

National
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Introductory remarks

This National Reform Programme (NRP) covers the measures the federal government and the regions have taken over the past 12 months to attain the targets included in the National Reform Programme of April 2011. In this programme, the governments express their conviction that structural reforms are essential to attain the targets and that the proposed and actualized budgetary objectives¹ should be met.

The ambitious targets from the 2011 NRP are confirmed in the 2012 NRP, despite the difficult economic climate. The most recently observed indicators show that evolutions move in the right direction and that several of them even excel the ambitious targets.

The governments also confirm the importance of attaining the NRP's employment objectives and consider this as a crucial condition to assure a respectable standard of living for all residents and to safeguard the young generations' future.

Therefore, the federal government agreed on the necessity to outline a global strategy for boosting economic activity and reinforcing competitiveness in order to stimulate economic growth and sustainable employment and to support purchasing power. The federal government aims to develop this strategy in collaboration with the social partners, the Regions and the Communities.

In doing so, the federal government is convinced to answer the country-specific recommendations Belgium received during the Council of July 2011.

For that reason, this NRP guards the balanced treatment of the EU2020-targets and of the answers to the country-specific recommendations. Simultaneously, it deals with Belgium's commitments to answer the Euro plus pact and the priorities of the European Commission and supported by the Council in the Annual Growth Survey of November 2011.

This programme is established through a close collaboration between the federal government and the governments of the Regions and the Communities. The regional programmes are annexed to this programme and describe the specific measures in detail.

The federal governmental agreement also includes the state reform agreement. At the same time, it provides increased collaboration between the federal and regional government, with respect for the competences of each level and in order to increase the nation's efficiency.

The National Reform Programme was also discussed in the parliament.

Finally, and as usual, the social partners and the civil society were involved in drawing up the national reform programme. They listed their own activities with regard to the programme in a document, which will also be reported to the European Commission.

¹ The Stability Programme and the National Reform Programme are submitted simultaneously. The underlying macro-economic projection and the included measures of both programmes are complementary and consistent.

1. Macroeconomic scenario 2012-2016

The macroeconomic scenario is described in the Stability Programme².

In 2011 the rate of Belgian economic growth is estimated at 1.9%. Quarter-on-quarter growth, however, declined progressively in the course of that same year. In 2012, growth should remain very modest, against the background of an only gradually recovering European business cycle and federal consolidation measures. Economic activity should stabilize in the first quarter of 2012 and thereafter display a slight export-driven growth (up to 0.2% in the fourth quarter). On a yearly basis, economic growth in 2012 is limited to 0.1%.

Not earlier than 2013, and in particular starting from 2014, growth should strengthen, primarily underpinned by the international economic pick-up. The output gap, which should be highly negative in 2012, should disappear gradually.

The limited growth at the beginning of the period and the recovering growth by its end bring about a strong employment growth, as a result of which the employment rate should only increase from 2014.

Inflation remains above 2% in 2011 and 2012, especially due to high oil prices. As from 2012, it should again drop below 2%, as a result of, among other things, the (supposed) absence of new oil shocks.

Table 1: Main results of the macroeconomic scenario 2012-2016 (evolution in %, except mentioned otherwise)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
GDP	1,9	0,1	1,3	1,7	1,8	2,0
Consumer price	3,5	3,0	1,9	1,8	1,8	1,8
Health index	3,1	2,8	2,0	1,8	1,8	1,8
Domestic employment (evolution in thousands)	56,1	6,8	12,8	33,3	46,4	54,5
Domestic employment (evolution in %)	1,2	0,2	0,3	0,7	1,0	1,2
Employment rate (20-64 year)	67,9	67,7	67,6	67,7	68,1	68,6
Unemployment rate (Eurostat definition)	7,2	7,5	7,8	7,8	7,5	7,3
Productivity per hour	0,1	0,1	0,5	0,9	1,0	0,9
Output gap (level)	-0,7	-1,9	-1,9	-1,5	-1,2	-0,7
Current account balance (National Accounts)	2,1	1,6	2,2	2,6	2,7	2,8

² Belgian Stability Programme 2012.

2. Macroeconomic monitoring

Since December 2011, a procedure for the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances is in place. It includes two distinct components: prevention and correction. The preventive component aims at detecting imbalances early. In a first stage, the European Commission compiles an annual report ("Alert Mechanism Report") listing the countries which require further investigation in order to determine whether one or more imbalances occur, based on the interpretation of 10 indicators (the so-called Scoreboard).

Table 2 gives an overview of the scoreboard³.

Table 2: Scoreboard of the alert mechanism for Belgium⁴

	Threshold	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Current account balance	+6%/-4%	4.8	4.2	4	3.8	3.7	2.9	2.3	1.8	0.6	-0.6	-0.6	
Net international investment position	-35%			37	37	28	34	29	29	40	57	78	
Real effective exchange rate	+/- 5%	-4.9	-3.8	-1.9	5.3	5.3	4.9	1.5	1.5	4.4	4.2	1.3	-0.6
Share in world export	-6%								-10.4	-14.1	-12.5	-15.4	
Nominal unit labour cost	+9%	3	6.1	7.1	7.8	2.7	1.8	2.6	5.5	8.6	10.8	8.5	6.6
House price index	+6%		2.8	5.2	5.4	6.2	9.8	5.6	4.4	0.8	0.8	0.4	
Private sector credit flow	15%	23.1	15.7	8.9	20.3	4.0	3.2	17.8	20.9	22.2	8.5	13.1	
Private sector debt	160%	169	179	180	194	188	185	193	203	218	229	233	
General government gross debt	60%	108	106	103	98	94	92	88	84	89	96	96	97
Unemployment rate	10%	8.2	7.3	7.0	7.4	8.0	8.4	8.4	8.1	7.6	7.5	7.7	7.8

Source: Eurostat, Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure.

The European Commission's report states that 12 countries, including Belgium, require an in-depth analysis in order to determine whether there are indeed excessive imbalances (4 other EU countries are already subject to special monitoring, rendering additional investigation superfluous). The indicators regarded as problematic for Belgium are private sector debt, public debt and loss of export market shares. Since the Commission applies the procedure for the first time, signs of imbalances for previous years are also taken into account. Therefore, the attention is drawn to the deterioration of the current account, cost and non-cost competitiveness. For all other indicators, the levels in Belgium are under the critical thresholds that were set by the European Commission.

The section below tackles the more problematic indicators and puts them in their context, among other things by a comparison with Germany, France and the Netherlands, the three neighbouring countries and main trading partners of Belgium. Germany and the Netherlands are not listed for in-depth analysis, contrary to, for instance, France and Belgium.

2.1. Private sector debt

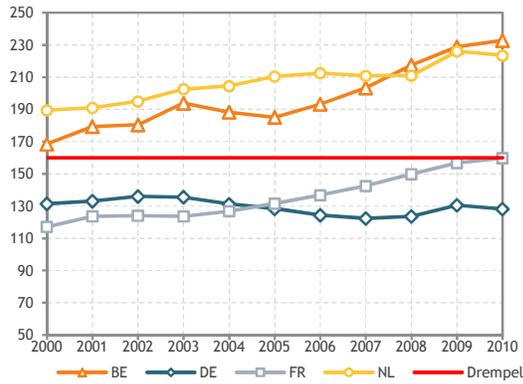
According to the EC Scoreboard, private sector debt presented in a non-consolidated way and is defined as the sum of loans and securities, other than shares, of non-financial corporations, households and non-profit institutions serving households. Debt is defined as % of GDP. According to the European Commission, excessive debt levels lead to major risks for growth and financial stability and raise a country's overall vulnerability level. This indicator (graph 1) shows that Belgium is positioned above the threshold over the entire period. For Belgium in particular, this indicator should be interpreted with great caution for two reasons. First and foremost, the data are not consolidated which implies that loans between companies are taken into

³ The scoreboard used for the Alert Mechanism Report has been updated until January 2012. Table 1 shows the update as far as 6 April 2012.

⁴ For an exact definition of all indicators and their update, see: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/excessive_imbalance_procedure/imbalance_scoreboard.

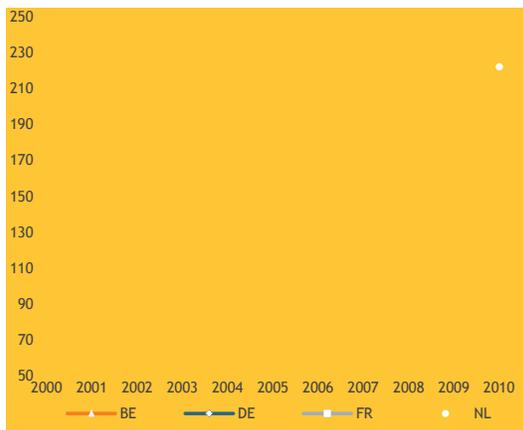
account. The presence of many multinational corporations often entails large flows of loans within corporations (domestic or foreign affiliates) due to the optimal management of the treasury, rather than the excessive use of external financing. These loans within a company involve little financial risk.

Graph 1 Private sector debt non-consolidated - % of GDP



A more appropriate method to evaluate the macroeconomic risk of an imbalance⁵ is to exclude debt within sectors, including intercompany loans, which leads to the same indicator but on a consolidated basis⁶. Graph 2 shows the degree in which the relative importance of private sector debt is reduced due to consolidation. That decrease is particularly important for Belgium, with a consolidated private sector debt level of approximately 130% of GDP. A breakdown between non-financial corporations and households shows that the consolidated debt level of non-financial corporations is very close to the euro area average, whereas the household debt level is traditionally low in Belgium. Based on this improved indicator, there no longer is a problem for Belgium.

Graph 2 Private sector debt consolidated - % of GDP



Another reason for caution in using the indicator ensues from the fact that the debt level is determined on a gross basis and not on a net basis. The private sector debt is generally employed for the accumulation of assets (houses, financial assets ...). The amount and the nature of accumulated assets are relevant to assess the ability to pay back loans and, thus, to evaluate the possibly unbalanced nature of the private sector debt level. By way of example, on 30 September 2011, property assets value amounted to 60% of total households' net assets, which corresponds to 288 % of GDP⁷.

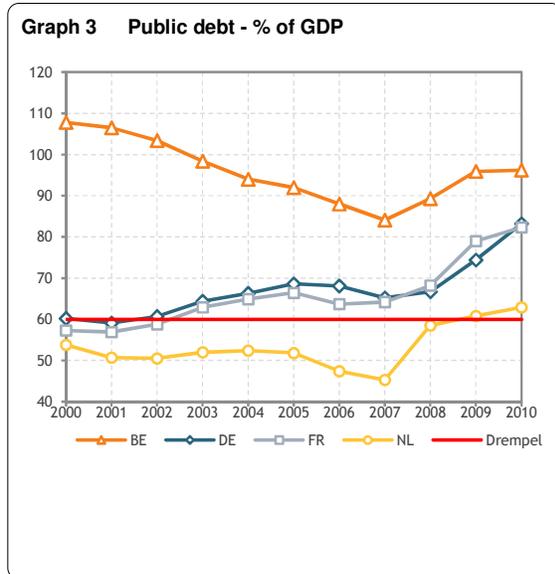
⁵ See also National Bank of Belgium, Annual report 2011, box 7, pp. 111-114.

⁶ For households, it is presumed that there is no difference between consolidated and non-consolidated debt.

⁷ See also National Bank of Belgium, Annual report 2011, p. 100.

2.2. Public debt

The Commission takes into account gross public debt in % of GDP, as determined in the Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) (Graph 3). The used threshold (60%) equals the Treaty's limit. In this procedure, this indicator is not regarded from the perspective of public finances but from the perspective of a risk of macroeconomic imbalances, and is thus considered as a "complementary" indicator.

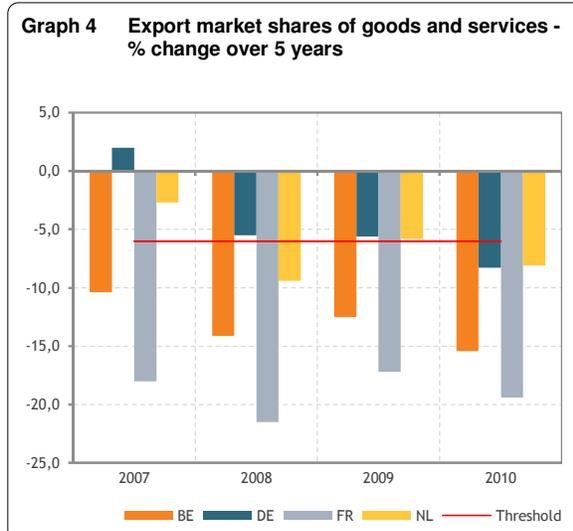


It is known that Belgium has a high public debt, exceeding the threshold of 60% of GDP over the whole period. Nonetheless, the Belgian debt level decreased steadily from 1994 to 2007, while German and French levels rose over the same period. Compared to the Netherlands, it decreased more robustly. From 2008 on, as a result of the problems in the bank sector requiring public financial interventions in most European countries and the ensuing current economic crisis, debt levels of all examined countries have risen again. Following these developments, the debt levels in % of GDP in the four countries exceeded the threshold. Still, the Belgian government confirmed its determination to shortly alter the trend of rising public debt and to start lowering debt levels systematically.

