main axes consist of:

- The integration of all education types of the French-speaking Community within a unique system and a 3-cycles structure;
- The removal of former grades and diplomas in favour of an harmonised terminology (bachelor, master, complementary master and PhD).

- The definition of terms and conditions of partnerships between institutions within the French-speaking Community or with foreign education institutions (see Eurypedia for more details);
- The systematic use of credits based on the European Credit Transfer System.

The [Mobility Scoreboard platform](#) for both higher education and initial vocational education and training provides a framework for monitoring progress made by European countries in creating a positive environment supporting learner mobility. Indicators aim to help countries identify actions to remove obstacles to learner mobility. Regarding Higher education specifically, the following [report](#) provides information including 6 indicators for learning mobility:

1. Information and guidance;
2. Foreign language preparation;
3. Portability of grants and loans;
4. Support provided to students with low socio-economic background;
5. Recognition of learning outcomes;
6. Recognition of qualifications.

The following map gives a [brief overview of the indicators in Belgium](#), by Communities.

Main cross-border mobility programmes for students in formal education

Erasmus + The national Agency responsible for the education and training section of Erasmus + is AEF-Europe. The educational context in which Erasmus + takes action is: school education, vocational education training, higher education, adult education and training. According to the AEF-Europe, the budget 2017 for the key action 1 – learning mobility for:

- School sector is 145 1110 euros;
- Vocational training is 2 525 524 euros;
- Higher education is 8 223 354 euros;
- Adult education and training is 180 385 euros.

The total budget 2017 for the key action 1 (education and training mobility) is 11 074 373 euros. The budget 2017 for the key action 2 – strategic partnership for:

- School sector is 2 403 363,64 euros;
- Vocational training is 1 968 615 euros;
- Higher education is 162 325 euros;
- Adult education and training is 249 001 euros.

The total budget 2017 for the key action 2 (education and training mobility) is 4 783 304, 64 euros. **Besides Erasmus +, the French-speaking Community implements also mobility projects.** In Secondary School The programme Schuman offers the possibility to young people from 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade of secondary school to participate to an individual exchange with young people from others regions of Luxembourg or Germany. This is due to an agreement in the framework of the Great Region Sarre-Lorraine-Luxembourg-Rhénanie-Palatinat-French and German-speaking Communities. The objectives are language learning and to get to know the culture of neighbours. The exchange lasts from 2 to 4 weeks. The [circular 6035](#) of 25/01/2017 which informs about the programme was sent to all secondary schools in the French-speaking Community. This programme is not funded. Parents take in charge the transport to the German family. Each hosting family takes in charge the daily fees of the youngster according to the Service of international relations of the Community. In Higher Education The French-Speaking

Community subsidises 3 mobility programme earmarked for students from French-speaking Community's higher education:

- Belgica Erasmus programme

Implemented in 2004, it aims at fostering the learning mobility within the 3 Belgian Communities. It is due to a partnership between the 3 Communities. Students can either study or do an internship in the other Community. The average duration varies from 3 month to an entire academic year.

- Exchange programme for future German language's teachers

Launched in 2009 by an inter-ministerial agreement based on the ambition to strengthen language learning. The German language student enrolls to attend teaching activities in another Belgian Community.

- The Student Mobility Assistance Fund (FAME)

The Student Mobility Assistance Fund provides mobility grants to students who plan to pursue a part of their education cursus abroad. They must receive the approbation from their education institution in order to be eligible for the grant. According to Eurypedia, *in 2004 the French Community created a Student Mobility Assistance Fund (FAME), which complements the European subsidies. At each beneficiary institution, at least 50% of the available budget must be used for students who receive a study allowance in the year before their departure. Mobility in this context relates to the European Higher Education Area, but also to the other Communities of Belgium. The French-speaking Community also gives support to the beneficiaries of certain European mobility programmes. The amounts of grants vary between €150 and €400 per month.* The [decree of 19 May 2004](#) institutes the Student Mobility Assistance Fund.

Promoting mobility in the context of non-formal learning, and of youth work

- The International Youth Office is the responsible agency for the youth section of Erasmus +;
- The Youth Department recognises and funds some youth organisations specialised in cross-border mobility. These are recognised as [youth services](#). They must satisfy the criteria and conditions set by decree to be recognised as youth services;
- The programme Bel'J organises cross-border mobility between the 3 Communities of Belgium. See section [1.8 Cross-border cooperation in youth field](#).

Quality assurance

The AEF-Europe agency and the International Youth Office implement mechanisms to evaluate cross-border mobility programme. **AEF-Europe** According to the Agency itself, the Agency provides to the European Commission: - An annual work programme which includes the agency's objectives and indicators; - An annual report which includes an evaluation on how the objectives and indicators are reached and a qualitative analyse. Participants are asked to provide feedback on their mobility project. There is nothing specific made in the framework of the European Quality Charter for Mobility. As main outcomes of quality assurance, the European Commission provides a feedback in regard to the annual report. **International Youth Office** According to the International Youth Office itself, it develops mechanisms to monitor and ensure the quality of programmes. The agency respects some quota of project's visits (during and after the project). The Office makes regular evaluation of projects, asks participant to provide feedback. When the Office identifies specific needs, it organises trainings accordingly.

6.6 Social inclusion through education and training

Educational support

Formal education

- A number of top-level policies aimed at keeping vulnerable young people engaged in education exist as follows:
 - The French-speaking Community allocates grants and study loans to pupils in secondary and higher education under certain conditions (pupils from low income households);
 - The [decree of 3 March 2004](#) organising specialised education (Décret du 3 mars 2004 organisant l'enseignement spécialisé). According to Eurypedia, very early on (in the law of 6 July 1970), Belgium created a dedicated, well-structured organisation for the education of children who are "apt to be educated but cannot attend an ordinary school". Consequently, in addition to ordinary full-time education, the French Community organises or subsidises, at the nursery, primary, and secondary levels, specialised education for people between the ages of three and twenty-one (with possible age limit dispensations) with a disability. Such education has been adapted on several occasions (in the decrees of 11 March 1986, 3 March 2004 and 5 February 2009). More detailed information in Eurypedia; - The [decree of 30 April 2009](#) organising a differentiated framework within French-speaking Community's schools to ensure to every pupil equal opportunities of social emancipation in a pedagogical quality environment (organisant un encadrement différencié au sein des établissements scolaires de la Communauté française afin d'assurer à chaque élève des chances égales d'émancipation sociale dans un environnement pédagogique de qualité);
 - The French-speaking Community and the Regions have concluded agreements to formalise and support assistance for disabled pupils. According to [Eurypedia](#), *the Regional Agencies for the integration of disabled people (AWIPH in Wallonia and PHARE for the Brussels Region) may participate to certain costs associated with integration (the purchase of special equipment, the adaptation of a building, etc.). These bodies also offer support with the integration process (assistance with communication, psycho-educational support, etc.) (See Eurypedia for more information);*
 - The [decree of 18 May 2012](#) aimed at implementing a support to welcome and offer education to first generation immigrants in organised or subsidised education (Décret du 18 mai 2012 visant à la mise en place d'un dispositif d'accueil et de scolarisation des élèves primo-arrivants dans l'enseignement organisé ou subventionné par la Communauté Française). Pupils are then welcome in DASPA (specific classrooms) for a period of 1 week to 12 months. The period can be extended to 6 extra months maximum. The objectives include the optimal insertion of young migrants, an education adapted to their specific needs (language, culture), and a transition before the insertion in a regular classroom.
 - The Decree related to Homework School. These structures welcome young people from 6 to 15 after school. They offer learning and social support.
- The reform of the Excellence Teaching Pact focuses its 4th axe on social inclusion at school. The 4th objective of the Pact is to remove barriers of specialised education. According to the Pact, too many pupils, in particular young people with low socio-economic background, are guided to specialised education even though they should stay in ordinary education. The Pact plans to refocus specialised education on the right targeted public.

The Pact aims at strengthening the role of Centres for Psychological Medical and Social Services in the field of school dropout and their role with the families. It will also aim at offering to pupils with specific needs the possibility to pursue their scholarship in the ordinary education system for which the reasonable arrangements will be made.

Non-formal education

- The decree related to youth centres sets out a specific support to equal opportunities for all (dispositif particulier d'égalité des chances). It gives extra public funding to youth centres working with disadvantaged public.
- The decree on Youth Organisations also sets out a specific support to actions targeted at beneficiaries with specific needs (Dispositif particulier de soutien aux actions destinées à des publics spécifiques). It gives extra public funding to youth organisations working with vulnerable public.

Many recognised associations contribute to the welfare and education of disadvantaged young people.

Social cohesion and equal opportunities

Several **measures and policies** have been adopted **to combat all forms of discriminations**: - The Schools Contract of 31 May 2005; - The policy related to the introduction of a separate subject treating citizenship at school has been introduced in 2016 in primary school. It has been implemented in secondary school in September 2017. - The decree of 12 December 2008 (prohibition of any form of discrimination in social institutions, in particular in schools); - The anti-discrimination plan which covers 53 measures to combat discriminations in particular for young people. It was initiated by the Minister of equal opportunities for the period 2014-2019. - The decree of 30 June 1998 aims at ensuring to every pupils equal opportunities for social emancipation in particular by the implementation of "positive discrimination". The decree has been revised many times. The last revision was in 2009. It affects only ordinary education system. According to this decree, the French-speaking Community grants extra funding to schools having pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Minister of Education is responsible for the implementation of this decree. - Yapaka is a programme which runs campaigns to promote child well-being and to prevent child abuse. It addresses issues including gender and discrimination. It is ongoing since 1998. The responsible authority is the Ministry of the French-speaking Community. More information is to be found in the Eurydice [2012 report on Citizenship Education](#).

6.7 Skills for innovation

Innovation in formal education

At the moment, there is no specific subject linked to innovation skills neither in primary or secondary education. The **decree on the missions of school** makes global and limited reference to it through the identification of 4 global objectives which are:

1. To promote self-confidence and the self-development of every pupils;
2. To bring every pupils to get the knowledge and to gain the competences to be able to learn their entire life and to take an active place in the social, economic and cultural life;
3. To prepare every pupils to become responsible citizens able to contribute to the development of a democratic, pluralist, solidarity society opened to others cultures;
4. Ensure to every pupils equal opportunities for social emancipation.

Schools may be authorised to organise their programme with large autonomy in order to reach these global objectives. The education website provides teachers with [pedagogical tools](#). But the topics are not linked with innovation learning field. These remain linked with the classic curriculum (languages, mathematics, sciences and technology, physical education, etc.). The **Teaching Excellence Pact, the education's reform**, plans to implement a core curriculum for every pupils from pre-primary school to the 3rd grade of secondary school. This core curriculum sets out [7 learning fields](#) whose 2 are cross-

disciplinary: - Creativity, commitment and “spirit of enterprise” (esprit d’entreprendre) According to the Pact, this learning field assume the capacity to link actions to ideas. “Spirit of enterprise” assumes the capacity to innovate, to create, to initiate, to commit and to organise and manage projects in order to realise objectives. it requires abilities such as analyse, communication, planning, etc. - Learning to learn and to make choices The Pact specifies that this learning field includes the following skills: learning from experience and identify its affinities and life projects. This cross-disciplinary subject aims at supporting pupils in identifying progressively their life / training project in an autonomous way. The ambition is to have pupils well informed about their potential and their affinities in order to be oriented in the right direction. These 2 subjects will be taught through 5 specific subjects in a cross-disciplinary way.

Fostering innovation through non-formal and informal learning and youth work

The French-speaking Community, through the Youth Department, funds youth organisations and youth centres. Their mission is to foster the capacity of innovation of young people by developing soft transversal skills (curiosity, intuition, critical and lateral thinking, problem solving, etc.). See section [1.4 Youth Policy Decision-Making](#).

Cultural sector also supports young people’s capacity of innovation. The French-speaking Community funds [programmes](#) to bring together young people with cultural activities in order to develop, among others things, their skills for innovation.

6.8 Media literacy and safe use of new media

National strategy

Faced with the proliferation of information and fake news, media literacy is seen as an essential lever that should be developed in order to enable children and young people to emancipate themselves and to be engaged citizens. The Government is working on the development of a transversal plan relating to media literacy, including many measures regarding children and young people. Its implementation will begin in 2022. At the moment, the Government pays particular attention to this topic through: - references to media literacy in the [decree of 24 July 1997](#) on the missions of school; - the creation, in 2008, of the [High Council of Media Literacy](#) (Conseil Supérieur d’Education aux Médias).

Media literacy and online safety through formal education

- The **decree of 24 July 1997 [on the missions of school](#)** sets out (art 9) that schools must, in their study programme and their pedagogical project, *highlight the importance of arts, media literacy and body language*.

Schools benefit from a large autonomy regarding the school’s programme as long as it respects the missions and objectives set in the decree on the missions of schools. Individual initiatives are taken at local level by teachers to teach media literacy in class.

They do so, for instance, through the teacher’s expertise, collaboration with specialised youth associations, etc.

The education's website “enseignement.be” provides [pedagogical tools](#) to encourage and support teachers in the field of media literacy.

- The **[decree of 5th June 2008](#) creating the High Council of Media Literacy** defines media literacy as following:

Media literacy is the education aiming at offering the ability to access media, to understand and appreciate, with a critical mind, the various features of the media and its content and the ability to communicate in various contexts. The High Council of Media Literacy offers

pedagogical tools, trainings, organises meetings between students and journalists, stimulates initiatives aimed at developing critical mind of pupils when facing Medias, etc.

It also organises, in partnership with the education sector, a [call for media literacy projects](#) in schools. The project's theme for the call 2017-2018 is "Medias: sources and vector of emotions" according to the [circular 6322](#) related to media literacy school activities – call for projects 2017-2018. The decree of 5th June 2008 sets out an annual amount of 20 000 euros to support school's media literacy projects. The half of this budget is for primary schools and the other half for secondary schools. Projects can receive a maximum of 2000 euros each. The High Council of Media Literacy organises for the second time in 2017 a [2-weeks event named: "the Media Literacy's fortnight"](#) (la quinzaine de l'éducation aux medias). It takes place at the end of October. The 2017's topic is: "inform, inquire: disinformation and fake news" (informer, s'informer: désinformation et fake news).

Promoting media literacy and online safety through non-formal and informal learning

- There are media-oriented youth organisations. Their work is to raise young people awareness about the right use of new media, the risks and opportunities that Medias offer. They work with schools, youth centres to meet young people.
- The Minister of Youth has launched in 2017 a call for media literacy projects. It addresses youth organisations and youth centres. It offers to selected projects a maximum of 2000 euros. The projects must affect at least one of the 3 following themes=

- The risks linked to the accessibility of personal information on internet; - How to react to conspiracy theory; - Understanding of advertisement's mechanisms. The total amount of funding is 30 000 euros with a maximum of 2000 euros allocated for selected projects.