We can also mention that, notwithstanding high public debt and high non-consolidated private sector debt, the country's net financing position is very positive.

2.3. Export market shares

This indicator is calculated as the percentage change over a 5-year period of the export value of goods and services in a country expressed as the world export market share of goods and services. As a result of the rapidly increasing participation of emerging economies in international trade, this indicator suggests that all four countries have lost export market shares since 2008 (and for 2010: all EU-15 countries, except Luxembourg). Belgium and France, however, have suffered the most important losses since the beginning of the examined period.



When export market shares are calculated as the share of global goods exports in volume, the situation does not seem any better. Belgian exports were mostly affected by the economic downturn in Europe - their main export markets - which particularly impacted investments and durable goods - their main export products. When the export market share is calculated by the (unweighted) total amount of total EU 27 exports of goods and services in value, Germany and the Netherlands seem to have gained slightly, while Belgium and (especially) France suffered losses.

In a joint study⁸ the Central Council for the Economy, the National Bank of Belgium and the Federal Planning Bureau also concluded that Belgium's export performance is inferior to the export performance of

⁸ National Bank of Belgium, Central Council for the Economy, Federal Planning Bureau, De uitdagingen voor het concurrentievermogen in België, September 2011.

some neighbouring countries. This constitutes a serious problem for a small open economy as Belgium. Reasons for this weak performance include an excessive concentration of exports to the neighbouring countries and insufficient exports to emerging countries. Furthermore, export products are still too often standard products rather than highly innovative goods and services. The indicator of the nominal unit labour costs remains below the threshold set by the Scoreboard, even though the evolution of Belgian wages is unfavourable compared to the average in the three neighbouring countries (Germany, France and the Netherlands). This unfavourable evolution compared to the average is the result of an unfavourable evolution of Belgian wages with respect to Germany, while Belgian wages grow less than in France and the Netherlands. Cost factors besides wages, and in particular energy costs, are also important. The well-known high energy-intensity and the recent stronger increase in energy prices in Belgium, increase the vulnerability of the country.

2.4. Conclusion

A more appropriate private debt indicator (on a consolidated basis) reveals no risks on imbalances in Belgium in this area.

The experience in reducing public debt since the beginning of the 90's and controlling public deficit shows that Belgium has always been serious about controlling public deficit and debt. However, public debt has risen again since 2008 due to the financial crisis and the subsequent economic recession. Nonetheless, the commitment of the governments to reach a balance as indicated in the stability programme⁹ will allow the debt level to decrease again systematically. We can also mention that, for many years, Belgium has combined high public debt with high non-consolidated private sector debt level without particular problems for the financial sector, while its net financing position is largely positive.

The problem of a loss of export market shares is present in all euro area countries. Contrary to many of those countries, this does not lead to a current account deficit in Belgium and the net investment position is highly positive.

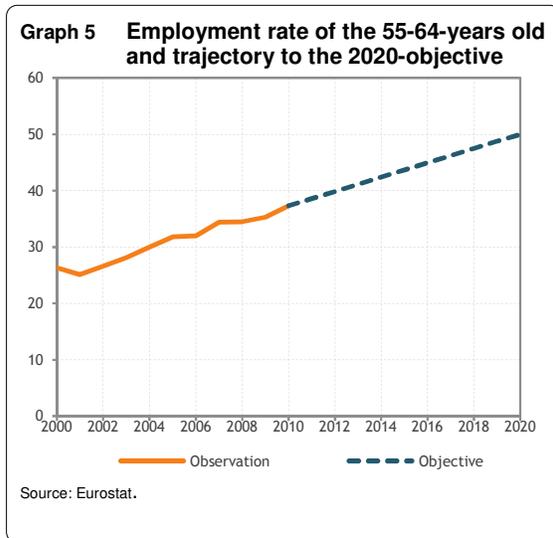
To tackle this, the government will validate in the coming months a plan to improve competitiveness and growth.

⁹ For a greater detail, see Belgian Stability Programme 2012.

3. Implementation of the 2011 NRP

The following part offers an overview of the initiatives taken in each of the domains pinpointed in the country-specific recommendations for Belgium in June 2011. The initiatives resulting from recommendation 1 are discussed in the Stability Programme¹⁰.

3.1. Career end (recommendation 2)



"(Belgium is recommended) to take steps to improve the long-term sustainability of public finances. In line with the framework of the three-pronged EU strategy, the focus should be put on curbing age-related expenditure, notably by preventing early exit from the labour market in order to markedly increase the effective retirement age. Measures such as linking the statutory retirement age to life expectancy could be considered."

Belgium has set itself the objective to put 50% of the 55-64 years old to work by 2020, as compared to 37.3% in 2010 (+2.0 pp in comparison to 2009). This is indispensable in order to guarantee the affordability of its social system. Additionally, realizing the 50%

target would increase the overall employment rate by 2.9% and, as such, contribute considerably to the general policy objectives of our country. As shown in annex 2, the structural measures are an important step in reaching the objectives..

The new federal government strongly focuses on this group, so as to increase the effective retirement age. In the course of the years, Belgium has elaborated various early retirement systems, which will all be adapted through retirement and end of career reforms.

The adaptations in the field of early retirement through the unemployment benefit system are:

- The admission age for “ordinary pre-pensions” (unemployment allowances with company bonus) is raised from 58 to 60 years. The required seniority is raised to 40 years. This will be realized in several steps and will be fully operational by 2015. Additionally, the employer’s social security contributions for the employer’s bonus will increase for lower exit ages.
- For pre-pensions in loss-making enterprises, the minimum age is raised from 50 to 52 years in 2012 and afterwards gradually to 55 years in 2018. For pre-pensions in restructuring enterprises, the minimum age is raised from 50 to 55 years in 2013.
- Pre-pension years prior to the age of 60 will no longer be fully taken into account for calculating pensions, except in some deviant systems.

¹⁰ See Stability Programme of Belgium 2012.

- The age of admission for partial early retirement (the right to work halftime or 4/5-time) is raised from 50 to 55 years, except for some harsh occupations or for people having worked effectively 28 years at the age of 50, for whom a 4/5th settlement under certain conditions is maintained. In addition to that, a proportionality principle in case of dismissal is introduced (following the example of the Netherlands), aiming at a proportional spread of the collective dismissals over all the age groups. Moreover, the enterprises will have to present annually to the Works Council an “employment for elderly workers” plan (for maintaining or increasing the number of elderly workers aged 50 and above). How to concretize this will have to be agreed upon with the social partners.

Similar settlements existing in the public sector, notably for teachers, will equally be cut back by the competent authorities.

Early exits via early legal retirement will be rendered increasingly difficult:

- In general, the admission age for early retirement will gradually be raised by 2016 to 62 years after a professional career of 40 years (or to 60 years after a professional career of 42 years and to 61 years after a professional career of 41 years).
- Additionally, the extra pension (pension bonus), now attributed to those that keep on working after the age of 62, will be re-assessed and possibly adjusted.
- The survival pension, presently a major inactivity trap, in particular for women, will be replaced by a transition allowance, at the end of which the eligible persons will be admitted to unemployment allowances guaranteeing their achieved rights.

The monitoring of the actual availability of all the unemployed (including the pre-pensioned) will be raised in 2013 to 55 years and in 2016 to at least 58 years. Flanders and the German-speaking Community anticipate this extension by adapting their guidance offer. They intend to tailor adapted trajectories, which will become compulsory from this year onwards for all the Flemish job-seekers up the age of 58 years entering the system. The Flemish subsidies attributed to the employers for recruiting workers aged 50 or above will be modulated in accordance with the period of unemployment and the age so as to boost their effectiveness.

For Wallonia and for the Brussels-Capital Region, the elderly are not a priority target group, taking into account their unemployment structure. So, no new measures have been developed. Existing measures, notably those within the framework of the functioning of the European Social Fund and in the field of the general diversity and job creation policies, are continued.

Finally, the various authorities will inquire on how to ease the working conditions for elderly workers so as to render it more attractive for them to keep on working.

3.2. Macro-financial stability (recommendation 3)

“(Belgium is recommended to) address the structural weakness in the financial sector, in particular by finalising restructuring of the banks in need of an adequately funded and viable business model”.

In October 2011, Dexia SA/NV Group had to face cash flow problems. In order to preserve financial stability, the Belgian government decided to acquire the entire Dexia Bank Belgium for 4 billion euros.

In December 2011 the Belgian State gave a temporary guarantee to the residual bank Dexia holding and Dexia CL with a maximum duration of three years and a maximum amount of 27.225 billion euro, i.e. the share of 60.5% in a total of 45 billion euro, of which 24.8 billion euro were effectively granted.

On 2 January 2012, KBC reimbursed the federal government a first instalment on the loan amounting to 3.5 billion euros contracted in 2008. This first instalment amounts to 500 million euros, increased by a penalty of 75 million euros. KBC considers the further reimbursement of the loans contracted with the federal government and the Flemish Region, in accordance with the commitments entered into under the restructuring plan approved by the Commission.

Moreover, the government reduced the risks of the financial sector thanks to the reform of the deposit-guarantee scheme. The risk profile of the financial institution and the risk of financial activities for public finances, are more taken into account. The old contribution to the Special fund for the protection of deposits and life insurance policies has been divided into two new contributions. The first one aims at covering deposits in case of default and integrates a risk factor specific to each institution and based on capital adequacy, assets quality and cash flow. The second one, the so-called "Financial Stability Contribution", aims at ensuring a fair sharing of the costs of the crisis and limiting systemic risks by discouraging financial institutions from becoming involved in risky activities.

The new financial supervision architecture, based on the "Twin Peaks" model, was set up in April 2011. The National Bank of Belgium (NBB) is henceforth in charge of prudential supervision of the financial sector from both the micro-prudential and the macro-prudential angles, while the Financial Services and Markets Authority (FSMA), formerly the CBFA, is responsible for the proper working of securities markets, the compliance with codes of conduct and the protection of consumers of financial services.

Furthermore, Belgium meets the commitments from the Euro Plus Pact thanks to a national legislation with respect to bank resolutions. The act of 2 June 2011 introduced indeed a specific recovery procedure applicable to financial institutions and makes it possible for the government to carry out preventive actions when the financial stability is in jeopardy.

Finally, the government wishes to further strengthen the financial regulation and supervision. Among others, it introduces a "bank's will", entrust the NBB with a study relating to the opportunity and the practical and financial feasibility of a distinction between investment banks and deposit banks and/or introduce a retail ring-fence. On the basis of this study, the government will also adopt a legal framework aiming at regulating speculation for own account of credit institutions engaged in a deposit activity. Finally, the government will control pay policies in the financial sector, will strengthen and reform the financial regulation and supervision, will ensure that credits granted to companies and households do not become more expensive and fewer, will strengthen prior control on financial products and will fully implement the reforms adopted at European level.

3.3. Wage development, productivity en competitiveness (recommendation 4)

"(Belgium is recommended to) take steps to reform, in consultation with the social partners and in accordance with national practice, the system of wage bargaining and wage indexation, to ensure that wage growth better reflects developments in labour productivity and competitiveness"

The federal government will elaborate a strategy aimed at boosting the Belgian economic activity and strengthening the competitiveness of our economy in order to encourage economic activity and the creation of sustainable jobs so as to boost purchasing power. This strategy will be introduced in co-operation with the Regions and the social partners. It will tackle competitiveness from the angle of the cost of production factors, productivity and potential outlet markets.

The 1996 wage norm act will be scrupulously applied. In that context, the federal government has decided, in accordance with the "Euro Plus Pact", that the real-term cost increase in 2012 may amount to maximum 0,3% only, after the real wages have been blocked in 2011, and collective bargaining agreements that do not respect this norm will not be eligible for binding powers by royal decree.

On the other hand, the various Belgian governments have chosen in 2011 to boost productivity via the strengthening of their innovation¹¹ and education¹² and training policies. Thus, two new Brussels cooperation agreements (between the regional and French-speaking Community authorities) provide for more means for training job-seekers and reinforcing the complementarities between the guidance and training services in view of a smoother integration onto the labour market. The German-speaking Community has reorganised its public placement services so as to render them more successful. Flanders intends to boost the opportunities of both the 50 years old and above and the inadequately qualified young job-seekers upon the labour market through its "Career Agreement" (February 2012). On top of that, Flanders invests more in training and various forms of informal learning (traineeships, on the job learning, individual vocational training etc.) and it assists participants to adult education or vocational training schemes also financially. Finally, Wallonia invests, within the framework of its "Marshall Plan 2.Green" and with financial support from the Structural Funds, in an extension of the training offer, focusing on priorities such as languages, ICT, green jobs and bottle neck occupations¹³.

3.4. Labour market participation (recommendation 5)

"(Belgium is recommended to) improve participation in the labour market by reducing the high tax and social security burden for the low-paid in a budgetary neutral way and by introducing a system in which the level of unemployment benefits decreases gradually with the duration of unemployment. Take steps to shift the tax burden from labour to consumption and to make the tax system more environmentally friendly. Improve the effectiveness of active labour policies by targeting measures at older workers and vulnerable groups."

When establishing its multi-annual budget and taking into account the limited budgetary room for manoeuvre, the federal government has made resources available to reduce the fiscal pressure on labour income in order to encourage employment. It focuses on the low and middle income categories, via a raise of the basic exempted income by 200 € per year for those categories of workers. The social security contribution reduction for the first three recruitments in small and middle-sized enterprises are also raised. These measures will come into force from 2013 onwards.

The unemployment system will be adapted by the middle of 2012. The degressivity of the allowances will be further increased so that, dependent upon the family situation and the labour market past, everyone will fall back after maximum 48 months onto a lump-sum amount that will be slightly superior to social welfare benefits. The follow-up of job-seeking efforts will also be strengthened by sooner and more frequent surveillance on the federal level. This will complement the guidance by the Regions, starting on day 1 of unemployment, in combination with a fast individual guidance in relation to the gap separating the unemployed job-seeker's competences from the labour market requirements. With this aim, in 2012, the cooperation agreement between the federal level and the Regions will be renewed. In Flanders, as of the 1st of June 2011, the target group of the so-called "tailor made approach" has been enlarged in order to guarantee a perfectly adapted guidance: unemployed job-seekers up to the age of 30 (included) are offered guidance after 1 year of unemployment (instead of 2 years as was previously the case); job-seekers up to the age of 50 (included) will be eligible for individual guidance after an unemployment period of 2 years. The Brussels-Capital Region has extended last year the systematic guidance for young job-seekers to all the unemployed under the age of 50. Wallonia too has extended systematically individual guidance schemes and it has developed, with the support of the Structural Funds, various programmes on behalf of the groups furthest away from the labour market.

¹¹ See chapters 4.2 and 3.6.

¹² See chapter 4.3.

¹³ See chapter 4.1.2.

Additionally, the definition of a “suitable job” has become stricter in the beginning of 2012 in order to enhance professional and geographic mobility. The so-called “waiting allowance”¹⁴ for young job-seekers is equally up for reform.

As far as the budgetary efforts have required raising revenue, the government has expressly avoided to raise the burden on labour. On the contrary, it has favoured a balanced contribution of the various income categories. As far as the incomes from capital are concerned, a new taxation system on capital income will be introduced for individuals (comprising, amongst others, a solidarity contribution for the high income categories, the tax on stock-exchange transactions will be raised, some types of capital gains on shares in company taxes will be taxed and taxes on stock-options will be increased).

The development of an environment-friendly fiscal system will further be pursued via a new taxation system on company cars. The advantage in kind will in the future be determined on the basis of two factors: the car’s CO₂-emission and its catalogue value. As from the 1st of March 2012, Flanders will calculate the new so-called ‘greened’ “entry into service”-taxes on the basis of various environmental characteristics of the vehicle, such as the CO₂-emission, the type of fuel and the Euro standard. Wallonia maintains in 2011 and 2012 the so-called “eco-taxation”-system on vehicles, be it in an adapted and simplified version.

On top of that, the levies on tobacco will be raised.

The banking¹⁵ and the energy sectors also will be asked to contribute via a raise of the return from the nuclear gains.

The fight against the social and fiscal fraud will be re-intensified.

The efficiency of the active labour policy in our country needs to be increased: the highest expenses in the entire EU do certainly not yield the best results. Focusing on specific target groups will become a regional competence enabling thus a more tailored approach by the Regions. On top of that, a far-reaching individual guidance of each job-seeker will go hand in hand with a meticulous monitoring of the job-seeking efforts.

The transfer of competences to the region will in particular allow for better linking target group oriented social security contributions measures to labour market realities. For those measures that remain a federal competence (amongst others fiscal measures), the deadweight loss will be tackled and the possibilities for reinforcing their impact on the labour market will be examined.

In dialogue with the social partners, a mechanism to create financial disincentives for employers in case of exaggerated use of temporary unemployment will be introduced from 2012 onwards, allowing for a certain degree of progressivity. There will also be better supervision.

The Regions too pursue improved efficiency in their active labour market policy, notably within the framework of the management agreements between the authorities and their employment services. Flanders wishes to tailor better the employment and support measures, thus guaranteeing job-seekers with an equal distance from the labour market an equal support (training, guidance, subsidies, work post adaptation. The income-related child care system has been extended too). The German-speaking Community has reorganised its public placement service in order to make it more successful. Wallonia has introduced social assistance within the framework of the individual guidance for job-seekers with particular problems.

¹⁴ See chapter 4.1.

¹⁵ See chapter 3.2.

3.5. Competition in the retail and energy sector (electricity/gas) (recommendation 6)

"Introduce measures to boost competition in the retail sector, by lowering barriers to entry and reducing operational restrictions; and introduce measures to strengthen competition in the electricity and gas markets by further improving the effectiveness of the sectoral regulatory and competition authorities."

As to legislation 2011 was a year of current affairs in which the *regulatory framework of retail trade* could not be reformed. In this context the Act of 6 April 2010 concerning market practices and consumer protection gave occasion for an important reform of the Belgian legislation in terms of modernization and simplification in order to comply with the evolution of the economic environment and the consumption patterns. As a consequence the fundamental ban on joint offers was withdrawn (except for financial products and services) and the pre-sale period halved to three weeks for three sensitive sectors (textiles, leather and shoes). Moreover companies are now able to claim an immediate settlement for distance selling and the rules with regard to sale at a loss have been made much more flexible.

Through its governmental agreement of 1 December 2011 the federal government committed itself to pursue an ambitious competition policy in the months to come, which is focused on the key sectors of our economy and on an effective analysis and a price control in order to sustain growth, to curtail inflation, to improve our companies' competitiveness, to support a correct and transparent price-making process and to boost citizens' purchasing power:

- Reinforcing the Price Observatory in its tasks. Therefore the Observatory will receive the necessary means to analyze the margins, to detect irregular price fluctuations of goods or services and to make the Competition Authority or, if need be, the government intervene on well-founded grounds. The Observatory is directly called in.
- Guaranteeing the coordination with sectorial regulators and the Price Observatory in order to reinforce the Competition Authority's efficiency. The latter will dispose of sufficient means and a dissuasive sanctioning framework. The independent nature of the Competition Council will be safeguarded.
- Updating the different legislations with regard to the retail sector according to the European standards in order to enlarge the wide range of means for countering unfair competition.

The Commercial Establishments Act (Act of 13 August 2004) was modified by the Act of 22 December 2009 as a result of the enforcement of the services directive. For instance, the criterion "consequences of the project for existing commercial establishments" was replaced by the criterion "space" (local development, mobility). In the near future the regions will be competent for commercial establishments (cf. governmental agreement of 1 December 2011), which can be considered as a sort of facilitation for the regions will be able to fix the criteria freely. Projects in the borderland of another region that could have an impact on one or more regions due to their size or attractiveness will be subject to compulsory consultation.

In the gas and electricity sector (network industries) the third European energy package has been transposed at federal level in national and regional law. This third package contains the actual unbundling of production and supply activities as well as of network management activities, the extension of the regulation authorities' competences and independence (at national and regional level) and the intensification of consumer protection. In Belgium ownership unbundling has already been introduced. Moreover gas transport network managers have now to be certified (and thus definitively designated). The regulators' competences (at national as well as regional level) have been reinforced and their objectives and tasks as well as their tariffication competences specified and extended. The public authorities are still able to give "guidelines" but they no longer lay down provisions and the Council of Ministers has lost its suspension power.

An inquiry by the CREG (independent regulator) and a study of the Price Observatory showed that prices increased by 11,8 % in 2011, compared to 6,7 % in our neighbouring countries. This rise affected, amongst other things, Belgium's competitiveness. Gas prices rose by 19,1 %, compared to 6,7 % on average in the neighbouring countries.

In accordance with the European provisions the government has reached an agreement on a *balanced package of temporary measures aiming at a better control of the electricity and gas prices*:

- Upward indexation freeze of the energy component of gas and electricity prices during 9 months in order to adapt the indexation formulas in conformity with the actual supply costs;
- Taking note of the CREG's decision to stabilize the distribution network tariffs until the regionalization takes effect;
- Limitation of the federal energy contribution for gas and electricity by:
 - suspending the contribution to the Belgian Kyoto Fund until 2012. The evolution of the contribution to fund after 2012 still needs to be decided
 - abolishing as from 1 January 2013 the exemption for final consumers of green electricity from contributing to the Kyoto Fund and the Denuclearization Fund
 - freezing the contributions to the CREG and the public social assistance centres until 2014 (included);
- Restriction of the suppliers' compensation for social tariffs for "protected customers";
- Abolition of the compensation for breach of contract on condition that a period of one month notice is observed;
- Initiative of the government and the public social assistance centres for stimulating assisted individuals to switch over to the cheapest contract formula;
- Offshore support mechanism reform;
- Production capacity analysis resulting in concrete measures to attract investment in productive capacity and to reinforce interconnections with the neighbouring countries;
- Examining the possibility of putting a part of the nuclear productive capacity on the market.

In the field of consumer protection a number of improvements have been carried out: compulsory definition of "vulnerable customers", obligation for suppliers to guarantee access to consumer data, control mechanism for price volatility, readability of invoices, possible update of the sectorial agreement and taking into account the opinions and reports of the Energy Mediation Office. As to Flanders the independence of the Flemish electricity regulator (VREG) has been strengthened and a closed distribution system arrangement has been adopted. The VREG can impose sanctions on distribution network managers for undeservedly cutting off the gas and electricity supply or not connecting customers. In such cases the VREG will be able to force the network administrator to pay damages. This way consumers are better protected against possible errors of network managers.

In Wallonia the gas and electricity decrees are being adapted in order to better protect final consumers and improve *the social protection measures* (extension of the categories of customers in need, better assistance for these people, automatic transfer by distribution network managers so that these customers can benefit from social tariffs and improvement of the default of payment procedure), to advance the working of the liberalized market and the integration of centralized products (notably by the introduction of provisions reforming

network energy efficiency, network connections and access for green electricity as well as intelligent network management) and to reinforce the regulator's competences and independence.

The liberalized telecommunications market is in full expansion and comprising a growing number of diverse activities. Therefore the government intends, in collaboration with the regulator whose instruments, autonomy and independence will be reinforced, to create a *strict and balanced regulatory framework for the telecommunications sector*. In doing so priority must be given to maximum transparency, a downward pressure on prices, promoting competition and strengthening consumer rights. Therefore a thorough reform of the telecommunications legislation will be carried through in Parliament and new radio spectrum (new 3G-licences and 4G-licences) will be sold by auction and put into operation. Moreover the different kinds of infrastructure will further be thrown open. In order to reinforce the information society a digital agenda 2020 will be elaborated at federal and regional level containing concrete objectives and actions.

As to the postal sector high-quality, accessible and affordable services for everyone will be provided. The liberalization of the postal market must take place in a steady environment and may under no circumstances lead to worse customer services. The regulator will continue to carry out his market surveillance task by creating a postal observatory for monitoring the most relevant indicators. Moreover a number of implementation decrees of the third postal directive must be issued..

3.6. Industrial policy, entrepreneurship, SMEs and internal market

During the European Council of 30 January 2012 the European heads of state and government leaders focused on three immediate priorities: stimulating employment, especially for youngsters, completing the internal market, financing the economy and SMEs in particular. The European Council of 1 and 2 March 2012 confirmed these priorities and emphasized the pioneer role of industry with regard to European growth. In this context the following matters deserve particular attention.

3.6.1. Internal market

With a view to guaranteeing the effective implementation of the services directive Belgium will increase the number of one-stop shops in order to fully meet the expectations (fulfilling all formalities electronically, interoperability, easy and user-friendly access to high-quality and updated information). In this context Belgium will see to it that the EU economic actors become aware of the facilities offered to them.

In order to enhance the confidence of consumers and companies in the internal market Belgium set up an online platform for extrajudicial dispute resolution (BELMED) at the beginning of April 2011. This service is intended to settle disputes between consumers and companies amicably. BELMED supplies information in the first place. In addition to this the BELMED platform provides online mediation in collaboration with independent mediators. This way a consumer dispute can be regulated easily, rapidly and cheaply. In total BELMED has already dealt with 220 applications via extrajudicial dispute resolution, mostly in the energy and travel sector.