- Through the decree of 5th June 2008 related to the creation of the High Council of Media Literacy, a maximum of 3 resources centres are recognised by the Government for 5 years renewable.

- CAV Liege (formations) - Media Animation - Centre de Formation et d'Auto Formation Continué

Raising awareness about the risks posed by new media

- The High Council of Media Literacy develops awareness campaigns with recognised resources centres earmarked for school and non-schools audiences according to the decree of 5th June 2008 creating the High Council of Media Literacy.
- Media-oriented youth organisations also work on raising awareness about the risks posed by new media. For instance, the youth organisation "Youth Media Action" (Action Medias Jeunes).
- The Council of Europe's programme "No hate Speech Movement" is implemented at the Community level by the International Youth Office. The objective is to fight hateful speech and discrimination on internet and involve young people in respecting Human Rights online. The International Youth Office developed a [website](#) where every young people can find information on the programme. It also provides young people with online training, tools, etc.

6.9 Awareness-raising about non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work

Information providers / counselling structures

The main information providers regarding information and guidance available to young people to learn about non-formal and informal learning are youth associations themselves. They benefit from a high degree of autonomy. They are in direct contact with young people.

Awareness raising initiatives

There is no public initiative organised to raise awareness on informal learning and youth work. Youth associations benefit from a high degree of autonomy.

6.10 Current debates and reforms

• School timetable's reform

The Government has adopted the decision to revise, from the start of the 2022-2023 school year, the [school timetables](#) for all types and level compulsory education. The fundamental element of this reorganization of the annual school calendar is to alternate periods of seven weeks of learning with periods of two weeks off. This "7/2" model is recommended by experts in chronobiology in the extent to which it confers the best balance between the length of the learning times and the rest periods necessary for the proper development of children and young people. This reform was debated in the public sphere for 30 years.

• Reform of the decree for higher education (décret paysage)

The reform of the 2013 decree for higher education (décret paysage) intends to reduce the observed lengthening of studies by setting tight deadlines for students to succeed in their studies. Concretely, any student will have a maximum of five years to obtain his bachelor's degree. This tightening of the conditions for success will be accompanied by "reinforced and targeted" assistance for success for students who encounter difficulties, in order to guide them towards success and graduation.

• "Teaching Excellence Pact"

The "Teaching Excellence Pact" is the ongoing **education reform** in the French-speaking Community. Its aim is to define action priorities at a 10-year horizon to strengthen the quality in education, make it more efficient and more equal. The Pact gathers numerous measures which will be translated into decrees. They will be submitted separately at the Government for approbation. It will be implemented on a 15 years period from 2017 until 2030. The first reforms will begin with pre-primary school in 2017 and will gradually affect every school degree from lowest (pre-primary) to highest (last degree of secondary school). It is based on a consultation process which run from 2015 to mid-2016. The whole education's sector has been consulted (teachers, headmasters, educators, parents, students). The finale version of the proposal has been presented to the Government in January 2016. The main measures of the proposition of the pact are divided into 5 axes: Axe 1: A core curriculum strengthened - Strengthen the quality of pre-primary education (Increase employment for nurses and pre-primary education, etc.); - Implement a core curriculum with 7 learning fields for the first 9 years of education. 5 learning fields are specific:

1. Languages
2. Artistic expression
3. Mathematics, sciences and technical skills
4. Social and Human sciences, philosophy and citizenship

5. Physical education or education linked to well-being and health

And there are 2 cross-disciplinary learning fields:

1. Creativity and spirit of enterprise (esprit d'entreprendre)
2. Learning to learn and make choices.

This core curriculum will be implemented in 2020 for pupils from pre-primary school until 2nd grade of primary school. - Success the digital transition - Develop the educational approach of guidance - Reform the structure of the last degree of secondary school

Axe 2: Empower every educational actors Axe 3: Reform of dual vocational education and training - Increase the value of dual vocational education and training. Axe 4: Towards an inclusive school Axe 5: Quality life at school The civil society is divided regarding the adoption of the pact.

Effective changes since 2020

Since the start of the school year 2020-2021, school is compulsory from 5 instead of 6 years old previously. This measure aims at fighting school failure in primary school, by signposting potential learning difficulties.

Preschool has now precise pedagogical objectives and the measure aiming at making school free is extended to the third year of preschool. It means that preschool cannot claim for fees to purchase school's material (painting, etc.).

A Regional Pact for Employment and Training

See chapter 3, section "debates and reforms"

- **"Move the Lines" and the Artistic and Cultural Education programme**

See Chapter 8, [section "debates and reforms"](#)

7. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

In 2015, with the 6th reform of the State, a part of health policies have moved from Federal and Community levels to the Regions. At the Community level, Ministers and institutions related are also responsible for competences related to youth health:

- the Minister of Sports and the Sport Ministry, ADEPS;
- the Minister of Childhood and the Birth and Childhood Office.

In Wallonia, the former Minister of Health has initiated a Walloon plan for health prevention and health promotion targeting all the Walloon population including young people. the Minister of Health has presented a Health Plan to the Government in April 2016. This plan covers the period 2018-2022. It includes priorities such as the promotion of health, healthy lifestyles, healthy eating and nutrition, preventing risky behaviour and substance abuse for the entire population including young people.

7.1 General context

Main trends in the health conditions of young people

The [2014 survey HSBC](#) "Behaviour, well-being and health of young people in the French-speaking Community" (Comportement, bien-être et santé des jeunes en Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles) is the Belgian French-speaking version of the international survey "Health Behaviour in Schoolaged Children" organised by WHO. In 2014, around 14 000 pupils from the fifth grade of primary school to the last year of secondary school have

participated to the tenth HSBC survey organised in the French-speaking Community. Here are some results of the survey: - 85% of respondents say they are satisfied with their lives; - Pupils from French-speaking Community's schools are among the biggest consumers of fruits and vegetables compared to others countries participating to the international survey; - 8 % of respondents are daily smokers which is a proportion closed to the one observed at the international scale. - More than one third of respondents drink sugary drinks; - Only 16% of respondents do at least 1 hour of sport every day; - 57% of respondents watch TV at least 2 hours a day; - 17% of respondents are bullied at school. This survey shows also important health inequalities regarding pupils with low socio-economic background, pupils from single-parents families and pupils from vocational education. The transition from primary school to secondary school is also a critical period (school, physical or psychological changes). These profiles need a particular attention in the field of health promotion. According to the Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth welfare in "childhood and youth inventory 2016-2017", 27 % of young Walloons (15 and 24) and 28 % of youngsters of Brussels (15 and 24) have a slight psychological anxiety disorder (mal-être psychologique). These rates are lower than the rates for the whole population. To know more about mental health issues, see the study "indicators of mental health in Wallonia 2016" ([Indicateurs de Santé mentale en Wallonie](#)).

Main concepts

Health promotion in the French-speaking Community is understood as following in the [decree of 14 July 1997 organising health promotion](#) in the French-speaking Community (organisant la promotion de la santé en Communauté française): 'the process which aims at giving the possibility to individual and to the community to act on the health determining factors and, in doing so, to improve health by favouring the population's commitment to take in charge daily life collectively and in solidarity, mixing personal choice and social responsibility. Health promotion aims at improving well-being of the population by mobilizing all public policies in a concerted way'.

7.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Health policies are shared between all levels of power. With the 6th reform of the state in 2015, many health competences have been transferred from Communities and Federal level to the **Regions**.

- The Walloon Government has then created in 2016 a unique public Agency (organisme d'intérêt public) to manage and coordinate the new competences. It created the Walloon Agency for a Quality Life (Agence pour une Vie de Qualité - AViQ). It develops synergies between all its competences in order to offer to citizens a global health support. Its 3 major policies are:
 1. Health and well-being including promotion and health prevention;
 2. Disabilities including awareness and information campaigns, policies related to accommodation for disabled people and the funding of employment policies for disabled people;
 3. Families including family allowances.
- Within the French Community Commission of Brussels, the Minister of Health is responsible for Regional health policies in the Region of Brussels. The Minister of Health elaborated in 2016 a decree to offer a legal framework to this new competence.

At the Community level, several Ministers are responsible for competences related to youth health:

- The Minister of Sports is responsible for policy-making in the field of physical education and sports for the entire population including young people;
- The Minister of Childhood is responsible for, among others things, policy-making related to activities and “medical prevention” services for nursing, children, pupils and students, health policy-making related to the Birth and Childhood Office’s missions, the administrative supervision of the Birth and Childhood Office; The [Birth and Childhood Office](#) (ONE) is a public body (organisme d’intérêt public) placed under the administrative supervision of the Minister of Childhood. It is responsible for the policy-making, the recognition and the funding of health promotion at school and after-school activities (accueil temps libre);
- The Minister of Youth Welfare who is responsible for child protection matters including aspects of mental health.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

- The Public Health Interministerial Conference (conference interministérielle santé publique) is composed of members of the Federal Government and members of the Regions and/or Communities Governments that are in charge of public health. The Conference is a tool for a dialogue between responsible authorities in the respect of their autonomy. The Interministerial Conference takes place twice a year.
- The French-speaking Community, the Walloon Region and the French-Community Commission of Brussels have signed an Agreement on the spread of Education to relational, emotional and sexual life (Education à la vie relationnelle, affective et sexuelle – EVRAS). This is commonly named “EVRAS”. The Agreement gives a common frame in which the three Governments will take action. It offers a common definition of EVRAS, the topics and contents related. The objective is to spread this subject in every school to offer same quality information to every pupils. It also facilitates cross-sectorial cooperation in order to offer education to relational, emotional and sexual life (EVRAS) to every pupil.
- The forthcoming Walloon plan for health prevention and promotion aims at promoting health in all policies. Cross-sectorial cooperation will be implemented through this plan. But this plan is still in progress. See section [7.8 Current debates and reforms](#).
- The [health promotion’s plan 2018 – 2022](#) of the Brussels Government sets as objective to foster and promote health in every policies.
- Well-being cells (Cellules bien-être) was a cross-sectorial pilot-project which brought together Youth, Health, Youth welfare and (formal) Education for the period of 2011-2014. The aim was to build a common project on a specific topic (e.g. sustainable alimentation, empowerment and participation, fight against violence...). There is no more financial support. See chapter 1 for more information.

7.3 Sport, youth fitness and physical activity

National strategy(ies)

There is no more comprehensive strategy aiming at promoting physical activity specifically for young people.

- At the Walloon level, the forthcoming Walloon plan for health prevention and promotion will include an objective regarding the promotion of physical activity for the entire population including young people. See [7.8 Current debates and reforms](#).
- At the Brussels Regional level, the plan 2018-2022 for health promotion includes the following priority: “promoting and supporting environments and behaviours favourable towards healthy nutrition, physical activity, and regarding alcohol and tobacco consumption”. This plan targets the entire population including young people. **Before the 6th reform of the State**, health promotion was a Community’s competence. In this

framework, the Government of the French-speaking Community implemented a plan for the promotion of healthy attitudes at nutrition and physical levels for children and teenagers in the French-speaking Community ([plan de promotion des attitudes saines](#) sur les plans alimentaire et physique pour les enfants et adolescents de Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles). It targeted every young people from the French-speaking Community. This plan was [evaluated](#) in 2009.

Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people

The Sports and Physical Education Administration (ADEPS) The [Sports and Physical Education Administration](#) (ADEPS) is a central actor in children and youth policies. It funds Sports Centres which organise sport's courses and sport's activities for schools and the population in general. Its missions are: - Organising sport courses; - Supporting sport operators (recognised sports federations, affiliated clubs, local powers, etc.); - Supporting high-level-sport (grants, etc.); - Training of sport instructors (pedagogical, managerial and safety training). The Sport's Administration is present at local level through the existence of 18 Sports Centres, 7 Sports Council Centres and one Loan Centre for sports equipment. It also collaborates with 80 local recognised Sports Centres. Sports Centres welcome pupils (from pre-school to Higher Education) during school time and holidays. They aim at encouraging young people to practice a regular sport activity and to discover new sports through:

- The [sport's day](#) (journée sportive): Adeps sport centres host pupils during school time for one schoolday centres on the discovery of new sports and the practice of sports;
- The pedagogical half-time (mi-temps pédagogique);
- The [sportive stay](#) (séjour sportif): it addresses mainly pupils from secondary schools or students from Higher education with a sport option. They practice a sport for 6 hours a day during several days during school time. It is hosted by Adeps sports centres.

The [decree of 27 February 2003](#), revised in 2006 and 2011, relates to the recognition and the funding of Local Sports Centres and Integrated Local Sports Centres. To be recognised and funded, they must, among others things, promote health education through sports.

"Sport" is one of the 5 competences of the French-speaking Community alongside education, culture, youth welfare and justice houses. **Programme "my club – my school" (mon club – mon école).** With this [programme](#), subventions are granted to schools and sport's clubs. Through these subventions, ADEPS encourages affiliated sport's club to promote the discovery of their sport's discipline among pupils, to stimulate passions. This programme creates privileged relationship between school and local sporting clubs to promote sports outside the 2 compulsory physical education hours at school. It opens school's sporting facilities to sports clubs outside school time.

- The awareness of sport practice addresses pupils from primary school and from the first stage of secondary school;
- The promotion of female sports addresses only young women of second and third stage of secondary school.

ADEPS grants a subvention:

- of 500 euros to the sport's club organising the activity;
- of 150 euros to the school hosting the activity.

The plan is ongoing since 2010. **Youth sector: missions of holiday's centres** The [decree](#) related to holiday's centres sets out 4 objectives, among which holiday's centres must foster the physical development of children, according to their capacities, by practicing sports, games or outdoor activities. The Youth Department of the French-speaking Community is responsible for the training of the coordinators and animators of these holiday's centres. The Birth and Childhood Office also provides training to youth and

children workers related to outdoor activities. See section [1.4 Youth Policy Decision-Making](#). **Website “mangerbouger”** The Birth and Childhood Office (ONE) and the Regions (French-speaking Community Commission of Brussels and the Walloon Region) participate to the funding and the management of the [website « mangerbouger.be »](http://mangerbouger.be). This website is coordinated by the association « Health in question » (Question Santé). It provides information on nutrition and physical activity to support people in their health project. It targets the entire population including young people, youth workers, school's actors, etc. This programme has been initiated in 2006 in the framework of the plan for the promotion of healthy attitudes at nutrition and physical levels for children and teenagers in the French-speaking Community ([plan de promotion des attitudes saines](#) sur les plans alimentaire et physique pour les enfants et adolescents de Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles).