3.6.2. Industrial policy

In the middle of 2011 the Flemish government adopted the White Paper *“Een nieuw industrieel beleid (NIB) voor Vlaanderen”* (A new industrial policy for Flanders). This paper presents a global view of Flanders' industrial future, which should be greener, more social, more creative and more innovative. The new industrial policy comprises 50 concrete actions and is based on four cornerstones: (1) the company of the future; (2) competences and labour market policy; (3) industrial innovation policy; (4) infrastructure policy.

An Industry Council has been set up in order to follow up and support the new industrial policy. In projects that contribute to the *“Company of the Future”* initiative financial aid can be granted to business associations for their industrial transformation project proposal allowing or focusing on an open production environ-

ment. At the beginning of 2012 a particular investment fund (*TINA fund*), set up to reform the Flemish economy through innovation, adopted its first project. The fund has 200 million euro at its disposal and focuses on innovative initiatives with a strategic potential through ambitious projects that can only be supported by consortiums of companies and knowledge institutions. In 2012 a new arrangement will be elaborated for strategic and innovative projects offering a global or an integral environmental or energy solution at company level with closed energy and material cycles. Projects offering process-integrated solutions and not referring to technologies of the limitative technology list are also concerned. The existing aid for investment and training will be reformed in order to contribute more specifically to the transformation of the Flemish economic tissue. In the field of innovation a new competence pole has been created with a view to a sustainable chemistry. The competence poles for industrial design, logistics, materials research and mobility have been extended by 4 years.

Within the framework of its industrial policy the Walloon government continues its competence poles and clusters policy: in 2011 a 7th call for projects was closed. 36 projects were supported representing a budget of 62 million euro. An 8th call for sustainable development is currently being organized. The proceedings concerning the decree consolidating this policy are further being carried out. In 2011 special attention was given to the internationalization of the competence poles and clusters, notably through the participation in European cooperation projects and in actions to support export, to attract foreign investors and to boost international visibility. The proceedings with regard to the decree implementing these lines of policy are being continued.

3.6.3. SMEs and entrepreneurship

In its governmental agreement of 1 December 2011 the federal government established a number of *priorities for enterprises*. By introducing a plan based on the priorities of the “revised Small Business Act” the following SME-related measures are taken into consideration:

- Depending on the budgetary opportunities, the social status of self-employed persons could be improved by giving special attention to small-sized self-employed workers;
- By 2014, reduction by 30 % of the administrative burden for all companies (at European level : 25 % reduction by 2014), extension of the number of European one-stop shops and improvement of payments by invoice (procedures and terms);
- Supporting all aspects of entrepreneurship: expansion, employers’ associations, first employments in micro-enterprises, second chance, assessment of existing tools (BVBA-starter=limited liability company, substituting entrepreneur) and higher participation of SMEs in public procurement.

With their new action plan *Ondernemerschapsonderwijs 2011-2014* (Entrepreneurship education 2011-2014) the Flemish authorities aim at stimulating youngsters to start up a business through education and training.

The measure “*business advice aid for pre-starters*”, which is part of the Entrepreneurship Action Plan, offers affordable aid to starting entrepreneurs for examining the feasibility of their commercial idea. They only pay 1/9 for the elaboration of a feasibility study, the other 8/9 being at the expense of the Flemish government. Meanwhile the 2 years taking pilot project has been started and aims at 2.500 feasibility studies. Those who want to start up a business can develop a business plan together with an expert from a business association. Moreover the following target groups can get advice on specific bottlenecks that constitute a bigger barrier to them than to average starters: starters having growth potential, people over 50, foreign entrepreneurs, disabled persons and women.

At the beginning of 2011 the *win-win loan* was extended to all SMEs (previously only destined to starters).

The “*Gzellensprong*” (Gazelle jump) growth platform has been set up and aims at high-potential as well as more average growing companies. At the end of 2011 a study regarding possible shortcomings in government instruments for growing companies was finished. Besides that 9 pilot projects concerning growth support are running until the third quarter of 2012.

Since the creation (mid 2010) of a second specific fund offering starters and promising SMEs the necessary financial means to start up and develop their business (*ARKimedes Fund II*), 10 candidates have been selected who are able to invest in innovative starters and fast-growing SMEs in sectors as nanoelectronics, clean technologies, ICT and life sciences.

Finally the long-range programme “*Slagkrachtige overheid*” (Decisive government) is further being implemented. One of the projects concerns fast procedures for investment files. In this context the Flemish government decision (July 2011) introducing a single environment licence can be referred to. This licence combines the environmental as well as the urban development licence. Before the end of 2012 this new procedure will be transposed into a decree.

Within the framework of a collaboration project the Walloon government launched an action plan in 2011 in order to boost the creation and development of SMEs. The Walloon SBA aims at promoting entrepreneurship, facilitating access to financing, developing (technical and non-technical) innovation, internationalizing, offering access to the (internal and external) market and complementing the regional SME policy. In 2012 new initiatives in connection with these priorities will be developed.

Since 2011 new measures with respect to SME support have been taken, in particular concerning access to financing (tightening up of the guarantee mechanism for transferring a business, mixed product of guarantee and loan for micro-companies, self-employed, liberal professions and craftsmen, micro-credit for female and second chance entrepreneurs), transfer of companies and internationalization (coaching cheques for internationalization), support to entrepreneurship (development of pedagogic tools and training for students, female entrepreneurship). Divers measures to meet these purposes are being implemented by means of structural funds.

In order to support employment measures have been taken to create jobs for self-employed as main occupation by means of measures in favour of self-employed as secondary occupation, including the extension of training cheques access and of their period of use, support to future entrepreneurs through accompanying structures for the creation of jobs and the introduction of a plan fostering the switch-over to the status of self-employed as main occupation (“*Airbag*” plan), which should be operational in 2012.

The Walloon government and the government of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation continued the implementation of their *Administrative Simplification Plans* in 2011. Focus was laid on the simplification of regulations, the simplification and dematerialization of processes (access for SMEs to public procurement, environmental permits, ...), the assessment and reduction of the administrative burden and the abolition of archaic texts (proposal for the abolition of 15 texts). In October 2011 the introduction of the confidence principle was launched as a pilot project. The development of an “SME test” is also planned for 2012.

In 2011 the Brussels Capital Region outlined its policy to support entrepreneurship by giving priority to 3 pillars: creation by the *Brussels Enterprise Agency* of a support network for starters and project developers; development of financing instruments for starting companies, including 2 new capitalization funds for innovating starters in partnership with the *Gewestelijke Investeringsmaatschappij voor Brussel (GIMB)* (Regional Investment Company of Brussels) and the establishment of a crowdfunding platform; launch of a vast training programme with regard to business management for entrepreneurs having started their economic activities less than a year ago.

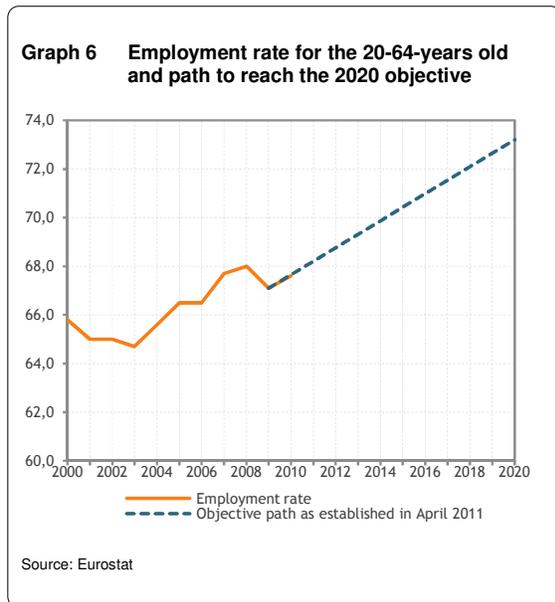
4. EU 2020 objectives

4.1. Employment

In recent years, the Belgian labour market has done relatively well in spite of the crisis. However, Belgium has become fully aware that the objective of an employment rate of 73.2% (20-64) in 2020 is ambitious and cannot be reached without structural reforms. In a no-policy change scenario, an employment rate of 70.3% is expected¹⁶

Table 3: Objectives for employment

Objectives	BE 2009	BE 2010	EU 2010	BE 2020	Required job creation 2010-2020
Employment rate 20-64	67.1%	67.6%	68.6%	73.2%	568 000
Employment rate women	61.0%	61.6%	62.1%	69.1%	348 000
NEET (percentage of young people Neither in Education, Employment nor Training)	11.1%	10.9%	12.8%	8.2%	
Employment rate 55-64	35.3%	37.3%	46.3%	50.0%	271 000
Difference in employment rate between non-EU and Belgian citizens	27.5%	28.4%	10.5%	< 16.5%	



Consequently, the new federal government has launched a first series of structural reforms of the labour market¹⁷. Indeed, a better general functioning of the Belgian labour market is likely to lead to a higher mobility rate and can help creating more opportunities for the underrepresented groups. All the Regions intend to contribute to reach this objective. This is why Flanders has signed an agreement with the social partners in order to invest 25 million EUR for the next 2 years to encourage older workers to stay active and to reduce the number early school leavers. Through its civic integration policy, the Flemish government notably helps guiding newcomers towards the labour market.

At the same time, additional initiatives have to be taken to boost the economic development. The policy pursued by the Regions on this matter¹⁸ and the strengthening of job creation in growth sectors, such as the green economy, the social service sector, town development and

the digital economy, must lead to a bigger job supply. The social economy can equally contribute.

¹⁶ Federal Planning Bureau, *Perspectives Economiques/Economische Voorzichten 2012-2017*, March 2012.

¹⁷ See chapters 3.1 and 3.3.

¹⁸ See chapter 3.6.

4.1.1. Dealing with youth unemployment

The situation of young people on the labour market is a source of great concern and is therefore a top priority for all authorities. In this field, the tailor-made concept is used as much as possible. Within this framework, a special system will be developed for young people faced with multidimensional problems (medical, mental, psychological and/or psychiatric problems).

The new federal government has also substantially reformed the unemployment benefits for school-leavers ("waiting allowances"). In order to favour a faster integration on the labour market, the waiting period will be converted into a professional integration period. The "waiting allowances" will be turned into "integration allowances". From 2012 on, the waiting period between the end of the studies and the granting of the first benefit will be extended from 9 months to 1 year. At the end of this waiting period, the allowances will only be granted to young people who can demonstrate that they have actively been looking for a job or who became involved in an integration path.

Moreover, the maximum period of time during which the allowance is granted is henceforth restricted, except if the person has worked for six months during the last two years. By doing so, the waiting allowance should become a real integration allowance.

From 2012 on, the granting of integration allowances will also be conditioned to continuous job search efforts that will be regularly evaluated. If the efforts are considered insufficient, the payment of the allowance will be suspended for a period of six months and it can only be resumed if the efforts of the person are judged positive.

The Regions and Communities pursue their efforts to raise the number of traineeships and opportunities to combine work and studies¹⁹, especially through enterprise learning experiences. In the Flemish Region, the "Career Agreement" provides that the public service for employment will increasingly take care of those who frequently leave the labour market, so as to reintegrate them in a sustainable way. In the long run, the aim is also to guarantee a work experience to early school leavers. Young job-seekers will also be encouraged to turn more rapidly towards occupations which are in great demand. In Flanders, youth unemployment in big cities will receive particular attention. An action plan in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) will result in a reinforcement of both technical secondary education and industrial policy.

The Brussels-Capital Region will go on with the intensification of the obligatory integration path for young job-seekers. The first evaluations show that the integration path increases by nearly 20% the probability for low-skilled young people to find a job. The Region will also elaborate a specific offer with short training periods, focused on the sectors which contribute most to job creation.

Wallonia intends to ensure an individual support to the newly registered young job-seekers by answering specifically to their needs at each stage of their integration path. Within this framework, the acquisition of work experience or the accomplishment of an enterprise learning experience will be emphasised, e.g. through plunging the young in the conditions of a real professional experience.

The German-speaking Community intensifies its career guidance programmes in order for young people to get acquainted with the realities of the labour market in an early stage.

Rules regulating student jobs have been relaxed. Lastly, it has been considered to link more closely the employer's fiscal and social security contributions reductions for employing low-skilled young workers to training efforts.

¹⁹ See chapter 3.3.

4.1.2. Interregional and professional mobility

In order to increase the professional mobility on the labour market, the Regions and Communities, in collaboration with the social partners, give top priority to training and to the development of their competence policies. Flanders intends to strengthen the career assistance mechanisms that allow all workers to resort to the support of employment services. Wallonia encourages part-time independent workers to take up a full-time independent activity.

The regional differences on the Belgian labour market result essentially from a general lack of mobility, both on the level of the integration on the labour market and on the level of the transition from one job to another. Yet there are also specific barriers, notably as regards language skills. In order to bring these barriers down, the regional employment services have been exchanging job vacancies for several years on the basis of an interregional cooperation agreement. The problems related to transport, particularly public transport, are being tackled. Within the employment services, mixed teams have been created in order to search actively for candidates fitting a series of vacant jobs. Within this framework, Flanders and Brussels have recently concluded a new cooperation agreement aiming at helping at least 1 000 job-seekers from Brussels each year to find a job. Flanders and Wallonia made similar arrangements in order to find a job for 1 500 Walloon job-seekers.

4.1.3. Lifelong learning

Participation to lifelong learning is insufficient in Belgium. The various authorities and the social partners agree that this has to be tackled.

In this context, the mechanism of responsibility of the employers will be adjusted, so that the objectives concerning training of employees will be reached, i.e. 1.9% of the total wage bill.

With this prospect, the Flemish Region encouraged the development of a partnership between the various actors both on the labour market and in the educational field to improve the response to the training needs in terms of orientation, education or infrastructure. The Flemish Region also supports financially the participants to adult learning programmes and to professional training and encourages the use of the internet for learning purposes. A new consolidated plan for literacy has also been adopted.

In the Brussels-Capital Region (the BCR and the French Community Commission), the budget financing the language vouchers system has been increased. Wallonia invests in the targeted strengthening of the training offer (jobs in great demand or in growth, notably green jobs or jobs related to the competitive clusters, ICT and languages), while paying particular attention to the adequacy between supply and demand and a better articulation between the Region and Communities' training and educational policies. As regards language skills, which receive particular attention linked with the support to mobility, Wallonia also uses language vouchers. Moreover, it has launched an e-learning platform in 2011.

Within the framework of its language learning policy, the Flemish Region gives the opportunity to allophone job-seekers to follow a "Dutch as a Second Language" course, in the six months following their registration, or orients them towards the "House of Dutch".

The German-speaking Community supports lifelong learning programmes for all citizens, regardless of their status.

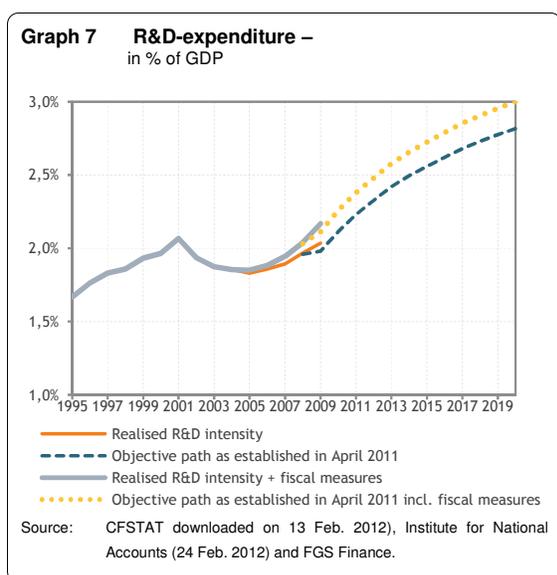
4.2. R&D and innovation

In the 2011 National Reform Program (NRP), Belgium set the target to raise R&D expenditure to 3% of GDP. Belgium wants tax incentives for R&D investments to be included in the calculations. The federal govern-

ment allows a 75% payroll tax exemption for researchers. By 2020, this measure will have contributed approximately 0.18% of GDP to the 3% objective. Innovation is, indeed, essential for productivity growth and thus for improving the competitiveness of the economy

Table 4: R&D objectives

	BE2008	BE2009	BE2020	Required growth 2009-2020
R&D intensity	1.97	2.03		
Tax incentives	0.07	0.13		
R&D intensity, including tax incentives	2.04	2.16	3.00	0.84



When establishing this target and the path to reach it, the last available official data on R&D dated from 2007. Currently, two additional years are available. The R&D intensity observed in 2008 and 2009 is slightly higher than what was anticipated during the preparation of the 2011 NRP. In 2009, Belgian R&D expenditure amounted to 6.9 billion euro, representing R&D intensity of 2.03%. That same year, the payroll tax exemption for R&D staff reached 0.45 billion euro, or 0.13% of GDP.

The measures described in the 2011 NRP have been implemented by both federal and regional authorities. An Interfederal Plan for Research and Innovation will be implemented. With due respect for the competencies of all levels of government, the plan will allow for better coordination of the efforts made by the Regions and the federal government with regard to R&D and technological innovation in order to support the economic development of the Regions and for valorising the results of this policy.

The fiscal policy to support R&D will be maintained and, depending on the available budgetary resources, even enhanced, more particularly with regard to payroll tax exemption for researchers, the 122 possible investment deductions, regional incentives exemptions granted to companies for research, deductions for patent income, Young Innovative companies and deductions for gifts.

The Brussels-Capital Region has updated its strategy for Research, Development and Innovation (RDI), focusing on: (i) the most promising sectors for regional investment within the framework of a strategy of smart specialization in line with the EU Strategy-2020, the future program HORIZON 2020 and the ERDF 2014-2020, (ii) the consistency of (financial) instruments and the optimization of the value chain of projects, (iii) the strengthening of interregional cooperation and (iv) the long-term evaluation of research and innovation policy of the Region. Within this framework and to shorten the circuit between academic research and economic value, the Region develops strategic platforms. Two new platforms were created in 2011 in the field of life sciences.

As part of the Research Strategy 2011-2015 of Wallonia and the Brussels-Wallonia federation, several new initiatives can be mentioned, including the approval of the "Partnership Wallonia-Brussels for Researchers" aimed at implementing the European Charter for Researchers, the launch of a first call for projects "public-private partnerships" (with a 6 million euro budget), the decision by the Walloon government to allocate 5 million euro annually for top-class research infrastructure, the launch of a tool aimed to train technological innovation researchers and to give them the experience of an international scientific partnership, the launch

of a call for research projects “sustainable development and environment” open to stakeholders from Wallonia and/or the Brussels-Capital Region.

Under the Marshall Plan 2.Green, 125 million euro was allocated to R&D projects on competitiveness clusters in 2011 (sixth and seventh calls for projects). The eighth is under process.

Under the Plan Creative Wallonia, new approaches are developed in the field of awareness (creativity week, multidisciplinary research initiatives and creative and innovative training), technology diffusion (adoption of an ICT Master Plan to be implemented in 2012), innovation (Observatory of trends, support measures for the innovation potential of SME's, operational in 2012), creation of innovative ecosystems (calls for projects "Coworking" and "Smart work centers"), and promotion of launching new products and services on the market, in particular for creative industries.

The Flemish Region has approved the concept note Innovation Centre Flanders, mapping out a long-term vision for a future, targeted innovation policy that addresses the major economic and social challenges. The note defines six innovation nodes: transformation by innovation, eco-innovation, green energy, health care innovation, sustainable mobility and logistics, and social innovation. Innovation steering groups have been set up to elaborate the strategic innovation policy. As a result of the extension of the Action Plan 'Innovative public contracts' up to the end of 2012, five innovation platforms were established at the end of 2011. The agreements concluded with existing poles of competence were extended in 2011 and a new initiative has been launched "Flanders Innovation Hub for Sustainable CHEmistry". In the field of renewable energy, other initiatives are I-Cleantech Flanders, Energyville and Experimental garden electrical vehicles.

The Fund Scientific Research Flanders has elaborated a series of research programs aiming at the internationalisation of the Flemish scientific landscape, like the Pegasus programme, which aims at attracting foreign postdoctoral researchers. The program of the Agency for Innovation by Science and Technology from now offers innovation mandates instead of research mandates. In this context the Flemish Europe platform has been created. Up to October 2011, the Flemish Region received 539.1 million euro through the Seventh Programme for Research and Technological Development, which represents a 2.43% return. The Policy Plan Communication of Science is aimed at broadening social basis for science and innovation. Each year, the Flemish universities receive 4 million euro of subsidies to make the career of junior researcher more attractive through various measures.

In 2011, the Flemish government devoted an additional amount of 65 million euro to R&D and innovation. In that same year, an extra 97 million euro was also earmarked for projects of the Agency Innovation by Science and Technology. The Flemish government also approved the growth trajectory for the period 2012-2014: R&D resources will increase by 60 million euro in 2012, 70 million in 2013 and 70 million in 2014. As a consequence, by 2014, the innovation budget will have increased by 200 million euro as compared to 2011.

In 2012, the Brussels Region will continue its efforts to support research and innovation, as a result of which RDI budget will again be raised by 5%. Two additional strategic platforms will be set up in the expanding fields of bioconstruction, wind energy for urban housing. Several measures will be reinforced, in particular the aid to realize doctoral theses in enterprises, the support of product and process innovation, the support of economic viability of spin-offs and the support in setting up European projects. The Brussels Region will continue supporting those who want to participate in European projects by not only supporting the setting up of projects, but also giving advice on setting up and running projects. To improve innovation financing, the Region created a fund to support starting young innovative companies (Brustart) in January 2012.

All the measures from the Research Strategy 2011-2015 and from the Plan Creative Wallonia will be pursued and even reinforced in 2012. Moreover, a peer review of the Walloon Innovation System led by the OECD is currently pursued and will be finalized in 2012.

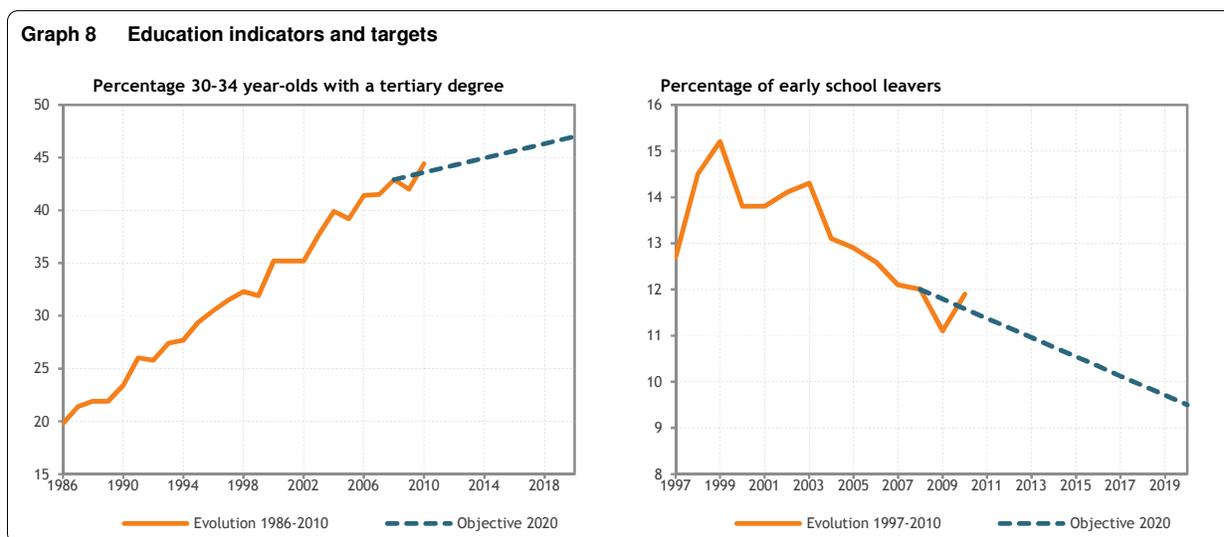
In 2012, the Flemish government will provide resources to develop top-class research infrastructures for four projects. Early 2012, a first project was approved for financing by a new fund aimed at setting up spin-off companies in the field of the research carried out in the four Flemish strategic research centres.

4.3. Education and training

In Belgium, education policy is the responsibility of the Flemish, French-speaking and German-speaking Communities; training policy belongs to the competences of the Communities and the Regions. The following part discusses new initiatives by the Communities and Regions with regard to the EU2020 objectives on education and training.

Table 5: Education targets

	BE2009	BE2010	EU2010	BE2020	Required growth 2010-2020
Percentage of 30-34 year-olds with a tertiary degree	42.0	44.4	33.6	47.0	2.6
Percentage of early school leavers	11.1	11.9	14.1	9.5	2.4



4.3.1. Tertiary education

Belgium has made the commitment to raise the share of people aged 30-34 years with a tertiary degree to 47% by 2020. This objective is more ambitious than the global EU target (40%). With a percentage of 44.4 % in 2010, Belgium was well on its way to achieve the 2020 objective. To achieve its target, Flanders aims at the further democratisation of the tertiary education system. For instance, an action plan for mobility is established with a special focus on vulnerable groups. In addition, the Decree on the modernisation and reform of tertiary education was approved. The plan will come into effect from the start of the academic year 2013-2014 and comprises the integration of all Masters' programmes into the universities and a structural increase in means. Furthermore, the reform of the 'Incentives Fund' started, widening access to underrepresented groups. The Decree regarding student accommodations allows tackling material and immaterial obstacles for students.

To reach this target, Flanders will also build on skill training paths and on the recognition of skills acquired outside formal education as well. The recognition of professional experience is also gaining ground, together with the certification of acquired experience.