Physical education in schools

Physical education is a **mandatory separate subject** at primary and secondary school according to the decree of 24 July 1997 on the missions of school. For the school year 2017-2018: - the [circular 6268](#) organises the curriculum for primary school; - the [circular 6293](#) organises the curriculum for secondary school. According to these circulars, the physical education's taught time is 2 hours in primary school and in the second and third stage of secondary school. It is 3 hours of physical activity for the first stage of secondary school (normally for pupils aged 12 to 14 years – maximum 16 years old). Circulars are updated every year. The website of the General Administration of Education provides **pedagogical tools and support** to physical education's teachers.

Refer to the section on the [promotion of physical activity](#) and the role of ADEPS to find initiatives on the **inclusion of physical activities outside the curriculum but within the school day** (e.g. in school breaks): the [programme “my club my school”](#) is an ADEPS's initiative to provide extracurricular sports activities in schools.

Collaboration and partnerships

Many collaboration exist between Sports and Education sectors as described above [programme “[my club, my school](#)” (programme “mon club mon école), “[Sport's day](#)” (journée sportive), [Sport's stay](#) (séjour sportif)].

7.4 Healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition

National strategy(ies)

In the French-speaking Community, the [decree of 20 December 2001](#) revised on 20 July 2006) organises health promotion at school. Health promotion at school consists of:

1. the implementation of health promotion programme and of a healthy school environment;
2. the medical follow-up which includes individual medical check-up and vaccination policy;
3. early detection of transmitted diseases and preventive medicine;
4. the collect of standardised healthcare data.

Health promotion is free and compulsory. Each school is linked to a Service of Health Promotion or to a Centre for Psychological-Medical and Social Services. These centres are the main stakeholders regarding health promotion at school according to the [2015 activity report of the Birth and Childhood Office](#). Their role is to guarantee a healthy school environment and also make young people actors of their health. With the 6th reform of the state, these centres are now under the administrative supervision of the Birth and Childhood Office. Legal texts must be adapted according to the new institutional reality. A project of decree is in progress based on the decree of 20 December 2001 related to health promotion at school and the decree of 16 may 2002 related to health promotion in Higher

Education except Universities. **In Wallonia**, the forthcoming Walloon Plan for health prevention and health promotion aims at improving health, quality of life and well-being of every Walloons including young people by 2030. The former Walloon Minister of Health presented the Plan's main strategic directions to the Government in February 2017. See [7.8 Current debates and reforms. In the French Community Commission of Brussels](#), the Minister of Health has presented a [Health Plan](#) to the Government in April 2016. This plan covers the period 2018-2022. It includes priorities such as the promotion of health, healthy lifestyles, healthy eating and nutrition, preventing risky behaviour and substance abuse for the entire population including young people. The Minister of Environment, Life Quality and Agriculture implemented the [strategy GoodFood](#) "towards a sustainable food system in the Region Brussels-Capital" ([stratégie GoodFood "vers un système alimentaire durable en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale"](#)). This policy covers the period 2016-2020. The goal is to put food at the heart of the city with all its social, economic and environmental dimensions. This strategy aims at raising awareness on healthy nutrition and healthy production. It encourages and federates initiatives in the sector. The strategy includes as a priority the involvement of citizens from earliest childhood. One of the action relates to the awareness and the involvement of future generations through schools (pedagogical animations, cooking lessons, farm's pedagogical visits, etc.). There is also the development of a vegetable garden at school: the strategy aims at supporting the creation of 10 school's vegetable garden per year by 2020. Through this strategy, the Region encourages the exchange of good practices between schools and teachers, via the "Bubble" network. It also aims at strengthen the training of educative teams on these topics (health, nutrition, sustainable food, local food).

Encouraging healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition for young people

Healthy Nutrition

- APAQ-W, the Walloon Agency for the Promotion of a Quality Agriculture develops several schemes regarding healthy nutrition for young people. One of the Agency's mission, as set out by decree, is to implement pedagogical actions and to develop the sense of taste according to the [Agency's activity report 2015](#).
 1. The Agency publishes pedagogical brochures such as "Julie and Martin's farm" ([la ferme de Julie et Martin](#)), "Farm over seasons for children from 5 to 8" (la ferme au fil des saisons élèves 5 à 8 ans), etc.
 2. The Agency publishes and disseminates in every primary school on the French-speaking territory a list of "pedagogical farms in Wallonia". This action is conducted in partnership with the association "Accueil Champêtre en Wallonie".
 3. Financial support for "healthy snack and healthy breakfast" (Aide aux collations santé) The Agency grants financial aids to schools for the organisation of healthy breakfasts and healthy snacks at school. The support amounts 1.75 euros per person with a maximum of 350 euros per breakfast (per school per year) according to the Agency's activity report 2015. For healthy snacks, the support amounts also 350 euros per event (0.20 euros per fruit and 0.50 euros for a dairy product). In 2015, 45 000 pupils have been touched by this action. This action is implemented for more than 15 years according to the Agency's activity report (2015). The Agency requires to participants to associate the event with a pedagogical project on the topic of healthy nutrition or the discovery of agriculture.
 4. "Let's eat walloon at the Scouting Camp" (Au camp, mangeons wallon!) Scouting movements may receive subventions from the Agency during their summer camp. The support amounts to 5 euros per participant per camp with a total amount of 400 euros per camp in order to buy local meat products according to the activity report 2015. The same support is granted for the purchase of local products from Walloon agriculture. In 2015, 528

scouting movements have introduced a request of which 258 have received the subvention.

- In the Community Commission of Brussels, the “GoodFood Homepage” provides initiatives and pedagogical tools to encourage healthy lifestyle and healthy nutrition for young people mainly through school.
- The [website “mangerbouger”](#) encourages healthy lifestyle and healthy nutrition for young people.

Sexual health The French-speaking Community, the Walloon Region and the French-Community Commission of Brussels have signed an agreement to spread the programme related to Education to relational, emotional and sexual life (EVRAS - Education à la Vie Relationnelle, Affective et Sexuelle) in schools. This agreement sets out a common definition of “Sex and Relationships Education” in order to define a common framework in which actors take action (common definition, common objectives and principles of EVRAS). It also creates “EVRAS support points” inside “Local Centres for health promotion”. There are 10 “Local Centres for health promotion” in the French-speaking Community. They are created by the decree of 14 July 1997 organising health promotion in the French-speaking Community (organisant la promotion de la santé en Communauté française). They address the entire population including young people. Their main mission is to reduce social inequalities regarding health issues. The Agreement organises the insertion of “EVRAS support points” which are resources centres inside the “Local Centres for health promotion”. These resources centres support schools by providing pedagogical tools, facilitating partnerships with associations such as family planning centres (centre de planning familial) or health promotion’s associations. They also make inventories of school’s needs and available resources in EVRAS. This agreement has been signed in 2013 and is concluded for a permanent period. Its evaluation is planned 2 years after its effective date. The agreement defines EVRAS as [§1] *an educative process which involves, among others things, a reflection (thought) in order to increase young people’s aptitudes to operate informed choices which will foster their fulfilment in their relational, emotional and sexual life and also to respect themselves and others. It’s about guiding every young people toward adulthood according to a global approach in which sexuality is understood in a wider sense and which includes relational, emotional, social, cultural, philosophic and ethic dimensions. [...]*. Actors operate within this common framework whether they depend from a level of power or another (family planning centres, teachers, youth workers, etc.).

The French-speaking Community implements an [EVRAS label certification](#) to ensure the quality of EVRAS service providers such as youth workers, family planning centres, etc.

A call for projects is also organised in the youth sector to fund EVRAS projects implemented by structures with the label certification. **At Regional level** The Regions recognise and fund “Family Planning centres” (Centre de planning familial). A multidisciplinary team (doctors, psychologists, social assistants, legal workers, etc.) welcomes families, couples, individuals and provides them with information, support and guiding regarding sexual and emotional life. **At the French-speaking Community level** In formal education, see [sex education and personal relationship education](#). In non-formal education, the Minister of Youth has published in 2017 a [circular](#) which gives a legal framework to “label” associations which organise EVRAS activities for young people. This label aims at guarantying quality of the services provided by the labelled association, ensuring that animators have the right training, ensuring that activities match the objectives of EVRAS as defined in the circular. The Minister of Youth has also developed in this circular a call for projects to fund EVRAS projects. The projects must target young people from youth organisations and youth centres. The implementation of the circular reserves a total budget of 150 000 euros for the projects. The selected projects can receive a total amount of 5 000 euros. **Preventing substance abuse** In 2007, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Education have signed a [convention](#) (annex 1) with the 10 “Local Centres for health promotion” regarding the implementation of a pilot project creating “support points” to prevent substance abuse at school. The convention defines their missions and their

funding. Their mission is to strengthen the collaboration between school's actors (school, Health Promotion Services at school, Centres for Psychological-Medical-Social Services) and actors specialised in substance abuse prevention. The objectives are to:

- Strengthen the knowledge of school's actors regarding the prevention offer of specialised structures;
- Adapt the prevention offer to school's needs;
- Make easier collaboration between school's actors and specialised structures;
- Make them work in network.

The Walloon Government is responsible for this Convention. According to the Walloon Agency for quality of life which is the funder, the programme received 202 500 euros in 2016. The dispositive was [evaluated](#) in September 2015.

Health education and healthy lifestyles education in schools

Health education Health promotion is compulsory at school. There is no separate subject in the school curriculum regarding specifically health education or health nutrition. However, the new compulsory subject "[education to philosophy and citizenship](#)" includes "education to well-being" in its objectives. It aims at developing the understanding of psychology and humans relations and of self-control, education to emotional relations and the acquisition of preventive behaviour as regards to health and security for oneself and others according to the decree related to education to philosophy and citizenship. The education 's website, "[enseignement.be](#)", provides information and [pedagogical tools](#) related to this subject. **Sex education and personal relationships education** There is no separate subject in the school curriculum regarding sex and relationship education. But the decree of 24 July 1997 "on the missions of school" has been modified in 2012 to introduce the following mission: "[...] *each school must educate to [...] relational, emotional and sexual life [...]*". This modification aims at introducing "[EVRAS](#)" (Education to relational, emotional and sexual life) in the school's missions. It compels every school to take initiatives regarding this subject. But schools are free to choose the way they will take action regarding EVRAS according to their school's project and their school's reality. On September 2013, the Minister of Education has signed an [informative circular](#) related to EVRAS. It supports schools by informing about what is EVRAS and by providing ideas on how to implement it. According to this circular, EVRAS is a "life education" which has many dimensions (emotional, relational, social, cultural, biological, sexual,...). It gives some examples of objectives purchased by EVRAS:

- Promoting the respect between boys and girls, women and men;
- Offering the possibility to anyone to make informed choices and to act by respecting oneself and others;
- Preparing pupils to physiologic, psychologic and social changes linked to puberty;
- Offering the possibility to everyone to get necessary aptitudes to face every aspects of sexuality and romantic relationships;
- Promoting the capacity of everyone to communicate on sexuality, emotions, relations and to acquire necessary vocabulary to be able to communicate it properly;

The circular also promotes the development of partnerships and synergies. Many actors are competent to support schools in their EVRAS project (Health Promotion Services, Family Planning Centres, associative sector or "EVRAS reference points" inside Local Centres for health promotion). "EVRAS reference points" inside Local Centres for health promotion provide schools with pedagogical tools. The Education Administration's website, "[enseignement.be](#)", also provides pedagogical tools.

Peer-to-peer education approaches

Peer-to-peer education approaches are used by some associations. For instance, the yearly project "[Festi-Team](#)" offers peer-to-peer awareness campaigns in summer festivals about safe-partying. Young people are informed about risks linked to drugs, alcohol abuse, safe sex, etc. Then they go in summer festivals to meet others young people and raise young partyer's awareness about these issues. The young people targeted are between 16 and 25 years old. The Youth Council also uses peer-to-peer education approaches through the [voluntary work of youth delegates](#). These ones meet young people in festivals, etc. and discuss with them about various topics including health.

The youth organisation OH YES ! has launched in 2021 an online channel on the social networks about sexual health: [Moules Frites](#). It uses the peer-to-peer education approach and give a free and kindly space for every young people to share about their questions, experiences, etc.

In education

To prevent school dropout, the decree of 21 November 2013 organises, among others things, the training of young people in the field of meditation in order to use peer-to-peer exchanges. See section [6.3 Preventing early leaving from education and training](#).

Collaboration and partnerships

Authorities of the French-part of Belgium cooperate to implement 2 dispositives to strengthen collaborations between school's actors and specialised actors: - In 2007 regarding [substance abuse prevention](#) ; - In 2013 regarding the [spread of Education to relational, emotional and sexual life](#) (EVRAS). The decree of 21 November 2013 related to well-being of young people at school, preventing school drop-out, prevention of violence's at school and school guiding is at the intersection of education and Youth Welfare sectors.

Raising awareness on healthy lifestyles and on factors affecting the health and well-being of young people

Information providers Many actors are responsible for disseminating information about youth health:

- Birth and Childhood Office;
- Health Promotion Services at school (the decree of [20 December 2001](#) related to health promotion at school and the [decree of 16 May 2002](#) related to health promotion in Higher Education except Universities);
- Centres for Psychological-Medical-Social Services;
- Local Centres for Health Promotion;
- Schools;
- Family Planning Centres;
- Associations;
- Youth information Centres.

Distribution of fruits and vegetables in schools The Regions participate to the European Programme "EU school fruit, vegetable and milk scheme". It is designed to help promote the benefits of healthy eating to children and encourage them to increase their consumption of fruit, vegetables and milk according to the [European Commission website](#).

- At the Walloon level, APAQ-W (Wallonia Agriculture) manages the scheme;
- At the Brussels Regional level, the Public Service of Brussels is responsible for the scheme.

The Birth and Childhood Office participates as expert to the scheme. The new programme came into effect on 1st August 2017. It replaces individual schemes. All along the school year, pupils from primary school receive fruits, vegetables or dairy products during 30 weeks. This programme was first introduced in 2009. It is financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund in the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy. For the school year 2017-2018, the Region of Brussels Capital launches for the first time its own strategy 2017-2023 in the framework of the European programme « School scheme ». Schools distribute fruits, vegetables and/or milk products for free to pupils.