Since 2009 the Federation Wallonia-Brussels²⁰ is engaged in the modernisation of its higher education system within the framework of a multiannual timetable. Recent developments were focused on the democratization of tertiary education, the development of the work-linked education system through a decree stipulating that part of the qualifications necessary to obtain a tertiary education degree can be obtained in firms and via the development of work-linked Masters' programmes in colleges of higher education, the fight against school failure and early school leaving by giving all students access to syllabi and other learning materials. In the future, these projects will be developed further and amplified and an in-depth reform of the higher education landscape is being prepared. A decree facilitating the access and the running of courses for students with disabilities is also under preparation.

4.3.2. Early school-leavers

The rate of early school-leavers in Belgium should be reduced to 9.5% by 2020. This objective is also more ambitious than the global EU target (10%). In 2010 the Belgian rate amounted to 11.9%, compared to 11.1% in 2009.

Flanders has drawn up a new action plan against school truancy and other forms of misconduct at school. The actions are part of a continuum of sensitization, prevention, counselling and sanctioning. In this regard, particular attention is awarded to special target groups as well. In the systems "learning and working", the registration process was improved, allowing for a better detection of bottlenecks. Counselling is also further improved. With the career agreement, Flanders will choose fully for offering professional experience through an adjusted job and training offer (workshops and/or workplace learning) in view of guiding people to shortage professions and the broader labour market. On a yearly basis, 1000 school leavers without any professional experience after 6 months will have the opportunity to participate in large work experience projects. In addition, the planned secondary education reform and the planned reform of the student counselling landscape aim at a more intelligent study choice and better school career counselling. An attractive offer of vocational education and training is provided, with a greater focus on foreign languages. Furthermore, second-chance education and lifelong learning are encouraged and several measures are being taken with regard to both ICT and youth unemployment reduction.

In the French-speaking educational system, several key projects are currently running on the different educational levels. On the one hand, vocational education is being reformed, in particular by the application of the "Qualification by units" (CPU), as a result of which school failure in the last two years of compulsory education can be replaced by a system of permanent remediation. The reform will be implemented gradually starting from 2011. The full implementation in 5 professions is planned for 2013-2014 and will be extended afterwards. Having organized sensitization projects for technical professions and study courses previously, the "Instances de Pilotage Inter-réseaux de l'Enseignement Qualifiant" (IPIEQ) now deal with reforming the offer of secondary vocational education through support measures to set up study courses which offer high job opportunities (shortage occupations and occupations in great demand), the preservation of rather unpopular study courses and even the merging of study courses. Other projects, including the opening of centres for advanced technology, are continued with the support of the Structural funds. On the other hand, the reform of alternating education aims at implementing a unique alternating contract for all registered youths within the framework of an alternating training connected to compulsory school attendance. This alternating contract replaces the apprenticeship contract (leercontract) and the convention social and occupational integration. In addition, transfer possibilities are developed together with training professionals (particularly between the management course and the bachelor programme), as well as measures for the recognition of qualifications acquired outside formal education. In the beginning of 2012, the government of the Federation

²⁰ In the Constitution, known as "Communauté française".

Wallonia-Brussels approved at first reading the preliminary draft of the decree on the introduction of a provision for the reception and education of new arrivals. Those more flexible measures should be ready at the start of the new school year 2012-2013. For the school year 2011-2012, there were also other initiatives with regard to the supervision of exemplary projects that fight against school failure and support well-being in educational institutions, as well as an agreement on class size. Finally, the measures with regard to training young jobseekers (see section “employment”) also contribute to the objective.

The programme ‘Time out’ of the German-speaking Community offers academic support to students with difficulties. It aims to stabilise them and finally redirect them toward a school or in-company training.

4.4. Energy and climate

The climate and energy topic of the Europe 2020 strategy encompasses the following three targets for Belgium: (1) a 15% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 compared to 2005 in sectors not covered by the EU Emission Trading System (i.e. non-ETS sectors), including emission ceilings for the period 2013-2020 (referred to as linear path to target), (2) a share of gross final energy consumption from renewable energy sources of 13% by 2020, and (3) an indicative target of saving 18% of primary energy consumption compared to projections for 2020. The following graphs illustrate each target and show where Belgium stands today with respect to its three objectives.

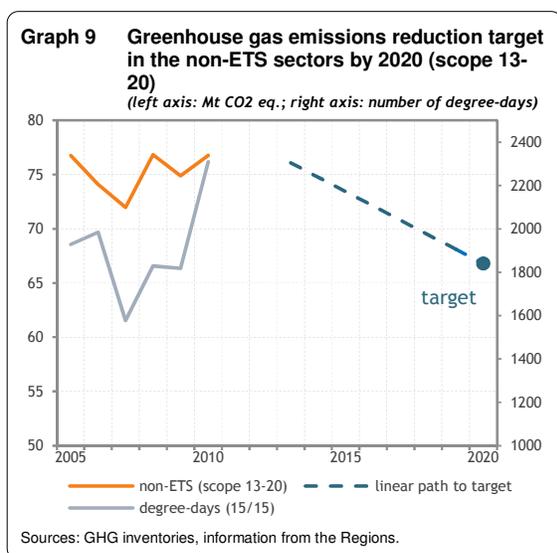
Table 6: Climate and energy targets

	BE2009	BE2010	EU2009	BE2020	Required growth 2009-2020
Non-ETS greenhouse gasses (2005=100)	74.9	76.8		66.8	-8.1
Share renewable energy	4.5	5.1	11.7	13.0	8.5 pp
Primary energy consumption	51.0	53.9		43.6	-7.4

pp: percentage points.

(1) figures based on emission inventories of January 2012.

(2) the 2010 figures are provisional (Eurostat February 2012).



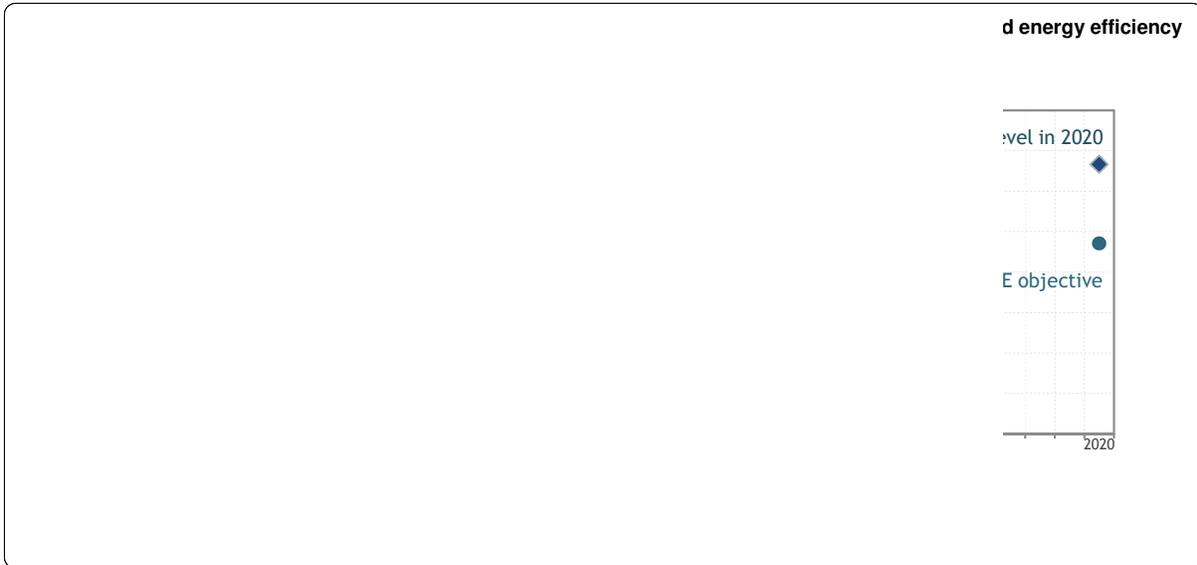
In 2010 greenhouse gas emissions in the non-ETS sectors were comparable to the 2005 level, i.e. 15 % above the target for 2020. To a large extent, those emissions depend on heating needs. 2010 was indeed extremely cold. When we correct the emissions on the basis of the average climate during the period 2000-2009, the emissions show a downward trend since 2008.

2009 and 2010 have seen a marked increase in renewable energy sources (RES) (see Graph), as a result of which the share of gross final energy consumption from renewable energy sources is higher than indicated in Belgium's national renewable energy action plan, which provides an indicative path towards the target. This Plan was transmitted to the European Commission in November 2010: 5.1% compared to 3.8%. In 2010, the gap to the 13 % target is slightly less than 8 percentage

points.

Finally, primary energy consumption, the main indicator to define the 'energy efficiency' objective, remained stable over the period 2005-2009, whereas the 2010 increase clearly reflects the impact of weather conditions on energy consumption (see above). In 2009, primary energy consumption remains some 5 % below the projected level for 2020, i.e. at 13 percentage points from the Belgian objective.

The responsibilities in the field of energy and climate policy are divided between the Federal Authority and the regions. The policy measures defined and decided at those different levels of government may serve different objectives at the same time. This is particularly so with regard to the GHG reduction targets in the non-ETS sector and the improvement of energy efficiency for which several common measures exist.



Most of those new common measures relate to buildings: residential, non-residential, private and public. On the regional level, the recently approved measures and new initiatives aim to drastically reduce energy consumption in buildings. The means to that end are more strict energy consumption standards for new constructions, calls for projects for the construction of exemplary buildings, ambitious renovation programmes, improved and valorised energy certification, insulation norms and energy bonuses for existing buildings, information and counselling for families and companies with regard to eco-construction and energy savings, stronger energy knowledge development among construction professionals (especially through specific training) and energy experts, and a strong enforcement of regulation for buildings. Moreover, the government's example function concerning construction is encouraged.

The reduction of greenhouse gas emission in the non-ETS sector and of primary energy consumption by 2020 should also result from other measures and initiatives, such as the translation by the federal Parliament in august 2011 of the new Directive 2010/30/EU with regard to eco-design and energy labels, the conclusion of new energy policy agreements with Flanders' industry, the strict standards for the environmental performance of government vehicles in Flanders and the Brussels Capital Region (and of taxis in the latter region) and other measures on mobility, especially in the Brussels Capital Region, the 1st Alliance Employment – Environment (Alliantie Werkgelegenheid-Leefmilieu), the launching of second generation sector agreements, supporting green investments and eco-innovation and the integration of social and environmental clauses in Walloon public contracts.

As for the greenhouse gas emission reduction target in the non-ETS sector, another initiative to be mentioned is the new Flemish Climate Policy Plan (Vlaamse Klimaatbeleidsplan), the draft of which should be ready by June 2012 and which the Flemish government is to approve permanently by the end of 2012. That policy plan reaches beyond the borders of individual domains and each sector is to take its responsibility and present measures to contribute to the reduction objectives.

With regard to the RES objective, finally, the federal government and the regions have continued and even consolidated their strategy for the development (or action plan) of renewable energy sources. On the federal level, the offshore wind turbines area was marked out, accelerating its deployment by 2020. Based on an impact assessment of sustainable development and an adaptation of the existing subsidy model for renewable energy in the North Sea, the government will make a decision on the delimitation of a new area for wind energy in the North Sea.

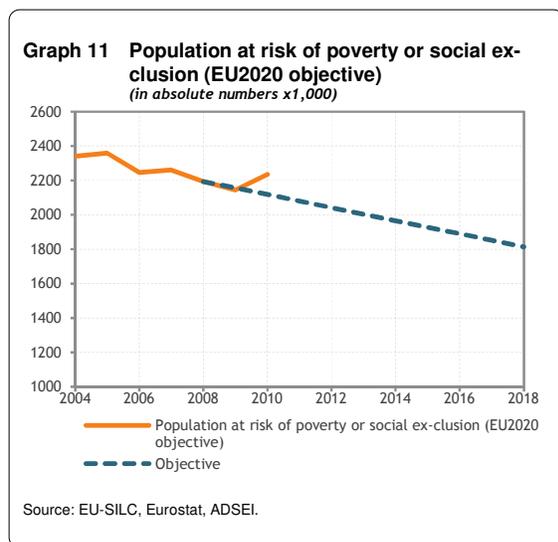
On the regional level, the strategy takes on many forms: (1) quantified objectives for specific SER applications (e.g. 8000 Gwh of green electricity in Flanders by 2020), (2) a wind energy plan, a minimum SER share in buildings and specific support mechanisms for heat production based on biomass and for heat recovery in Flanders, (3) the actualization of the wind turbine parks, an evaluation of potential biomass-durable energy (in order to dispose of a strategy at the end of 2012), the approval of quota for green electricity certificates after 2012 and a reform of the current support mechanisms in Wallonia, and (4) a consolidation of the mechanism for green electricity certificates in the Brussels-Capital Region.

4.5. Social inclusion

Table 7: Objective for social inclusion (absolute numbers x1.000)

	BE2009	BE2010	BE2018	Required decrease 2010-2018
Risk of poverty or social exclusion	2,145	2,235	1,814	421

Source: EU-SILC, Eurostat, ADSEI.