7.5 Mental health

National strategy(ies)

The Federal Government and the authorities targeted by the articles 128, 130, 135 and 138 of the Belgian Constitution approved in March 2015 a "Guide for a new mental health care policy for children and teenagers" ([guide pour une nouvelle politique de santé mentale pour enfants et adolescents](#)) in order to adopt a new policy as regards to mental health of children and teenagers. The new policy has adopted a [national plan](#) which covers the period 2015-2020. The new policy targets mainly young people from 0 to 18 with a mental health disorder as well as their family or relatives and the mental health's stakeholders. It also targets young people from 18 to 23 in order to ensure a transition towards the adult's mental health care sector. Vision and mission The vision of the new policy is based on 7 principles:

1. A global approach (continuity and complementarity of health care);
2. A general approach with a possibility to offer specific care to target groups;
3. The importance of early detection, prevention and health promotion;
4. Fostering the treatment in the patient's environment (home care must be favoured);
5. During the treatment, it is important to take into account the health factors (health determinants) to give more chance to the social reintegration process. A dialogue with the relevant authorities must be undertaken;
6. It is important to take into account the socio-economic environment in order to offer to anyone (groups with socio-economic risks) the best chances to receive the right care;
7. The policy will pay attention to harmonise the transition towards adult's mental health cares.

The main mission (functions) of the mental health stakeholders are: - Early detection, screening and guiding; - Signposting; - Treatment; - Inclusion in every field of life; - Exchanges and expertise (valorisation de l'expertise) The national plan is based on the 4 objectives of the WHO's "Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020" according to the "Guide for a new mental health care policy for children and teenagers". The Federal Minister of health and its administration are responsible for the coordination of the global policy and its action plan. The Regions and Communities are involved in the policy by taking action in their own field of competence. The national plan requires a cross-sectorial cooperation involving federal authorities with regional and community's authorities. Taskforces are charged to evaluate through the health national survey the outcomes of the new policy. A Committee for the follow-up of the new policy is set out. The "public health Interministerial Conference", which is composed of every Health Ministers, approved in 2012 a statement for the realisation of networks and care circuits in the sector of mental health for children and teenagers.

Improving the mental health of young people

The new policy on mental health care for children and teenagers provides a legal framework in which stakeholders take action. Suicide Prevention Centres fund

programmes to provide trainings on suicide prevention for professionals dealing with young people.

- Due to the pandemic, Belgian governments cooperated to strengthen the psychological support in December 2020. The multidisciplinary mobile aid has been strengthened to focus further on young people with mental health issues.

7.6 Mechanisms of early detection and signposting of young people facing health risks

Policy framework

Mechanisms of early detection and signposting of young people facing health risks are widespread at different levels of power depending of the competences (youth welfare policies, education policies through the action of Centres for Psychological-Medical and Social Services, etc.). The [decree of 20 December 2001](#) revised on July 2006 rules health promotion at school which includes the following missions: - the implementation of health promotion programme and of a healthy school environment; - the medical follow-up which includes individual medical check-up and vaccination policy; - early detection of transmitted diseases and preventive medicine; - the collect of standardised healthcare data. Individual medical check-up is compulsory by decree. Medical Inspection at school was firstly introduced in 1964 through the Law of 21 March 1964. The vision was mainly centred on the fight against infectious diseases and the need for early detection of health risks. Since then, health conception has evolved towards a global approach which is health promotion according to the Birth and Childhood Office's website. In [mental health care policy](#), the stakeholder's missions address, among others things, early detection, screening and guiding, and signposting of young people mental health risks. These are addressed in action 21 and 22 of the national plan 2015-2020. A specific attention is provided to nursing, toddlers and preschool children (0 to 6) with a potential mental health risk. Cross-sectorial approach is mainly fostered.

Stakeholders

Many stakeholders depending of different level of power and different Ministers take action in early detection and signposting of young people facing health risks. In the framework of the decree of 20 December 2001, the main stakeholders are Health Promotion Services at school and Centres for Psychological-Medical-Social Services. They are under the administrative supervision of the Birth and Childhood Office since the 6th reform of the State.

Guidance to stakeholders

Local Centres for Health Promotion provide guidance to stakeholders which develops actions in the field of health promotion and preventive medicine (pedagogical tools, advices, training, etc.). There are 9 Centres in Wallonia and one for the French-speaking part of the Brussels Region.

Target groups

There is no specific target group. Young people are reached via schools.

Funding

The information is not available yet.

7.7 Making health facilities more youth friendly

There are no specific policies or programmes aiming at making health facilities more youth friendly.

7.8 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

Due to the pandemic, Belgian governments cooperated to strengthen the psychological support in December 2020. The multidisciplinary mobile aid has been strengthened to focus further on young people with mental health issues.

In the "0-25 Child and Youth plan", the Government has decided to strengthen the measure aimed at providing free meals school. Therefore, 12,500,000 euros will be dedicated to healthy food within schools.

Ongoing debates

The Covid-19 pandemic has many negative effects on youth's physical and mental health. A survey shows that the level of [distress and anxiety has significantly increased](#) among the age category 3-25. More than 80% of the group age 18-25 has a level of anxiety above the average.

A citizen action "draw your circle" (trace ton cercle) pulled together thousands of people to raise policy awareness about youth's distress.

8. CREATIVITY AND CULTURE

Initiatives to foster young people's cultural participation and creativity are streamlined across various policy field: Education, Culture and Youth sector which is part of the Culture field. Many partnerships between cultural operators and schools are encouraged by decree to bring culture at school.

The Minister of Education and the Minister of Culture have the ambition to implement a "cultural and artistic educational programme" at school.

8.1 General context

Main trends in young people's creativity and cultural participation

According to the survey "[cultural practices in the French-speaking Community](#)" of the Observatory of cultural policies (2007), young people between 16 and 24 are less informed than other age groups about leisure and cultural activities organised at the local level. Only around 4 on 10 young people report that they know about the cultural agenda in their municipality. This knowledge tends to increase with age even if it stays globally low. It also says that the main obstacles to youth participation in cultural activities (according to young people themselves) in cultural experiences are monetary barriers (43 % of 16-24 years old young people interrogated), the lack of time (26 %), and mobility barriers (9 %). The Observatory of cultural policies is currently working on a research about "digital practices of young people". The work is in progress.

Main concepts

In the French-speaking Community, the word culture is understood in the sense of the [Fribourg Declaration](#). It is said that *the word « culture » covers the values, beliefs, convictions, languages, knowledge and arts, traditions, institutions and ways of life by which a person or a group expresses his humanity and the significations he gives to his existence and development.*

Culture is all the means that we acquire or create to understand the world and to take action. Culture is not only Arts in its stricter dimension according to the [circular related to training operators in the youth sector](#).

Culture and youth policies are strongly connected, as youth policies are considered as part of the cultural field.

8.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Youth cultural policies The main actors involved in the policy-making targeting specifically young people in the field of creativity and culture are: 1. The Minister of Youth 2. The Youth Department which implements the youth policies through decrees 3. Youth associations and Federations gathered in Commissions to represent youth associations and young people One particularity in the field of youth policy is its strong ethos of subsidiarity. Youth associations are the main service providers at the local level. The autonomous status of associations is indicative of their potential flexibility. This autonomy allows responses to local specificities. In this context, the national youth policy doesn't address specific target groups in the youth population. Associations are free to focus their action on a specific target group. Several decrees determine the implementation of youth policies at the local level by Youth Organisations and Youth Centres. **Cultural policies targeting the whole population including young people** The Minister of Culture is responsible for policy-making targeting any age artists and people in the field of creativity and culture. The General Administration of Culture is composed of 6 General Services: 1. Books and Letters General Service 2. Audio-visual and Media General Service 3. Cultural Heritage General Service 4. Artistic Creation General Service 5. Youth and Permanent Education General Service 6. Territorial action General Service A Culture Inspection General Service completes the administrative organisation. Those services, among other things, implement several programmes to foster the access to culture, mainly in schools.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

The main cross-sectorial cooperation regarding culture and young people is the [decree of 24 March 2006 revised on 3 April 2014](#) which aims at supporting cultural and artistic activities in schools. The Minister of Culture and the Minister of Education share the responsibility for this decree. The Culture-Education Service implements the decree. It runs its own budget. See [8.8 Synergies and partnerships](#).

8.3 National strategy on creativity and culture for young people

Existence of a national strategy

The [political Declaration 2014-2019](#) « Federate to succeed » has been introduced in 2014 by the French-speaking Community's Government. It covers the period 2014-2019.

Scope and contents

The political Declaration 2014-2019 « Federate to succeed » is a global note referring to the Government's actions for the legislature. In the note, the Government gives priority to Education: *Education is at the heart of the Government's action because it is the best investment for the future.* Culture and creativity are mentioned as means and tools to use in the education process. *The access to creativity, cultural discovery, citizenship, sports practices will also be encouraged. Culture, diverse and plural, is also essential to the personal fulfilment. [...] Artistic and cultural education is learned in first place at school. School is a place of discovery and learning. It is the ideal vector to learn a subject, discover the work of an artist, attend a wide range of artistic and cultural performance also foster the development of its own creativity.*

Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

The Government of the French-speaking Community is responsible for the implementation of the strategy.

Revisions/updates

None.

8.4 Promoting culture and cultural participation

Reducing obstacles to young people's access to culture

Libraries Public libraries provide young people under 18 with a free library card. It allows them to borrow books for free. **Museums** There are reduced fees for people under 26 years old. Museums subsidised by the French-speaking Community are free for everybody the first Sunday of each month according to the decree of 3 May 2012 related to the recognition and the funding of museums and other museum institutions. Since 1997, the Federal Museums are free on Wednesday afternoon. **Mobility for young people** The state demands free transportation for some categories of persons including young people according to the [management contract](#) (2008 - 2012) signed between the Belgian state and the Belgian train public transport SNCB. The [appendice 12](#) details it. Train is free for:

- young people under 6 years old accompanied by a person of 12 years old or more with a valid transport ticket. A person of 12 or more with a valid ticket may travel with 4 children under 6 years old;
- young people from 6 to 12 accompanied by a person of 12 years old or more with a valid transport ticket except for week-end and public holidays. A person of 12 or more with a valid ticket may travel with 4 children under 6 years old;

Mobility for scouting movements Since the 1st of March 2017, the bus network «TEC» is free for scouting movements during their activities according to the former [Walloon Minister of Mobility's office](#). 116 000 young people are affected by this measure. According to scouting Federations, each scouting federation has signed a partnership contract with the Walloon Transport Society (Société régionale wallonne du transport). Public transportation are free on the Brussels network STIB for children under 12 years old. On the Walloon network the age limit is 6. There are no agreement between scouting movements and the Belgian train network SNCB.

Disseminating information on cultural opportunities

- The General Administration of Culture has an official website « [culture.be](#) » which disseminates information about cultural events, jobs and internships in the cultural sector, news, work of associations funded by public services, etc.
- The "[Wallonia Museum Homepage](#)" gives virtual access to almost 500 museums in the French-speaking Community. It includes a database with all school activities or learning activities provided by the museums for young people. It was created in 2007 by the Cultural Heritage Service of the French-speaking Community. It is no more funded or updated.
- "Youth Theatre meetings" ([rencontres Théâtre jeune public](#)) is an annual festival in Huy between Liège and Namur. It showcases around 30 youth theatre performances per year. The Youth service of the Liege Province organises this event. Many professionals or teachers attend this event to select the future shows to present to their pupils for the upcoming year.

Knowledge of cultural heritage amongst young people

Federal level In January 2017, around 100 pupils from 16 to 18 years old from 13 schools spread on the Belgian territory went to Auschwitz and Birkenau in Poland with the Federal

Minister of Defence. It is organised by the public body "[War Veterans Institute](#)" in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence. This annual commemoration aims at continuing Holocaust remembrance among youngster generations and to fight extremism. It also took part in 2014-2015 to the European project "the train of 1000 – a European story on Remembrance" for the 70st anniversary of the Liberation. 1 000 young Europeans from Belgium visited Auschwitz for 5 days. It was organised by the ASBL Auschwitz Memory – Auschwitz Foundation (Mémoire d'Auschwitz - Fondation Auschwitz), the « Veteran Institute » (Institut des Vétérans) and the International Federation of Resistance (Fédération internationale des Résistants) with the supports of the European Commission, the 3 Regions, the 3 Communities, Provinces, private funds (Fondation Roi Baudouin, etc.), associations, etc. As part of its missions, the "War Veterans Institute" must organise learning projects on the transmission of memory. It organises cultural visits, develops learning tools and exhibitions on memory transmission. The War Veterans Institute is a Federal public body under the administrative supervision of the Ministry of Defence.

French-speaking Community level Some youth organisations, youth centres, cultural centres and museums organise on their own initiative activities to promote awareness of a country's cultural heritage.

8.5 Developing cultural and creative competences

Acquiring cultural and creative competences through education and training

Formal learning

The [decree](#) on the missions of schools states that *every subsidised school must arouse interest for culture and creativity and foster the participation to cultural and sports activities by collaborating with the identified actors" (art. 8). Schools must also "adapt their study programme and learning project to the importance of Arts, media literacy and body language (art. 9).*

These lines are general and do not compel any schools to implement it in a specific way. Schools are free to implement it the way they want to. Thus, at the moment, there is no structural offer. It depends on the school and on the teacher (school's projects, personal interest, etc.). Therefore, there are **public initiatives to foster and facilitate the collaborations between Culture and Education.**

- The [decree of 24 march 2006 revised on 3 April 2014](#) related to the implementation, promotion and strengthening of collaborations between Culture and Education (décret relatif à la mise en oeuvre, la promotion et le renforcement des collaborations entre la Culture et l'Enseignement) is one of these tools. It aims at supporting cultural and artistic activities at school. It works through collaboration between schools and cultural operators (long term cooperation, punctual cooperation, etc.). This decree is implemented by a cross-sectorial department: the [Culture-Education Service](#). See section [8.8 Synergies and partnerships](#).
- In the Brussels Region, the French Commission Community of Brussels has organised a programme to subsidise Culture/Education programmes. It is called culture is classy (la culture a de la classe).
- For the future, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Culture have the ambition to collaborate to implement a "cultural and artistic educational programme" (Parcours d'Education Artistique et Culturel - PECA). With this programme, culture and creative competences will be included in the formal curricula of each pupil. Culture and creativity will become a separate subject at school. See section [8.10 Current debates and reforms](#).

Non-formal learning

The General Administration of Culture of the French-speaking Community funds and recognises cultural operators. Some of them must, among other missions, organise learning activities for young people:

- In the youth cultural sector, the Youth Department funds youth organisations and youth centres. They organise sociocultural voluntary extracurricular activities. They aim at promoting the development of a critical, active and responsible citizenship ([CRACS](#)). They do it through developing responsible and participative attitudes towards social, economic, cultural and political life as well as putting into practice and promoting sociocultural practices and creation. Some of them, especially youth centres, work on developing creative and cultural skills with young people.
- Expression and Creativity Centre, according to the [decree of 30 April 2009 revised in 2016](#), must stimulate creativity by organising workshops and socio artistic projects. They address the entire population including young people. There are 11 Centres which also have the recognition of the Youth sector as a youth organisation or as a youth centre (La Baraka, Circonflex, Interpôle, Le foyer des jeunes, bibi ASBL centre de promotion humaine, Atelier créatif de pierreuse, Atelier créatif mosaïque, Caj Mir, Les Abeilles, La Prairie).
- Recognised Cultural Centres must, among other missions, provide cultural activities to young people (cultural awareness, creative workshops, etc.) according to the decree of [21 November 2013 related to Cultural Centres](#).
- Recognised public libraries organise cultural and creative activities for schools and young people after school according to the [decree of 30 April 2009](#) related to the development of lecture practices organised by the reading public network and public libraries.
- The [decree of 3 May 2012](#) related to the recognition and the funding of museums and other museum institutions includes in the museum's missions the development of learning activity programme and the creation of learning tools targeting young people.

There are no guidelines for the recognition of cultural and creative competences acquired through non formal learning.

Specialised training for professionals in the education, culture and youth fields

Formal education There are 19 higher education schools of arts according to [eurypedia](#) in the French-speaking Community. There is a specialised study programme for students who want to be teachers in formal education. This is the "agrégation". It provides students with teaching methodologies. It is complementary to others studies (Art History, mathematics, etc.). **Non-formal education**

- The ministerial circular organising the support of training programmes for animators and socio-cultural and socio-artistic action recognises and funds training operators in the youth sector. See section [5.7. "Learning to participate" through formal, non-formal and informal learning](#).
- The BAGIC is a specialised training for cultural and social project's coordinators. The French-speaking Community delivers certificate of aptitude to cultural institutions management and to the coordination of cultural and socio cultural global projects. This 2-years training is organised by 5 training operators funded by the French-speaking Community.
- In partnership with the European Social Fund, the General Service of Youth and Permanent Education has launched for the year 2017-2018 a call for projects "Investing in cultural jobs" (Investir les métiers de la culture). This programme is in the framework of the measure 3.2 of FSE action plan for the French-speaking Community: train and

support job seekers and vulnerable people in order to insert them on the labour market. It aims at supporting projects which develop innovative trainings for professionals in the cultural sector. The targeted jobs must be new, in the cultural sector and meet one of the following criteria:

1. New cultural jobs in the digital era;
2. New cultural jobs linked with intercultural issues;
3. Existing cultural jobs needing to be highlighted;
4. Jobs related to training, animation, support in the non-formal education.

Providing quality access to creative environments

There are many public policies and programmes to ensure access to creative environments to young people. The main programmes are organised for schools. **French-speaking Community's policies** Many cultural operators develop creative environments for young people as demanded in decrees.

1. The decree related to Cultural Centres

In application of the decree, cultural centres run regular work on mediation and accessibility for young people to culture. They have a pricing policy to support young people to access cultural performances. They also work on raising awareness of young people in schools on creativity and culture. They have a central role in bringing theatre to schools.

2. The decree related to childhood and youth theatre This decree organises the support for young creators and the recognition and the funding of theatre companies targeting young people. The decree recognises 2 "dramatic centres" for childhood and youth: Pierre de Lune in Brussels and the "Walloon dramatic centre for childhood and youth" in Wallonia. Their specific missions are to promote and disseminate performances from theatre companies, to offer learning support to teachers and to raise awareness and give young people access to the discovery of theatre and artistic languages. Their target group are young people during school time or not.

3. The decree related to collaborations between School and Culture

Further information on this decree in [section 8.8 synergies and partnerships](#).

4. The decree related to the development of reading practices organised by the reading public network and the public libraries

5. The decree related to expression and creative centres The mission of Expression and Creative Centres is to stimulate creativity by organising workshops and socio-artistic projects. Some Centres are also recognised as youth centres. Then, their action focus mainly on young people.

6. The decree related to the recognition and the funding of museums

7. The decree related to permanent education

A lifelong learning association ([association d'éducation permanente](#)) aims at developing, mainly for adults, a critical knowledge of society's realities, capacities of analyse, action and evaluation, responsible attitudes and active participation to social, cultural, economic and political life.

8. The decree related to Youth Organisations

Further information in section [1.4 Youth policy decision-making](#).

9. The decree related to Homework Schools

Further information in section [1.4 Youth policy decision-making](#).

10. The decree related to Homework Schools

Further information in section [1.4 Youth policy decision-making](#). **French-speaking Community's programmes**

- **Books and Letters General Service of the General Administration of Culture**

- Programme "[writer in the classroom](#)" Writers, illustrators meet young people in primary and secondary school, share their experience and organise creative workshops. The Books and Letters department supports the practical costs (travel expenses of authors, fees, etc.). - Annual contest the fury to read (La fureur de lire) This contest focuses on kids from 3 to 13 years old. It is coordinated and funded by the Books and Letters department. Young participants are invited to create drawings, songs, texts, movies, etc. about a selection of 12 books. The winners receive rewards such as cultural vouchers, cultural activities admission tickets, etc. - Programme "initiating pupils to regional languages" The department of regional and endogenous language of the French-speaking Community provides teachers with learning tools to support them in developing awakening activities on regional languages (wallon, gaumais, picard, bruxellois) among young people.

- Territorial Action General Service (libraries, cultural centres) of the General Administration of Culture

[Museobus](#): it is a wandering museum which offers exhibitions and animations on several themes. It moves on the territory of the French-speaking Community on demand.

- **Artistic creation General Service (theatre, arts, music) of the General Administration of Culture**

- The [programme "performance in schools"](#) This programme aims at giving the access to kids and young people to quality artistic and cultural performance in schools. The programme is divided into 2 dispositives: the programme "theatre at school" and the programme "song at school". The funding partners are:

1. The department of "theatre arts diffusion" (service des arts de la scène) of the French-speaking Community;
2. Cultural Services of the Provinces;
3. The French Community Commission of Brussels.

They take in charge a part of the selling price of the selected show.

- **The [Culture-School department of the French-speaking Community](#)**

- Sixth-form student prize for French-speaking Belgian cinema Sixth-form students are invited to elect their favourite film among those produced by the French-speaking Community. They watch the movies during school time, then discuss it. They are also invited to review the movie and to create their own work inspired from the movies. They can meet the directors and actors to discover the cinema realities and jobs. It was launched in 2006. - Sixth-form student prize for French-speaking for literature Pupils of 5th and 6th years of secondary school are invited to read 5 novels issued from the French-speaking Community and to elect their favourite. In extension, the activity offers also the possibility to receive writers in class. Based on their readings, they discuss and work on their creativity by creating their own poems, comics, paintings, etc. It was launched in 1993. - Budding journalists (journalistes en herbe) This is a contest targeting pupils of 6th year of primary school and pupils of 1st and 2nd year of secondary school. They are invited to create their own newspaper. It was launched in 2008. - « Quartz de la chanson » This is a contest targeting pupils in 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th year of secondary school regarding the musical universe. It was launched in 2009. - « On stage » (Sur les planches) Pupils of 4th, 5th or 6th year of secondary school are invited to participate to a theatre festival. Participants work on a theatre play and perform it in a real theatre. The department Culture-school, which organises and funds the activity, cooperates with various theatres. It was launched in 1999. - "Look again at my cultural heritage" (Mon patrimoine revisité) This is a contest for pupils of 1st and 2nd year of primary school. They are invited to visit their city, local traditional event, etc. They choose a piece of local art (painting, monument, etc.) and reimagine it through fine arts. It was launched in 2016. - "Rhythmic poems contest" (concours de slam) Participants are invited to create their own rhythmic poems

and to recite them in public. They attend writing workshops, they meet professionals, etc. It was launched in 2016.

8.6 Developing entrepreneurial skills through culture

Developing entrepreneurial skills through cultural activities

Some youth associations, through their cultural activities, participate to this objective by giving young people the tools to develop their sense of initiative, creativity, their ability to manage projects, etc. For more information on entrepreneurial skills, see section [3.8. Development of entrepreneurship competence](#).

Support young entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors

In the French-Speaking Community

- The programme “[Arti chok](#)” supports young professional artists in their first mobility project. The kind of project supported may be an international festival, contest, foreign training or artist-in-residence programme. This programme is funded by the International Youth Office (100 000 euros per year) according to the International Youth Office.
- The [decree of 10 April 2003](#) related to the recognition and the funding of the theatre arts professional sector develops a policy which supports artists of any ages. Even if the decree does not point out any specific attention to young creators, the advisory commissions charged of the selection pays attention to young creator’s projects according to the General Service of Theatre. The “Council in charge of supporting theatre’s projects” guarantees each year the support of 10 first creations.

In Universities

Universities have created a specific “legal status” for artist students. See section [3.8. Development of entrepreneurship competence](#).

At Federal level

At Federal level, there is also a legal status “student-entrepreneur” for students under 25 years old. See section [3.8. Development of entrepreneurship competence](#).

In Wallonia

The Agency charged to support entrepreneurship is the *Agency for Enterprise and Innovation*. See section [3.8. Development of entrepreneurship competence](#).

In Brussels

The Agency charged to support entrepreneurship is *Impulse*. More information in section 3.9.

8.7 Fostering the creative use of new technologies

New technologies in support of creativity and innovation

Wallonia

According to “Digital schools in actions” ([école numérique en actions](#)), the Walloon Government has launched since 2011, 3 calls for projects “digital schools” (école numérique). The project’s partners are the Governments of the French-speaking Community and the German-speaking Community. The project aims at boosting the use of innovative Information and Communications technologies in the education sector (formal and non-formal). There have been 3 calls since 2011: • 28 projects on 175 were accepted for the first call (2012/2013); • 72 projects on 450 were accepted for the second call (2013/2014); • 200 on 490 projects were accepted for the third call (2014/2016). For

the 300 accepted projects, 690 computers, 5824 digital tablets, 293 interactive whiteboards, 104 projectors, 269 digital tools (camera, printer, etc.) were provided. The accepted projects also received digital training for teachers. Teachers were also supported all along the process by expert trainers. These projects have often implemented sustainable teaching practices enhanced by team which had participated to the projects. It also confirmed that the needs in computer equipment are various according to the projects. The technical and teaching support is an important key for success. This call for projects belongs to a global project named "IT Plan for education" (Plan TIC pour l'éducation) which belongs itself to the global Walloon Digital strategy. The project "IT for education Plan" is the third project aiming at fostering new technologies in schools. 2 previous projects, "Cyberécoles" (1997 to 2000) and "Cyberclasse" (2006 to 2012), enabled the installation of 40 000 computers in schools. The call for applications "connected schools" aims at providing with WIFI every learning spaces in 200 pilot schools. At the end, the goal is to provide every Walloon school with WIFI and mobile equipment. In order to develop the use of digital learning, new call for projects will be launched every year. Every laureate will receive an equipment kit (computers, tablets, etc.). **Brussels** The Computing Centre for the Region of Brussels (Centre d'informatique pour la Région Bruxelloise) works on the project « [Fiber to the school](#) » since 2014. This is a key project in the Region's multimedia strategy. It aims at providing with high-speed internet the 168 secondary schools of Brussels. The project will go on a 6 years period of time from 2014 to 2019. The Brussels Region funds the project (2 000 000 euros per year). At the moment 92 schools are connected. At the end of 2017, 112 schools will be connected. The Computing Centre for the Region of Brussels connects schools at the rate of 28 per year.

Facilitating access to culture through new technologies

- « [Lirtuel](#) » is the digital library of the French-Speaking Community. It was initiated by the "public reading public service" (service de lecture public) in 2015. This project is attached to the project "Digital Loan in Libraries" (Prêt Numérique en Bibliothèque) which gathers French-speaking libraries (France, Switzerland, Belgium). In the French-speaking Community, there is one common digital catalogue. It is free and accessible to any member of recognised public libraries. The French-speaking Community funds the platform. In order to buy the books, the Public Service collaborates with the central libraries of every French-speaking Provinces and the Region of Brussels. They all participate to a common budget. Each province gives 5000 euros per year. The French-speaking Community contributes with 10 000 euros. Since last year, 2 local libraries have also participated with 500 euros each per year according to information provided by the public reading public service. The digital catalogue depends on the agreement signed with the publishers. Therefore, children's books are not yet well represented in the catalogue. There was no specific communication to schools to inform young people about this opportunity.
- "[PointCulture](#)" was formerly the national network multimedia library. The missions have now progressed with the development of the digital market. "Point Culture" concludes every 5 years an agreement with the French-speaking Community. It defines its missions for the 5 next years. Its mission is now to create a place where public use art and culture, criticize, experiment, question their relation to the Arts and explore the issues that drive social live. It targets the entire population including young people. The 4 fields of actions are:
 1. To inform and to initiate young people to the various arts disciplines;
 2. To disseminate and promote the work of cultural operators, artists, etc.;
 3. To raise awareness, to inform, to educate about cultural skills and cultural knowledge;
 4. To highlight the audio-visual heritage. Point Culture is funded by the French-speaking Community. For the year 2015-2016, it received 5 999 000 euros which is 66 % of Point Culture's revenue according to the [activity report](#). The French-speaking Community has also funded 967 000 euros of "non-profit

employment” (emploi non-marchand). The total amount of subventions represents 87 % of Point Culture’s revenue for 2015-2016.

- The “Wallonia Museum Homepage” gives virtual access to almost 500 museums in the French-speaking Community. It includes a database with all school activities or learning activities provided by the museums for young people. No more fundings are dedicated to the project at the moment. The platform is not kept up to date.
- “[Quai 10](#)” (Le centre de l’image animée et interactive – Quai 10) is the new audiovisual centre located in Charleroi. It gathers 2 disciplines: cinema and video games. It provides learning tools, learning spaces on the “image” thematic. The “gaming space” collaborates with the Federation of Youth Centres and Youth Organisations [FOR’J](#). Together they welcome young people and organise animations, training, and workshops. They develop young people’s critical thinking through the discovery, the analyse and the creation of video games.

8.8 Synergies and partnerships

Synergies between public policies and programmes

There is a debate and upcoming reform about the implementation in the formal curricula of a “cultural and artistic educational programme”. [See section 8.10 debates and reforms.](#)
Currents Culture – Education Synergies The main significant long-term synergy affects collaborations between culture and education sectors. Ministers of Culture and of Education signed in 2006 [a common decree](#) (revised in 2009 and 2014) to implement, to promote and to strengthen collaborations between Education and Culture. It aims at supporting cultural and artistic activities at school. It works through collaboration between schools and cultural operators (long term cooperation, punctual cooperation, etc.). The decree states the following objectives:

- Give pupils access to culture and various forms of creation and artistic expression at school;
- Emancipate pupils by giving them the means to access different languages of creation, by helping them to develop their creativity, their imagination, by awaking their sensitivity;
- Inform young people about artistic creation sector, artistic studies, cultural jobs by meeting artists and professionals;
- Fighting school failure by taking into account the diversity of intelligences;
- Strengthening and enhancing collaborations aiming at initiating pupils to cultural and artistic activities, to the practice of these activities;
- Providing teachers with information and learning tools to develop cultural and artistic activities with their pupils;
- Raise education actors awareness about the importance of an artistic and cultural approach which is plural and continuing with its diversity of expressions and in its multidisciplinary dimensions.