By 2020 (data 2018), Belgium wants to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 380,000 people, compared to 2008 (-17%). Being at risk of poverty or social exclusion means: being at risk of poverty or living in a household with very low work intensity or suffering severe material deprivation.

4.5.1. Guaranteeing the social protection of the population

Social security protects the population against the consequences of the crisis and it is an important economic stabiliser. It now faces a decrease in its receipts and an increase in its expenditure. In order to be able to meet its obligations, a contribution guaranteeing its budget balance will be granted during the current period of government (until 2014). Extra measures will be taken in the fight against social fraud. A number of structural reforms of the labour market and of the pensions should increase the employment rate and the effective retirement age (cf. above).

As regards health care expenditure government decided to reduce these, so that a sustainable growth of this important sector will be guaranteed.

For 2013, the growth norm will be 2% (plus the expected increase of the health price index for 2013); with an extra 40 million euro for new jobs in non-profitsector.

For 2014, the growth norm will be set at 3%, in the context of the general deficit objective (plus the expected increase of the health prices index for 2014) Moreover, the budget objective for 2014, may include an additional amount for new jobs in the non-profitsector

For 2015 and the following years, the norm will be fixed by law.

In view of protecting the purchasing power, the system of the automatic indexation of wages and benefits will be maintained. In addition, the federal government will maintain the measures with regard to the growth-indexation of the benefits taken in the context of the envelope for 2011-2012. The available means for 2013-2014 will temporarily be reduced by 40%, but a number of benefits, such as the social minima (especially the minimum pensions of employed and self-employed persons), will be increased. In the long run, the objective is for the lowest social security benefits and social assistance benefits to attain the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, taking into account the social advantages they go together with. Where possible, the federal government will speed up the automatic granting of social rights (energy, water, communication, public transport, ...). The government also wants an accelerated and simplified access to the OMNIO status (higher health care insurance reimbursements) and a substantial extension of the third payer's system for the most vulnerable patient groups. Before mid-2014, a series of measures will be elaborated to fight poverty amongst the elderly and pensioners. The optimisation of the automatic granting of the income guarantee for the elderly will be examined.

In Flanders, a basic decree on Flemish Social Protection will give shape to a powerful, renewed social policy focusing on the affordability and the accessibility of care. The care insurance will be consolidated. A system of maximum billing in home care and a new scheme to support children financially will be introduced. In a second phase, a Flemish hospitalisation insurance and a new system to limit the costs in the residential elderly care will be developed.

Taking into account the multidimensionality of poverty, the governments have developed a plan-based approach in order to obtain coordinated policies: the federal plan for combating poverty (update in 2012), the Flemish action plan for combating poverty 2010-2014, the two-yearly Brussels poverty report and the Walloon plan for social cohesion 2009-2013 (participative evaluation before the end of 2012)²¹. The Belgian Roma integration strategy will help attain the social inclusion objectives of the NRP.

4.5.2. Combating child poverty

In consultation with the federated entities, the federal government will elaborate a realistic plan for combating child poverty. The right to family benefits will be embedded in the Constitution and the family benefits

²¹ More information on the regional plans for combating poverty can be found in the regional NRPs in annex.

for self-employed persons will be made equal (i.e. increased) to the family benefits for employed persons. With the state reform, the remaining competences with regard to child care and education as well as the competence for family benefits will be transferred to the Communities (to the Joint Community Commission in Brussels). Flanders has drawn up a specific action programme for combating child poverty that focuses on children from age 0 to 3. The programme will be reinforced in 2012. It involves all policy levels (including the local actors). In order to guarantee maximum learning opportunities for each child, the new financing of compulsory education and the maximum billing system in primary education will be evaluated. In addition, the overrepresentation of disadvantaged children and young people in special education will be reduced through better diagnoses. The content, the organisation and the institutional aspect of preventive family support will be redesigned, with special focus on families living in poverty. The accessibility of youth services will be improved by means of an integral approach. The ambulant and mobile offer will be reinforced in order to provide for care and support for children living in problematic situations. The local authorities will be stimulated and supported in their task to provide for more accessible and useful youth services for children and young people living in poverty and to develop local child poverty plans (focus on children aged 0 to 3). The Fund for leisure participation will be further developed. The Brussels Capital Region will focus on the improvement of homework policy, study skills, parent support and parent involvement. Child care and after-school care combined with neighbourhood action will be developed from a social perspective. Special "children's places" will be created, which will provide care for children aged 3 months to 3 years from socially and economically deprived environments. In Wallonia and in the Federation Wallonia-Brussels, the action plan "Children's rights" 2011-2014 provides for information, education and training with regard to children's rights and the fight against social inequalities and discriminations. The ambition is to guarantee an adequate living standard for all children, with special focus on housing, parenting support, to guarantee quality care, education and training for all children, to fight against the inequalities in the field of health and to combat child abuse.

4.5.3. Active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market

The federal government will stimulate activation, in consultation with the federated entities and in collaboration with the local authorities. The exemption for persons entitled to the general social assistance benefit with regard to professional integration will be reformed in order to stimulate the access to employment and to stimulate longer working times. The rules will be made more flexible in order to encourage partnerships between the public social welfare centres, the regional employment services and other parties, aimed at offering integrated guidance towards employment. Flanders is currently developing an integrated policy framework w^2 – work-welfare – for people who are not able to participate in the labour market. The decree will structurally anchor the collaboration between the policy domains Work/Social Economy and Welfare, with a view to optimising labour market participation. Meanwhile, projects within the policy domains Work and Social Economy in which welfare organisations are involved, are already being adapted to the new policy framework. Experiments are organised that concern activation guidance for persons with medical, mental, psychic and psychiatric problems, reintegration into the labour market from labour care, case management in the context of welfare, ... Flanders also focuses on the activation of employment seekers with poverty problems and will launch up to 500 extra poverty trajectories in 2012. To make managers aware of the situation of e.g. people with poverty problems at work, a support package will be elaborated. In execution of the Strategic Plan for Literacy, the Flemish employment agency uses a screening tool for detecting the target group. Illiterate job seekers are systematically referred to the Centres for basic education, where they receive adequate guidance. Brussels especially focuses on young adults and on the optimisation of the employment of people entitled to the general social assistance benefit. The Flemish Region keeps investing in the development of the social economy by supporting firms providing jobs for the unemployed and local initiatives for the development of employment. In 2012, further efforts will be made to simplify the structures and rules for the application of the decree on "tailored employment" in case of collective professional integration. In Wallonia, special efforts are made for the inclusion of people furthest from the labour market. A network of social assistants is mobilised in the context of the individualised support of job seekers. In 2011, a multi-annual agreement on literacy was signed, aimed at developing the detection of illiteracy and at the rein-

forcement of the learning offer. Moreover, the Walloon government pursues its employment policy with regard to people receiving the general social assistance benefit with extra financing in 2012. Another objective is the improvement of the work-life balance by extending the services for child care, assistance to persons, ... In the German-speaking Community, the agency for disabled persons collaborates with the institute for the training of self-employed persons, in order to give young disabled persons the opportunity to follow a tailored professional training. These persons are closely guided.

4.5.4. Combating inadequate housing and homelessness

Vital expenses, such as energy costs, should not prevent people from living a dignified existence. The federal government will see to it that the energy prices for private persons and companies do not exceed the prices in our neighbouring countries (cf. section 3.5). The Flemish social public service obligations and the free kWh regulation have been evaluated. The drinking water invoice will be kept affordable. Brussels and Flanders provide for social energy guidance. Brussels grants an energy allowance for which social criteria are taken into account.

The federal government will improve the procedure for collective debt settlement. In Wallonia, the debt mediation sector is being reformed. It has been refinanced with a view to professionalization.

The federal government will conclude a collaboration agreement on homelessness with the federated entities. This agreement will delimit the missions and responsibilities of each level of competence. The Communities and the Regions are investing in eviction prevention. Flanders has developed a programme for ambulant and preventive housing guidance, in the context of which the eviction problem is mapped more accurately. The accelerated allocation of social rental housing to the homeless will be examined and adapted. The development of easily accessible integrated offices for housing and energy will be started by subsidising the inter-municipal local housing policy projects. The affordability of individual housing will be improved by extending the rent subsidy and the action of the social rental agencies will be reinforced. In 2012, a follow-up report will be made with regard to the social housing offer in the context of the land and property policy. The Brussels Capital Region invests in the prevention of evictions where no new housing is proposed. The existing support for tenants will be reinforced and vulnerable groups will be offered "housing care". Additional services for people in precarious living situations will be developed and there will be experiments with alternative housing in order to stimulate autonomy, solidarity-based housing and guidance in the living environment. In Wallonia, there will be further consultation between the public and the private partners in 2012, in order to organise the structural financing of the night shelters by 2014. Wallonia continues its policy of extending and improving the housing offer: increase of the number of public housing units and renovation of the existing housing units, especially with view to the improvement of the energy efficiency (cf. section energy-climate), the award of housing benefits and energy bonuses for private dwellings.

Annex 1: Standard table for the assessment of CSRs and key macro-structural reforms in the NRP

Main areas of intervention (1)	Number of CSR (2)	Government level (3)	Qualitative information of the planned and already enacted measures					
			Description of the measures					Impact on public finance
			Description of the measure	Legal/administrative instruments	Formal objectives	State of Progress (including the implementation stage, the sequence and timing of the measure)	Risk of implementation (if relevant)	Overall and yearly change in government revenue and expenditure (reported in mln. national currency)
Public Finance	CSR 2: end-of-career issue	Fed	Pension reform	Law on various provisions of 28 December 2011	Limitation of assimilated periods for the pension calculation			
		Fed	Early retirement reform	Law on various provisions of 28 December 2011	Early retirement pension age is gradually raised in the schemes for employees, the self-employed and civil servants.			
Financial market	CSR 3: macro-financial stability	Fed	Entry into force of a new supervision model (Twin Peaks)	Law of 2 July 2010	Reinforce financial stability	In force since 1 April 2011		n.a.
		Fed	Measures in favour of Dexia: acquisition of Dexia Banque Belgique and granting of a guarantee to Dexia SA and Dexia Credit Local (jointly with the governments of France and Luxembourg)	See press release of 10 October 2011 (Dexia website)	Reinforce financial stability	Implemented in October 2011		4 billion (acquisition Dexia Banque Belgique, i. e. financial assets)
Labour Market	CSR 4: wage development, productivity, competitiveness	Fed	Strict compliance with the 1996 law on the promotion of employment and the safeguarding of competitiveness which sets bases of the wage norm					
	CSR 5: Labour market participation	Fed	Increase(€200) in the basic exempted income for low wages	Budget 2012	Reduce taxation on low wages and encourage employment	Application in 2013		120 millions
		Fed	Reinforcement of the degressivity unemployment benefits and temporal limitation of integration benefits		Increase labour market participation	2012		
		FI	As an alternative for a wage subsidy for employers a growth path has been established		The growth path aims to increase the number of	About 5000 additional places will be created during		3,9 million euros(budget 2012)

	for the Individual Vocational Training measure (IBO) until 2014.		people who benefit from the IBO measure up to 17000 in 2014.	the 2 following years.		
Fl	The extension of the tailored guidance approach to the group of inflowing jobseekers from 55 to 58 years old		The objective is to raise the employment rate target of people older than 50 years old with 1% annually.	The extension of the tailored guidance approach will enter into force from the 1th of June 2012 onwards.		1,8 million euro (budget 2012)
Wal	Establishment of a single coaching process to accompany all job seekers	Decree of 26/01/2012	Establishment of a single coaching process to accompany all job seekers, modulated on the basis of their individual characteristics	Decree adopted in January 2012, the Executive Order should be adopted late in the first half of 2012. 500 advisors assigned to the individual accompaniment, 95.000 people accompagnied		No budgetary impact, the measure is implemented through internal reallocation of resources
Wal	Enhancing the effectiveness of the public employment and training service	Revision of the management contract and decrees. Development of new approaches and working methods: Development of a personalized relationship with employers. collection, management and filing of a maximum of job offers,...	Enhancing the effectiveness of the employment public service by refocusing on its core missions and to the satisfaction of the recruitment needs of employers	Decree on the management adopted by the Parliament on 31 March 2011, new decree "Forem" adopted in December 2011 by the Government (third reading in March 2012) and new management contract signed in September 2011.		No budgetary impact
Bru	Mandatory 'Occupational Project Building' system on top of the continuing training programme for jobseekers, a systematic, high-quality, formalised and customised support offered to the under-25s looking for work			Implemented. This accompanying measure benefitted 11.202 under 25s jobseekers in 2011. The first assessment (july 2011) showed that the job placement rate increased by 10.6% with the target audience since the introduction of this system.		