Every 3 years, the Government settles on a joint action programme ([Programme d’Actions concerté](#)) for a collaboration policy between Culture and Education as asked in the decree of 24 March 2006 (art 6). The action programme includes:

- The strategies to adopt in order to reach the objectives of the decree;
- The actions to implement to reach these objectives;
- The key indicators to evaluate how the objectives have been reached;

- The coordination process to increase the synergies between the cultural and educational sector;
- The propositions related to the implementation of privileged partnerships by ensuring that diverse artistic disciplines are represented;
- The propositions related to the collaborations implemented by the French-speaking Community.

The cross-sectorial Culture-Education Department is a one-stop service whose missions are: 1. The implementation of the 3-years joint action programme elaborated by the French-speaking Community's Government; 2. The decision on the admissibility of sustainable and punctual cooperation projects and to transfer the admissible projects to the "Selection and Evaluation Commission"; 3. Centralising all demands from cultural or educational sector; 4. Updating and promoting an inventory of French-speaking Community's initiatives to bring closer Culture and Education; 5. Making an inventory and disseminating learning tools created by cultural operators or teachers; 6. Fostering and facilitating the cooperation between cultural operators and teachers; 7. Organising meetings between pupils and artists; The Culture-Education Department works in synergies with:

- The General Administration of Culture;
- The General Administration of Education;
- The High Council of Media Education.

The decree organises 3 support mechanisms:

1. Sustainable cooperation: it supports cultural or artistic activities issued from a call for project, based on a school year, mainly realised during school time on the basis of a partnership convention concluded between the school and a cultural operator. The selected projects receive at most 4000 euros each.
2. Punctual cooperation: it supports cultural or artistic activities initiated by a school or a cultural operator, not issued from a call for project, realised during school time or not, including a partnership convention. It is possible to introduce 2 different bi-annual projects. The selected projects receive at most 2000 euros each.
3. Privileged partnerships: the Government can conclude privileged partnerships with some cultural operators known for their good educational skills. It involves a funding over several years and a convention between the Government and the cultural operator.

The Culture-Education Service runs its own budget (1 206 000 euros for the year 2017-2018) according to information provided by the Culture-Education Service. It covers all its activities (implementation of the decree, budget for the implementation of specific programmes, artists in residence programme, etc.).

In the Region of Brussels, the Government has also implemented a programme to fund partnerships projects between schools and cultural operators. The projects must aim at fostering pupil's creativity and cultural participation. It is named: "Culture is classy" (La culture a de la classe). The selected projects will receive at most 2400 euros for a class and 9600 euros by school.

Partnerships between the culture and creative sectors, youth organisations and youth workers

Youth policies belong to the cultural sector. Youth sector depends on a different Minister than the others cultural matters (theatre, artistic creation, etc.). Youth workers are free to initiate partnerships with stakeholders of the cultural sector and vice versa. Many partnerships exist but there are at the initiative of the associations themselves. The Youth

Department created a website in 2014 “cards for a cross-sectorial citizenship” (cartes de visite pour une transversalité citoyenne”. It introduces the work of youth associations through various themes (culture, education, media education, international, employment, etc.). 5000 euros were granted to the 21 projects presented in the folder. 5000 euros were used for the collective realisation of the folder.

The website is no longer online.

8.9 Enhancing social inclusion through culture

Fostering equality and young people involvement through cultural activities

Specific support for Youth Organisations

The decree on Youth Organisations plans a specific support to actions targeted at beneficiaries with specific needs ("Dispositif particulier de soutien aux actions destinées à des publics spécifiques"). It offers extra funding to youth organisations working with vulnerable public (disabled young people, low socio-economic background, etc.). See section [4.4 Inclusive programmes for Young People](#). Among the 8 beneficiaries of this specific support, one works on cultural expression with vulnerable young people ([C-PAGE](#)). Another one, [gratte Asbl](#), offers to both fit and disabled young people the opportunity to meet and to participate to leisure and creative activities together. The association, "[Les compagnons batisseurs](#)" also organises activities with and for young people from diverse background (diverse origins, diverse capacities, etc.).

Specific support for Youth Centres

The decree on Youth Centres plans a specific support to equal opportunities for all ("Dispositif particulier d'égalité des chances"). It gives specific support to youth centres working with disadvantaged publics (low socio-economic background). See section [4.4 Inclusive programmes for Young People](#). These youth centres organise for instance French lectures, artistic and creative workshops, sports and cultural activities etc. for vulnerable young people. [Article 27](#) Article 27 is an association which aims at facilitating the access to culture for vulnerable people. The association works in partnerships with cultural operators and social institutions in order to offer reduced prices for cultural activities to this specific public. An entrance ticket costs 1,25 euros for people who receive social support from a recognised social partner according to the website's association.

Combating discrimination and poverty through cultural activities

Many cultural operators work on combating discrimination and poverty through cultural activities in various cultural sector (youth, theatre, reading, music, cinema, permanent education, etc.). They are recognised and financially supported by the French-speaking Community's Government through the Youth Department.

8.10 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

- **Move the lines initiative and the Teaching Excellence Pact**

The former Minister of Culture and Education launched the 19th January 2015 a consultation process including cultural and artistic operators and actors of permanent education sector. This is called "Move the lines" ([Bouger les lignes](#)). It is co-managed by the Observatory of Cultural Policies, the General Administration of Culture with the support of PointCulture. **Move the lines** aims at adapting cultural policies to the evolution of society. It aims at building the new cultural offer of 21st Century for a 21st Century audience with the institution of the 21st Century. "Move the lines" is the preliminary phase of a deep and structural reform of cultural policies in the French-speaking Community.

The Teaching Excellence Pact (pacte pour un enseignement d'excellence) is also a consultation process launched in 2015 which aims at strengthening the quality of education for every pupils. See section [6.10 Current debates and reforms](#). Both consultation process have issued a common working group which is the culture – school alliance (alliance culture – école). This working group developed the idea of a “cultural and artistic educational programme” as described below.

- **Cultural and Artistic Educational Programme**

The Minister of Education and the Minister of Culture have the ambition to implement a “cultural and artistic educational programme” (Parcours d'Education Artistique et Culturel). The Government and the parliament will elaborate an action plan and the first measures should be implemented during the 3 next years. It was firstly initiated by the former Minister of Education and Culture in 2015. The working group “culture – school alliance” has proposed **to develop for every pupil, from primary to secondary school, a compelling “cultural and artistic educational programme”** which will follow the pupil all along its formal education. This programme aims to ensure to every pupils the access to culture and arts. With this in mind, the working group has made **14 propositions**:

1. The programme is intended to all pupils;
2. From primary to secondary school;
3. The programme has 3 fields of action: the knowledge, the development of individual and collective practices, the encounter with artists and cultural / artistic work;
4. The programme is cross-disciplinary. It affects all subjects;
5. The teacher takes in charge the cultural part of every subject. The education “to” and “by” artistic subject needs specific learning practices and times;
6. A number of hours will be allocated to encounters, visits, etc. according to the class's needs;
7. The programme must be organised within the school's time independently of an eventual extension of the school day;
8. Skills base (référentiel de compétences) will have to be made for the knowledge and skills to gain during the programme, taking into account its transversal dimension;
9. The programme will have to be made by school's headmasters and learning team in partnership with the cultural and artistic sector and integrated to the school's management programme;
10. The training of teachers (higher education and lifelong learning) must take into account the implementation of the programme;
11. The implementation of the programme needs the appointment of “cultural referent” to ensure a role of animation, information and networking;
12. The programme is elaborated thanks to partnerships between cultural and education actors;
13. The Department “culture – school” will be charged to ensure the implementation of the programme and to centralise and disseminate information related to the programme;
14. The constitutive elements of every pupil's cultural and artistic programme could be gathered in an individual portfolio which would attest the accomplished work of the pupil in the cultural and artistic domain.

Ongoing debates

Many debates took place in the Belgian society about the reform of education, the Teaching Excellence Pact. More detailed information in section [6.10 Current debates and reforms](#) in the Chapter 6 Education and training.

9. YOUTH AND THE WORLD

The main actor involved in youth's contribution to global processes of policy-making, implementation and follow-up is the Youth Council. This is an advisory body recognised and funded by the Youth Department of the French-speaking Community. Others actors have an important role in raising youth awareness about global issues such as the International Youth Office, youth associations or schools.

The Youth Forum has an important role to play by sending youth delegates at the UN conferences and meetings every two years. Youth associations and the International Youth Office also raise youth awareness about global issues by supporting specific youth projects in Belgium and abroad.

9.1 General context

Main concepts

There is no specific concept to illustrate.

Youth interest in global issues

A large online consultation called "**Generation What?**" ([Génération Quoi?](#)) was undertaken in the French-speaking Community by the public service broadcaster RTBF between May and July 2016. Although the sample was not representative of the entire young population, the survey involved a large number of young people (8000 participants aged 18-34 years). The results suggest that young people in the French-part of Belgium are mainly worried about environment and access to employment. According to the same survey, 56 % of the young people interrogated said that they were interested to engage in a non-for-profit organisation. 26 % have already been engaged in a non-for profit organisation. 80 % were favourable to the establishment of the compulsory civil service. At the contrary, the military service does not interest young people.

9.2 Administration and governance

Governance

The main actor involved in youth's contribution to global processes of policy-making, implementation and follow-up is the [Youth Council](#) of the French-speaking Community of Belgium. As official advisory body, it collects 16 – 30 years old young people's opinion and then relieve it to the politics. The Youth Council defends young people's interests and represents them at national and international level. The youth council takes part in regular meetings at UN-level by sending young people to represent the points of view of Belgian youth. Environment and sustainable development are the main topic discussed.

The Minister of Youth at the French-speaking Community level launched in 2016 a programme to stimulate youth participation at **local level**. Young people are invited to launch projects, participate, contribute to global processes within their municipalities.

In Wallonia, the Minister of environment and ecological transition organises every year a Youth Parliament on environmental issues. The first yaeer, fifty-five students from Universities and Higher education School were invited to debate. They formulated 8 propositions that have been taken into account for the writing of the second [Sustainable development Walloon Strategy](#) of 7 July 2016. Since then, the parliament is renewed every year. The last parliament took place in February and March 2018. Thirty-five students formulated [10 policy recommendations](#) to boost circular economy in Wallonia.

There is a **wide range of associations** working with young people on global processes. The association Idea Network ([Réseau Idée](#)), for instance, gathers around 130 associations working on sustainable development and environmental issues.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

The French-speaking Community, the Walloon Region and the Region of Brussels Capital signed in 2011 a [cooperation agreement](#) related to the education to environment, nature and sustainable development. The objective is to promote and develop education to environment and to nature with perspective of sustainable development to education to citizenship. The time frame is 6 years and it is renewable. It fosters the implementation of a global strategy for the three entities and underlines the importance of environmental stakes for which pupils must be prepared. A [first cooperation agreement](#) was signed in 2004 by the French-speaking Community and the Walloon Region. The 2011's agreement includes a new signatory: the Region of Brussels-Capital. It develops then a partnership which covers all schools on the French-speaking Community's territory.

The current cooperation Agreement which covers the time period of 2021-2024 establishes an [action plan](#) with 5 main cooperation objectives:

1. Cooperation in order to integrate "education to environment" in the schools curriculum and in the teacher's training;
2. Cooperation in order to support school in including sustainable development in their management;
3. Cooperation to provide quality pedagogical tools to schools;
4. Cooperation in the field of information, promotion and exchanges of good practices;
5. Cooperation to promote and implement the Agreement cooperation.

For more information on education to environment and sustainable development, see section [9.5 Green volunteering, production and consumption.](#)

9.3 Exchanges between young people and policy-makers on global issues

Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the domestic level

A youth consultation to update the Air Climate Energy

The Walloon Region has set up a wide consultation process for the adoption of a new Air Climate Energy Plan (PACE).

The 2016-2022 Air Climate Energy Plan (PACE), initiated by Wallonia, sets Walloon objectives in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, energy and air quality. A new Air Climate Energy Plan for 2030 is in preparation. To do this, a consultation process, followed by work to update objectives and measures is implemented to meet Walloon commitments, including the achievement of -55% greenhouse gas emissions by compared to 1990.

As part of this participatory process, the Youth Forum was asked to consult young people. Therefore, the Forum created two fun activities and an online form aimed at collecting ideas from young people aged 16 to 30. The objective of this consultation is to ensure that the comments of the population of this age group are taken into account when updating the Air Climate Energy Plan for the Walloon Region.

Young people meet the Prime Minister

On May 26, 2021, the young Ambassadors of the Youth Dialogue organized a meeting between 9 young spokespersons and the Prime Minister, Mr. De Croo. In total, around sixty young people from 2 secondary schools and a municipal council were able to

participate. This meeting is a continuation of the Festival of Democracy, organized in 2020 by the Youth Forum, which gathered the opinions of young people about their participation in society and the impact they have on the decisions that are taken.

In this context, young people frequently expressed two feelings: they did not feel sufficiently listened to by politicians and wish to express their reality more as young citizens, experts in their experiences. This is precisely what the young people who participated in the Festival of Democracy had the opportunity to do, during a virtual meeting with Mr. De Croo. This interview is the first edition of a series of meetings planned between young people and elected politicians. The objective, through this project, is to allow as many young people as possible to discuss their vision of engagement and politics, in an informal setting, with a political representative.

Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the international level

There is a regular framework for view exchanges at the international level through the work of the Youth Forum and its selection of youth delegates.

The Youth Forum of the French-Speaking community selects 3 youth delegates below 30 years old for a 2-years mandate. Their mission is to represent the points of view of French-speaking Belgian youth at United Nations conferences and meetings.

One of them participates to the Conference of the Parties on climate change, the second one to the 3rd General Assembly Commission of the UN and the ECOSOC Youth Forum and the last one to the High Level Political Forum on sustainable development.

During a two year period, youth delegates follow policy developments in their thematic field, both at national and international level. They ask young people in their communities about their views, as inspiration for the key messages they will address internationally. To this end, youth delegates organize and participate in events, use online communication tools and give presentations.

Youth delegates also influence national decision-making through lobbying, among others by elaborating policy proposals, contacting decision-makers and writing press articles. A true 'key moment' is when they actually go to the UN where they:

- participate in negotiations as part of the Belgian delegation;
- give speeches in the name of youth from the French-speaking Community of Belgium
- organize side-events to raise awareness among the international community about youth issues.

Moreover, they work together with youth delegates from around the world to make young people's voices heard more effectively at international level.

Through the work of these youth delegates, this programme contributes to the exchanges of views between young people and politicians at international level. Youth delegates also participates to a more efficient visibility of the UN work.

Environment and sustainable development are the main topics discussed.

In the framework of the Youth Dialogue, the Youth Forum

9.4 Raising awareness about global issues

Formal, non-formal and informal learning

In the context of formal learning

- **At Federal level**

The programme “Show the hand” ([Annoncer la couleur](#) – Kleur bekenen) is a federal awareness programme on the topic of worldwide citizenship education. It is funded by the Belgian development cooperation and coordinated by the Belgian Agency for development. Its field of action is formal education.

The programme: - Provides various pedagogical tools (games, web documentary, pedagogical file, etc.); - Supports teachers and future teachers in working with pupils on worldwide citizenship; - Give access to an online inventory of pedagogical resources on worldwide citizenship (exhibitions, educative websites, etc.) - Organises a call for projects addressing schools in the field of worldwide citizenship education. This programme has existed since 1997 at the initiative of the former Minister of development cooperation. Worldwide citizenship education supports young people in understanding the world, developing their critical thinking, etc. It includes 8 topics: 1. Sustainable development; 2. Diversity and intercultural activities; 3. Peace and conflicts; 4. Democracy and citizenship; 5. Social justice; 6. Migrations; 7. Human Rights; 8. Trade and consumption.

- **At French-speaking community level**

The decree of 24 July 1997 on the missions of school ([art. 6§3](#)) declares that one of general objectives of education is *to prepare every pupil to be responsible citizen able to contribute to the development of solidarity and democratic society, pluralist and open to other cultures*.

Global issues are not covered as a separate subject in upper-secondary school. They are taught as cross-disciplinary subjects according to the Minister of education in the brochure “be and become a citizen”.

According to the [decree of 12 January 2007](#) on education of citizenship, a commission of experts (universities, upper-secondary school teachers) has been charged by decree to write a document named “Be and Become a citizen”. It addresses teachers of upper-secondary schools. This pedagogical tool gives references to understand the civil and political society. It also provides teachers with pedagogical tools and evaluations.

The decree of 12 January 2007 on education to citizenship defines, in the [brochure](#) 'be and become a citizen', a minimum of **12 topics** which must be addressed in classes:

1. The functioning of democracy, the principles of citizenship and democracy;
2. Organisation and development of European and International Institutions;
3. Division of the state and description of State's Institutions;
4. Organisation of power as defined by the Belgian Constitution;
5. Organisation and functioning of legal system;
6. Human Rights and civil liberties;
7. Human Rights and the rights of the children;
8. Governmental and non-governmental institutions which ensure their respect;
9. International humanitarian law;
10. Social protection and citizenship;
11. The functioning and the role of the media;
12. Sustainable development including green consumption.

According to the article 10 of the decree on citizenship education of 12 January 2007, the content of this brochure must be integrated in the programme as transversal subjects.

The French-speaking Community encourages practices of Education related to Environment and Sustainable Development ([Ere DD](#)). An agreement was signed between the French-speaking Community and the Walloon Region in 2003. It has been updated in 2012 to integrate the Brussels Region. This [agreement](#) aims at sharing power and responsibilities to exercise competences of each structure in order to promote and develop education related to environment, nature and sustainable development and to place in the wider education purpose of responsible citizenship.

In the context of non-formal learning

- The French-speaking Community, through the [Youth Department](#), recognises and funds youth organisations and youth centres. As explained in chapter 1, the main goal of youth association is to make young people active, responsible and critic citizens living in solidarity ([CRACS](#)). Therefore, their action focus, among other things, on raising youth awareness about global issues.
- Many associations play an important role in raising awareness about global issues among young people. They organise plenty of activities in schools or in youth centres. With the support of the Walloon Region, the [association COREN](#) organise a call for project "Schools for tomorrow" ([écoles pour demain](#)). Pupils are invited to develop an environmental projects in their school on subjects such as lifestyle, eco-consumption, waste management, climate change, water management, etc. At the end of the year, schools receive a certificate 'school for tomorrow' from the Minister of Environment.
- The Youth Forum through its "[youth delegates](#)" programme contributes to raising youth awareness about global issues. Youth delegates meet young people in schools, in youth centres, etc. in order to consult young people and raise their awareness about UN topics. They also have [a facebook page](#) to disseminate information about their actions, news of UN, information about Sustainable Development Goals, etc.
- The [International Youth Office](#) also has an important role in raising youth awareness about global issues by funding foreign non-formal education projects based on exchange, cooperation, cultural values. The International Youth Office launches every year since 2012, a [call for projects](#) named "[Humans Rights, Social Rights](#)". This project addresses young people from 15 to 30 years old or youth workers working with young people on the "Human Rights" topic. It funds mobility projects which focus on the discovery, the understanding of others countries Human Rights realities. This exchange project between at least 2 youth groups (one from the French-speaking Community) aim at fostering at international level creative or discovery activities on the Human Rights topic. The projects are funded for a maximum of 5 500 euros with a compulsory co-funding of 10 %. The International Youth Office pays particular attention to vulnerable young people. The International Youth Office will grant more attention to projects which address the migration and refugee's topic. The International Youth Office also organises an annual [call for projects](#) "[European citizenship](#)". The objectives of this call are to raise awareness of young people on aspects of global society and to increase their identity as European citizenship.
- Public bodies such as Brussels environment, the [Walloon Agency for Air and Climate](#) or the Walloon public administration for sustainable development, fund many projects to raise young people awareness about environmental issues. For instance, the Walloon public administration for sustainable development funds since 2011 the action 'generation zero watt challenge' ([défi génération zéro-watt](#)). The goal is to develop pedagogical activities and learning about energy consumption. Pupils will try to reduce the energy consumption of their school by 10 %. It addresses (pre-)primary schools. It is funded by the Walloon Region and the European Leader Fund.
- The French Community is engaged in a 4-year EU programme aiming at providing opportunities for young people to engage at the local level towards the fulfilment of the sustainable development goals (SDG), while connecting with their counterparts across different regions in Europe. Through the Mindchangers project, youth will actively engage with local authorities and civil society organisations on matters such as the climate crisis and migration which are at the centre of this initiative.

Educator's support

- The [brochure](#) 'be and become a citizen' is a pedagogical tool which gives references to understand the civil and political society. It affects global issues as defined in the decree of [12 January 2007](#) related to the strengthening of education to responsible and active citizenship within schools. It also provides teachers with pedagogical tools and evaluations.

- Regarding sustainable development, the education's website "enseignement.be" provides "activity notes". They are adapted for each school degree. They offer to teachers ideas on how to introduce and teach sustainable development at school. A working group composed of French-speaking Community's education inspectors have created these "activity notes". It is part of a [larger initiative](#) which aims at strengthening the importance of learning about sustainable development at school.
- The website of the federal programme "Show the hand" (annoncer la couleur) disseminates information and pedagogical resources on worldwide citizenship education (see above).
- Many associations offer pedagogical support to teachers and youth workers. For instance, the association Training and Education Sustainable Development ([Education et formation développement durable](#)), created in 2014, promotes and integrates sustainable development and education to sustainable development in formal, non-formal and informal education structures at local, regional, national and international level. They promote and disseminate the tool 'sustainable development notebooks' ([les cahiers du développement durable](#)). This cross-sectoral tool is financed by the Walloon Region.

Youth-targeted information campaigns on global issues

Brussels environment established an exhibition on environment in XXIst century's cities: [Bel expo](#). The exhibition has been conceived for youth from 8 to 14. Importance place is given to interactive and pedagogical games.

Information providers

In the Region of Brussels, the main public information provider regarding environmental issues is [Brussels environment](#). It addresses everyone including young people. It develops many actions including the provision of pedagogical tools to support education on global issues. As explained in the previous section, the Brussels Minister for Environment and Quality life funded an exhibition on environmental issues.

In Wallonia, the Walloon public administration of sustainable development is one of the main information provider regarding environmental issues. It addresses everyone including young people. It funds the sustainable developments notebooks which are described [above](#).

The [Walloon Agency for Air and Climate](#) is also an important stakeholder. Among other missions, it develops tools to understand better the challenges and the stakes related to environmental issues. For instance, it has developed an [interactive webtool](#) 'My2050' which offers to everyone the possibility to create its own transition scenario and to see in an interactive virtual landscape the options to reduce gas emission, to calculate the decrease of gas emission by 2050, and to consult the outcomes of this virtual scenario. Teachers are provided with pedagogical material to ensure animation in classes (from second stage of secondary school). It has also developed a [pedagogical kit](#) addressed to teachers and pupils from technical education. Activities proposed in this kit can be taught in geography, citizenship education, etc.

Within the French-speaking Community, schools, youth associations are main stakeholders to raise youth awareness about global issues.

Associations are an important resource to provide information about global issues (youth information centres, thematic associations, etc.).

For instance, through its website, the "Idée" Network ([Réseau Idée](#)) offers teachers, facilitators, trainers, eco-advisers, parents, citizens ... clear and centralized information on ErE: existing educational tools, environmental education organizations active in Wallonia and in Brussels, their activities (events, training, courses, walks ...), educational approaches, etc.

Key initiatives

The main key initiatives to disseminate information on global issues are made through the work of schools, [youth organisations](#), [youth centres](#). This is a continuous work.

9.5 Green volunteering, production and consumption

Green volunteering

Promotion of green volunteering is made through dedicated youth associations which focus their action on green volunteering and environmental impact such as [Les Scouts](#), [Nature et Loisirs](#), [Empreintes](#), etc.

The International Youth Office funds many [cultural youth projects abroad](#) among which green volunteering projects.

Green production and consumption

Promotion of green production and green consumption is mainly made through the work of associations which focus their action on this specific topic. For instance, the "MJ Verte" project gathers nearly sixty Youth Centers across Belgium which are part of a global sustainable approach: sorting waste, vegetable gardens, compost, responsible purchasing, use of reusable cups, concert tokens made of corn, etc. It provides a "MJ Green Label" to Youth Centers who wish to embark on the path of in-depth, transversal, shared eco-citizenship, anchored in the action of the MJ with young people.

See [section 9.4](#) for further information about green production and green consumption initiatives.

9.6 Intercontinental youth work and development cooperation

Intercontinental youth work cooperation

The International Youth Office is the main actor funding and organising cooperation and exchanges between organisations, between individuals and organisations or between individuals active in youth work in more than one continent.

1. European citizenship annual project (citoyens d'europe) (see section [9.4 Raising awareness about global issues](#));
2. Call for projects 2017 Humans Rights (see section [9.4 Raising awareness about global issues](#));
3. "Axe Sud" aims at fostering the exchange between groups of youngsters from the French part of Belgium and French-Speaking countries in Africa (Algeria, Benin, Burkina-Faso, Burundi, Morocco, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Senegal and Tunisia). Projects can take several different forms including cooperative projects, or development aid projects. See section [2.6 Cross-border mobility programmes](#).
4. "Young Citizens of the World" (Jeunes citoyens du monde) brings young people from all over the world together to discuss and think about thematic such as active citizenship, Human's Rights and solidarity. This programme is the result of a multilateral cooperation with the Council of Europe. See section [2.6 Cross-border mobility programmes](#).

Development cooperation activities

Youth organisations are recognised and funded by the Youth Department of the French-speaking Community and focus their activity on organising development cooperation

activities. For instance, Compagnons Bâtisseurs is a youth organisation which targets young people from 14 to 30, providing them with volunteering projects abroad. These projects can address environment, development cooperation, social work, building activities, etc.

9.7 Current debates and reforms

The Government is determined to improve the mobility of young people. In this context, financial aid intended for young people for mobility projects (outside school) and outside EU Erasmus projects and European Solidarity Corps (CES) through the International Youth Office will be implemented.

10. YOUTH WORK

10.1 General context

Historical development

According to "History of youth houses in the French-speaking Community of Belgium 1949-2016 (Histoire des maisons de jeunes en Belgique francophone 1949-2016)", from 19th Century, youth and culture policy is marked by a clear desire of state neutrality. The state's role is secondary regarding the role of associations. These ones are created by the philosophical trends which exist in the Belgian society. This system gives birth to an organisation of the civil society in philosophical and political pillars (Socialism, Liberalism, and Catholicism). After World War II, the traumatism caused by the influence of totalitarianism on youth develops a strong desire of freedom of association and the management of youth policy by young people themselves. The interest of the State for youth movements after war comes from the necessity to create spaces to learn democratic life and citizenship. This analysis results of war lessons (for instance, totalitarian regime using young people as medium of propaganda). Youth organisations (mainly scouts) were the first structures to emerge in the context of youth policy and youth work. They were at the initiatives of the authorities (downward movement). On the contrary, the emergency of youth houses was at the initiative of private actors such as teachers, municipalities, parishes, judicial authorities, etc. (upward movement). These structures appear firstly in working-class area in order to offer to disadvantaged young people a place where they can participate to educative and leisure activities. The main goal was then preventive.

National definition

The French-speaking Community of Belgium shares the same definition of youth work as the Council of Europe: youth work is a wide concept covering a wide range of social, cultural, educative, environmental and/or political activities by, with and for young people, in groups or individually. Youth workers are either paid or volunteers. Youth work is based on informal and non-formal education centred on young people and their voluntary participation. It is a social practice with young people themselves and with societies in which they live, which facilitates the active participation of young people and their involvement in their communities, and decision-making.

10.2 Administration and governance of youth work

Governance

The Minister of Youth is the main actor involved in youth policy making. It lies within the French-speaking Community of Belgium. The Youth Department is a service within the Ministry of Culture. It implements the youth policy by applying decrees. It recognises and

funds youth associations. Youth associations are non-public actors who implement directly the principles of youth policy by working directly with young people. There are 2 main types of youth associations: 1. Youth organisations that are active at the Community-wide level. It includes youth movements such as scouts but also others types of youth organisations such as thematic movements or youth services. 2. Youth centres which are active at local level. They work with young people on temporary projects (dance, culture, theatre, media literacy, environmental projects, etc.). The Youth sector also includes Homework schools and Holidays centres which are at the intersection of youth policies and childhood policies.

Cross-sectoral cooperation

The Common Political Declaration 2019-2024 highlights, in the frame of youth policies, the importance to build bridges between the various policy fields affecting young people. There is a will to create an "interministerial and intergovernmental conference" dedicated to youth in order to work on a cross-sectorial outlook of youth between the federal and regional authorities. The Declaration also points out the importance to create synergies between services within the French-speaking Community of Belgium in order to foster partnerships projects. The minister of Youth for the period 2019-2024 has numerous portfolios: - High Education and Vocational education; - Sports; - Youth Welfare; - Justice houses; - Brussel's promotion.

10.3 Support to youth work

Policy legal framework

There is no youth strategy. The main top level policies and regulations on youth work are the following 5 decrees: 1. Decree of 26 March 2009 related to youth organisations which defines the general tasks and specific procedures to recognise and fund associations active at the Community level; 2. Decree of 20 July 2000, revised in 2004 and 2008, related to youth centres which defines the general missions and the specific procedures to recognise and fund associations that are active at local level. 3. Decree of 28 April 2004 related to Homework Schools; 4. Decree of 17 May 1999 related to Holidays Centres; 5. Decree of 14 November 2008 implementing the Youth Council. These 5 decrees compose the legal framework in which youth actors must refer to. They all share a common vision of the youth policy and its goals. The aim of the youth policy is to promote individual and collective participation of young people by developing a responsible, active and critical citizenship in a spirit of solidarity. Youth policy is a cultural policy. It focuses mainly on youth participation and expression. Non-formal learning is at the core of youth policy in the French-speaking Community. Activities undertaken are mainly volunteering activities, youth participation to citizenship projects, etc. There are 5 main types of youth work providers: 1. Youth Organisations 2. Youth Centres 3. Homework schools 4. Holidays centres 5. Youth council They all refer to their own decree and legal framework but, as said above, they all share a common vision of youth policy. Youth policies target all young people. There are no primary targets of youth work.

Funding

To support youth work, decrees organise the funding of youth associations. The Youth Department is responsible for the implementation of these decrees. See section [1.7 Youth Policy Decision-Making](#) for more information on the funding of youth associations.

Cooperation

Cooperation between youth welfare and education: the decree of 21 November 2013 connects education and youth welfare sector to foster youth well-being in school and to prevent school dropouts.

Cooperation between youth and childhood policies : 2 decrees are at the intersection of childhood and youth sectors: the decree of 28 April 2004 related to Homework Schools and the decree of 17 May 1999 related to Holidays Centres.

Cooperation between Youth and youth welfare policies : "histoires croisées" (Crossed stories) is a specific fund based on a cross-sectorial convention between two Ministries of the French speaking Community of Belgium: Youth and Youth welfare. The purpose is to build bridges between the organisations recognised by the two departments and other organisations, in order to promote actions with and for youngsters and to give a better picture of youth in the civil society. Through the implementation of this measure, the Minister wants to enhance networking between the two sectors and to promote cross sectorial projects. The programme is at the moment suspended but could be implemented again.

10.4 Quality and innovation in youth work

Quality assurance

There are no quality indicators to evaluate the work of youth organisations. However, every 4 years their work is evaluated by the Inspection of Culture in order to renew their recognition by the public youth service. For more information, refer to 5.7 "Learning to participate" through formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Research and evidence supporting youth work

The Minister of Youth maintains an institutionalised and regular cooperation with the Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth Welfare. This is a cross-disciplinary service of the French-Speaking Community created in 1998 at the request of the government.

This body is placed under the authority of the Secretary General of the Ministry. The missions of the Observatory consist notably in:

supporting researches and developing analysis and indicators about childhood, youth and youth welfare; compiling an inventory of public policies and organisations and institutions that concern these target groups; evaluating decrees related to these topics, delivering opinions and making recommendations in these fields of competences; promoting children's rights. The Observatory is charged by the government to implement the article 42 (promoting the principles of the Convention in the French-Speaking Community) and 44 (reporting to the UN the measures taken at national level related to the Convention) of the International Convention of 20 November 1989 related to the Rights of Children. In this context, it is notably in charge of the follow-up and the evaluation of the Children's rights action plans adopted by the French-speaking Community Government and the Walloon Region. The Observatory is independent regarding the themes of the researches that it supports. To ensure that the Government is aware and implicated about the processes and the results of these studies, Cabinets of Ministers are generally invited to be part of the Committee in charge of the follow-up of the studies. The Government has also the prerogative to ask the Observatory to focus research on specific objects

The decree "Décret créant l'Observatoire de l'enfance, de la jeunesse et de l'aide à la jeunesse" (Decree of 12 May 2004 creating the Observatory of Childhood, Youth and Youth Welfare) is the official document describing the role and missions of the Observatory.

Participative youth work

No top-level youth work policies and regulations have been developed directly with the consultation and contribution of young people. However, The Minister for Youth and the Youth Department conduct regular dialogue and consultation with official representative bodies which involve actively young people. There are 3 main Advisory bodies in the field of youth policies that request the presence of young people in their board. This is a bottom-

up approach and indirect consultation where these experts relay to the Minister of Youth young's opinion, recommendations, impacts of politics on youth reality.

- The Advisory Commission of the Youth Organisations (Commission Consultative des Organisations de Jeunesse – CCOJ) requests the presence of one half of young people aged under 35 for Youth Organisations;
- The Advisory Commission of the Youth Centres and Youth Clubs (Commission Consultative des Maisons et Centres de Jeunes – CCMCJ) requests the presence of one third of young people aged under 26 for Youth Centres;
- The Youth forum of the French-speaking Community of Belgium (Forum des jeunes) is a youth consultation body. Refer to section 5.4 for more information. The call for projects "Youth Local Policies" (politiques locales de jeunesse) aims to encourage young people to play an active role in their local environment. One of the main goal of youth policy in the French-speaking Community of Belgium is to involve young people in the design, implementation and evaluation of their youth work projects. They are actors of their projects.

Smart youth work

The Youth Department recognises and funds youth organisations among which some are media-oriented. They raise young people awareness about the right use of (new) media, the risks and opportunities that Medias offer. They work with schools, youth centres in order to train young people to media literacy. They also offer trainings to youth workers. The main goal is to provide young people with a critical mind regarding the use of media. The Minister of Youth has launched in 2017 a call for media literacy projects. It addresses youth organisations and youth centres. It offers to selected projects a maximum of 2000 euros. The projects must affect at least one of the 3 following themes=

The total amount of funding is 30 000 euros with a maximum of 2000 euros allocated for selected projects. The High Council of Media Literacy offers a common understanding of media literacy in the French-speaking Community of Belgium. It is mainly active in the education sector to strengthen media literacy's lectures and projects in schools. There are no measures to make digital infrastructure available to youth work projects and programmes. There are initiatives aiming at facilitating cooperation and partnerships between youth work providers and actors in the fields of education, innovation, research and development, and business in order to support the transmission of digital practices and technology to youth work.

10.5 Youth workers

Status in national legislation

The status of youth worker applies to any person active in organising and delivering youth work projects (including volunteers). Youth associations are independents and are free to put in place their own appointment policy. However, there are some particularities regarding the status of youth workers in decrees for subsidised youth centres. In the framework of their recognition, youth centres must introduce a request for the approval of the qualification of their "animator coordinator" (main youth worker who's responsible for the coordination of the youth centre). This request must be done within 18 months after the designation of this animator coordinator. Main standards and criteria analysed by the Inspection of culture and the Youth Department are the knowledge related to the youth centre, its audience, the non-formal education methods, the consistency of the youth centre's educational project (methods, actions, objectives of the youth centre), team management competences, etc. [Education, training and skills recognition](#)

There are no specific paths in initial education leading to a qualification as youth worker. But, many trainings for continuous professional development are provided. The ministerial circular organising the support of training programmes related to animation, socio-cultural

and socio-artistic action (circulaire ministérielle du 1er septembre 2009 organisant le soutien des programmes de formation des cadres de l'animation et de l'action socioculturelles et socio-artistiques) is the legal framework regarding the training in youth work in the French-speaking Community. The Youth Department within the General Administration of Culture implements this circular. The circular organises the funding of training organisations. These ones organise the training of workers in the youth sector (youth organisations, youth centres, holidays centres). Training organisations offer training programmes, learning tools to support youth workers.

Mobility of youth workers

The International Youth Office offers mobility at international level through the Erasmus + programme. There are many opportunities at local and regional level such as seminars, training, etc. directly organised by youth association. The youth sector is very active regarding network activities. The objectives are professional development, exchanges of good practices, capacity building of youth workers, innovation, etc.

10.6 Recognition and validation of skills acquired through youth work

Existing arrangements

Refer to [6.4 Validation of non-formal and informal learning](#).

Skills

There are no skills officially listed. But the aim of youth policies are to make young people responsible, critical, active citizens in a spirit of solidarity.

10.7 Raising awareness about youth work

Information providers

The main information providers regarding information and guidance available to young people to learn about non-formal and informal learning are youth associations themselves. They benefit from a high degree of autonomy. They are in direct contact with young people.

Key initiatives

The Youth Department organises regularly many communication activities to raise awareness about youth work. It has published around 10 books (one every 2 years) on youth work and organises events for their promotion. It also organises events gathering youth workers in order to foster networking. The last one gathered around 400 youth workers in Liège around themes such as migrants, environment, the difficulty of involving young people in long-lasting projects, media literacy, the links between youth and youth welfare sectors. The Youth Department is also very active in regional events (book fair, education faire, youth work fair, etc.) in order to present youth work to a large audience. However, the main target groups are – at the moment - youth workers themselves and teachers. A campaign is currently organised to promote a tool – Kaléidoscope – among teachers in schools. This tool is search engine gathering non-formal education of the French-speaking Community in order to foster links between formal and non-formal education. But the main channels of communication are mainly in the hands of youth associations themselves as they have a large degree of autonomy.

10.8 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming developments

The Common Political Declaration 2019-2024 highlights, in the frame of youth policies, the importance to build bridges between the various policy fields affecting young people. There is a will to create an "interministerial and intergovernmental conference" dedicated to youth in order to work on a cross-sectorial outlook of youth between the federal and regional authorities. The Declaration also points out the importance to create synergies between services within the French-speaking Community of Belgium in order to foster partnerships projects. The Youth Council becomes the Youth Forum. A new decree has been adopted the 2nd May 2019 and will be implemented by the 1st January 2020. The aim is to simplify the decree to allow more flexibility and to strengthen the participative nature of the structure. The main concern is to reinforce the youth participation. To answer this question, a meeting gathering around 40 youth workers took place in September. Some elements of discussion were raised: the financial means allocated to the youth forum, the age of the public, the will to pay particular attention to young people with fewer opportunities.

Ongoing debates

At the moment, the main parliamentary debates affect the two reforms currently going in the French-speaking Community of Belgium in the field of youth policies: - The reform of the decree related to the youth council which will be implemented by the 1st January 2020 with the establishment of the Youth Forum; - The political will to create an "interministerial and intergovernmental conference" dedicated to youth in order to work on a cross-sectorial outlook of youth between the federal and regional authorities. At the moment, no concrete information has been released regarding this objective.

GLOSSARY

BIJ: stands for International Youth Office (French Community public service). The BIJ manage various international non-formal education programs for French-speaking young people in Wallonia and Brussels.

Certificate of Secondary Education: secondary education takes place after six years of primary education and is followed by higher education or employment. The Secondary education lasts 6 years and is divided into 3 degrees (2 years each). The Certificate of Lower Secondary Education (CE1D) is awarded to pupils at the end of the 1st degree. The Certificate of Upper Secondary Education (CESS) is issued at the end of third degree.

Decree: law applying only to a community or a regional level.

General Delegate for the Rights of the Child: French Community's Delegate for mediation, review and recommendation concerning the applying of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Holiday's Centre: their missions are to contribute to the supervision, education and the development of children during the school holidays by organising residential or not activities such as trips, camps or animations. Holiday Centres are ruled by the decree "Décret du 17 mai 1999 relatif aux centres de vacances".

Homework School: "Homework Schools are not schools properly speaking. They are associations active in the intellectual development of the child, in particular through help with homework and school remediation and in the development of the child's creativity by playful activities and animation. They are ruled by the decree "Décret du 28 avril 2004 relatif à la reconnaissance et au soutien des écoles de devoirs".

Ministry: designate the government's services. Can be used as well as public services or administration. The Ministry of the French Community is divided into thematical administrations such as General Administration of Culture or General Administration of Education.

OEJAJ: stands for Observatory for Children, Youth and Youth Welfare (French Community public service). The Observatory produces studies and helps public decision-making on children and youth.

ONE: stands for Birth and Childhood Office (public service).

Thematic Movement: see Youth Organisation.

Youth Centre (CJ): association active at a local level, organising activities mainly for people from 12 to 26 years old and promoting the development of a critical, active and responsible citizenship. Youth Centres are ruled by the decree "Décret du 20 juillet 2000 fixant les conditions d'agrément et de subventionnement des maisons de jeunes, centres de rencontres et d'hébergement et centres d'information des jeunes et de leurs fédérations". There are 3 different kinds of Youth Centres: Youth Clubs (mainly animations and projects), Youth Hostels (mainly accommodation) and Youth Information Centres (mainly information).

Youth Council: is the official advisory body and spokesperson for the youth in the French Community (created by the decree "Décret du 14 novembre 2008 instaurant le Conseil de la Jeunesse en Communauté française). Not to be confused with a student's council nor a classroom council.

Youth Club: see Youth Centre. **Youth Hostel:** see Youth Centre.

Youth Information Centre: see Youth Centre.

Youth Movement: see Youth Organisation.

Youth Organisation (OJ): association active at the Community-wide level, organising activities for people from 3 to 30 years old and promoting the development of a critical, active and responsible citizenship. Youth Organisations are ruled by the decree "Décret du 26 mars 2009 fixant les conditions d'agrément et de subventions aux Organisations de Jeunesse". There are 5 different kinds of Youth Organisation: Thematic Movements (political or citizen movements), Youth Movements (scouting movements), Youth Services (mainly animation and training), Federations of Youth Organisations and Federations of Youth Centers.

Youth Service: see Youth Organisation.

Youth Welfare: is the social part of the youth policies in the French Community, next to the cultural part which is represented by the Youth Organisation, Youth Centres, Youth Council, Holiday Centres and Homework Schools. Youth Welfare addresses young people to 20 years old and is ruled by the decree "Décret du 4 mars 1991 relatif à l'Aide à la Jeunesse". Youth Welfare provides different kinds of services such as : Open Aid Services (AMO), Centres for the Care of Child Abuse, Emergency reception centres, Educational Assistance and Intervention Service, Guardianship Services, Judicial Protection Services, etc.

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