		Bru	Provision of Occupational Project Building (“construction du projet professionnel” – CPP)					
		D	Continuous reform of public employment services	No legal instrument, but the reform is part of the contract between PES and local government	Improvement of placement services for unemployed (especially for young and older unemployed) and employers.	70%	Cost rise Risks coming along with change management	No impact on public budgets (the objective is to improve services with constant budgets)
		Regions and german speaking community	Mobility agreement					
Product and service market	CSR6: competition	Fed	Package of measures aiming at a better control of energy price development. More transparency in pricing in order to promote competition (see paragraph 3.5		Business competitiveness and purchasing power support	Entering into force 1 st April 2012		
		Fed	Price Observatory and the Competition Authority reinforcement		Set up of an ambitious competition policy and an effective analysis and a price control in order to sustain growth, to curtail inflation, to improve companies' competitiveness, to support a correct and transparent price-making process and to boost citizens' purchasing power.			

- (1) This classification is in line with that already used within the framework of CSRs monitoring under the first European Semester.
- (2) The number of CSRs differs across Member States.
- (3) Fed: Federal government; Fl: Flemish government; Bru: Brussels government; Wal: Walloon government; D: German speaking Community of Belgium

Macro-economic effects of structural reform package

A particularly important package of structural measures that is included in this programme, concerns the reform on pensions and the unemployment allowance system (see chapter 3.1). The Federal Planning Bureau¹ has estimated the macro-economic and budgetary impact² of this package. As the impact of structural measures is particularly important in the long run, the tables not only show the impact in 2020 and 2030, but also in 2060. The results are compared to the reference scenario³ that is included in chapter 1 of this programme.

Table: Impact of structural reform package on pensions and unemployment

	Annual growth rates (in real terms) in %				Level (reference scenario / scenario without reforms)		
	2011-2020	2020-2030	2030-2060	2011-2060	2020	2030	2060
Employment	0.08	0.07	0.00	0.03	0.7	1.4	1.4
Labour productivity	-0.08	0.08	0.00	0.00	-0.7	0	0.0
gdp	-0.01	0.15	0.00	0.03	-0.1	1.4	1.4

The reform leads to an increase in the labour supply of 83,000 people in 2060, mainly people aged between 55 and 64. In the long-run, a high proportion of these people will be employed, so that the employment rate increases by 1%-point. In the shorter run, the increase in the employment rate is smaller, with a corresponding increase in the unemployment rate.

**Table: Impact of structural reform package on pensions and unemployment
(difference w.r.t. reference scenario), in %-points.**

	2020	2030	2060
Employment rate	0.4	0.9	1.0
Employment rate of 55-64 year olds	3.9	5.1	5.6
Unemployment rate	0.5	0.0	0.0

GDP is not much impacted in the short-run. The slight negative effect in the short and medium-term is due to lower domestic demand that in turn is explained by the negative effect of lower social expenditure and a lower wage bill. With time, the increase in employment translates in a substantially higher gdp. The gdp-level is estimated to be 1.4% higher than would have been the case without the reform package.

¹ Federal Planning Bureau, Les conséquences budgétaires du vieillissement à l'horizon 2060 pour la Belgique, March 2012.

² The budgetary impact of the package is included in the 2012 Stability programme.

³ The reference scenario includes the package of structural reforms.

Annex 2: Reporting table on national Europe 2020 targets and other key commitments

Implementation progress	Level of government (1)	List of measures and the progress of commitment implementation	Estimated impacts of the measures (qualitative and/or quantitative)
National 2020 headline targets			
Employment target [73.2%]	BE	See table 1	
R&D target [3%]	Fl	Approval in 2011 of the growth path for the R&D budget in 2012-2014.	The budget is increased cumulatively after 2011: by 60 million euro in 2012, 70 million in 2013 and 70 million in 2014. Consequently, the Innovation budget will have increased by 200 million euros between 2011 and 2014. These extra means must help Flanders to bring the R&D budget closer to the 3% objective.
	Wal, FWB	Implementation of the research strategy 2011-2015 Launch of a call for PPP projects within a 6 million euro budget Decision to invest 5 million euro annually in top-class research infrastructure	Step up the R&D efforts, promote scientific excellence, strengthen R&D capacity and R&D valorisation
	Bru	Strategic platforms : two new platforms created in 2011 in the field of life sciences (clinical trials and toxicity of nanomaterials)	
GHG emission reduction target [-15%]	Wal	Launch of the 1st Alliance Employment-Environment in September 2011	Improving housing quality and energy performance. Transition of the building industry towards more sustainable approaches is assured, while raising the sector's employment rate
	Fed	Maximisation and rationalisation of investments for energy savings in public buildings and measures to optimize the mobility plans for civil servants	
Renewable energy target [13%]	Fl	Set of measures in implementation of the Flemish Action Plan Renewable Energy 2020	In Flanders the share of renewable energy in final energy consumption went up from 2.2% in 2008 to 3.4% in 2010. To achieve the renewable energy target, a strong growth in the production of green heat is needed. In this context, the Flemish government approved an action plan green heat on 15 July 2011. The plan includes a support mechanism for large industrial facilities producing green heat from biomass and waste heat recovery
	Wal	Updating the wind energy park	Objective of 4.500GWh of wind energy by 2020 to contribute to the target of 8.000 GWh of green energy produced in Wallonia

Energy efficiency target [18%]	Fed	Transposition of the new framework directive 2010/30/EU with regard to eco-design and energy labels	
	Fl	Set of measures in implementation of the second Flemish Action Plan Energy efficiency.	Updated calculations used to establish this action plan show that an energy saving of 13 % can be realised by the end of 2016. Important is the implementation of the Energy Renovation Programme 2020, which stipulates, among other things, that all roofs should be insulated by 2020.
	Bru	"Employment - Environnement Alliance" – sustainable construction axis implemented in 2011 through 44 identified actions.	
	Bru	Exemplary role of the public sector through the passive standard for new buildings and the low-energy standard for renovation of public buildings	
Early school leaving target [9.5%]	Fl	Action plan "cross-border behaviour" (including playing truant)	<p>The actions are part of a continuum of sensitization, prevention, counselling and sanctioning. In this regard, particular attention is awarded to special target groups as well. As from September 2012, all registrations, deregistrations and periods of presence and absence will be retrieved over the whole school year in primary education, secondary education and apprenticeships. Moreover, scientific research on truant profile and on the influence of school and environment on playing truant will be started.</p> <p>This action plan should contribute to cutting back the share of early school-leavers to 5.2 % in Flanders. Finally, career counselling is also being improved further. With the career agreement, the VDAB will choose fully for offering professional experience through an adjusted job and training offer (workshops and/or workplace learning) in view of guiding people to shortage professions and the broader labour market</p>
	FWB	The introduction of the certification by units (CPU): gradual certification by unit since 2011, full implementation in 5 professions planned in 2013-2014, and extended afterwards	Decrease in repetition rates from 17% to 2%. Decrease in drop-outs to 10%.
Target for tertiary education [47%]	Fl	Modernisation and reform of tertiary education	The plan will come into effect as from the academic year 2013-2014 and comprises, among other things, the integration of all Masters' programmes into the universities and a structural increase in means. The modernisation and reform of tertiary education should contribute to raising the share of 30-34 years olds having completed tertiary or equivalent education to 47,8% in Flanders.
	FWB, Wal	<p>Development of a work-linked system on different educational levels and training (nb. Refers to 2 "educational" targets)</p> <p>For compulsory education: further reform aiming at the introduction of a unique contract (by 2012)</p> <p>For tertiary education: Decree of 20 October 2011 and development of Masters' programmes based on a work-linked education in colleges of higher education</p> <p>For training : Implementation of the work-linked education for job seekers in training</p>	<p>Development of a qualitative work-linked education. The unique contract replaces the apprenticeship contract and the convention social and occupational integration.</p> <p>Modernisation of tertiary education, in particular through stronger links with companies.</p> <p>Stronger work-linked education in vocational training</p>
Poverty target [-380.000]	Fed	Structural mechanism for adapting social security and social assistance benefits to the development of the general standard of living	Supporting the income of the lowest income categories

	Fl	Approval on 18 November 2011 of the draft framework decree regarding child care for baby's and young children	For people on low income, among them one parent families, the organisation and the cost of child care remains one of the big obstacles to entering the labour market. The Flemish government has taken the commitment to guarantee sufficient, accessible, affordable and high quality pre school childcare
	Wal	Fighting overindebtedness : reorganisation and professionalization of the sector is ongoing, launch of a prevention portal. Increased financing has been obtained.	Reinforcement of overindebtedness prevention through a reform and increased financing of the sector. The aim is to reduce the number of overindebted people by 20%.
	Bru	34 specific strategic objectives in the context of the Brussels "poverty reduction action Plan": Implementation of housing right → € 206 million to enhance and develop the social housing stock in Brussels	
Euro-plus pact commitments (if relevant) Euro Plus Pact commitment on ... 1. Public deficit 2012-2015 2. Energy prices 3. Wage development 4. Financial sector 5. Pensions Other: Industrial policy			
	Fl	The TINA fund has 200 million euro at its disposal and focuses on innovative initiatives with a strategic potential through ambitious projects that can only be supported by consortiums of companies and knowledge institutions.	The Tina fund was set up to reform the Flemish economy through innovation.
	Wal	SMEs support policy and access to financing. Launch of a Walloon SBA and of several measures since 2010 : reinforcement of the guarantee mechanism for business succession, mixed product of guarantee and loans for micro-companies, self-employed, liberal professions and craftsmen, micro-credit for female and second chance entrepreneurs, coaching cheques for internationalization, development of pedagogic tools and training for students, ...	The Walloon SBA aims at 4 priorities : facilitating access to financing, promoting entrepreneurship, developing innovation and internationalizing of SMEs.
	Fed	Overall strategy for the revival of economic activity, the reinforcement of competitiveness in order to stimulate both economic growth and sustainable employment and to support purchasing power. Implementation of an SME plan inspired by the priorities of the revised "Small Business Act"	

(1) Fed: Federal government; Fl: Flemish government; Bru: Brussels government; Wal: Walloon government; FWB: Fédération Wallonnie-Bruxelles.

Annex 3: Flemish Reform Programme

1. Governance of the Flemish Europe 2020 Strategy

On 1 April 2011, the Government of Flanders (VR) took note of the first Flemish Reform Programme (VHP) within the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy. This illustrates the Government of Flanders ambition to assume ownership with regard to the Europe 2020 Strategy. The Pact 2020 and Flanders in Action (ViA) constitute the (Flemish) reference framework for accomplishing reforms in Flanders. Within the framework of the further reinforcement and deepening of ViA, the Government of Flanders selected 13 transversal themes in July 2011, falling back on transition thinking as suitable methodology.

For 2012 as well, a reform programme is presented and Flanders commits itself once more to take the necessary measures, not only with a view to realising its Europe 2020 objectives but also, with respect to the Flemish competencies, with the object of providing an answer to the country-specific recommendations directed to Belgium. In addition, the present VHP contains an answer to the challenges that are implicit in the Euro Plus Pact and the Annual Growth Survey. The state of affairs with regard to the implementation of the VHP 2011 is indicated in the VHP 2012, as well as the initiatives that are in store for 2012.

The Government of Flanders attaches much importance to reinforcing the support for the Europe 2020 Strategy. The social partners were involved in the establishment of the VHP 2012 via VESOC (the Flemish Economic and Social Consultation Committee) and special attention is also paid to initiatives that are set up in cooperation with the (supra)local administrations. Cooperation between the Flemish authorities and the (supra)local administrations regarding concrete projects that implement the Europe 2020 Strategy can considerably extend the support.

On the web page <http://vlaandereninactie.be/actie/eu2020> all relevant information with regard to the VHP is opened up to a broader public. The VHP also offers the basis for the input by the Flemish authorities for the national reform programme and it is also the starting point for the contribution by the Flemish authorities to the activities of the Committee of the Regions Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform.

2. An efficient and effective government

2.1. Healthy public finances

The Government of Flanders budget target for **2011** was to **return to the balanced budget**. This objective from the Flemish Coalition Agreement was realised by means of the implementation of the cuts agreed upon during the government formation, combined with a strict monitoring of the evolution of the receipts and expenditure.

In the past two years, the Government of Flanders has laid foundations by saving 2 billion. For **2012** as well, the Government of Flanders aims at a balanced budget and for this purpose, the necessary measures were taken, amounting to 543.9 million euros, in pursuance of the budget control (February 2012).

The structural choices that the Government of Flanders has made in this early **budget control 2012**, and which keep down expenditure in the long term, reflect its intention to continue to support the economic growth, notwithstanding the additional efforts:

- The principle “everybody has to work for two more years” will also be applied to education. The TBS system (pre-retirement scheme) in education will be thoroughly reformed, with the exception of nursery school teachers, where it will be limited to 2 years at most (instead of the current 4 years).
- Furthermore, the cost-effective rate of the VVM (Flemish public transport company) "De Lijn" will be increased with 0.5 percentage point per year of the current management agreement.
- In order to further downsize the public service, the objective to reduce the number of Flemish public servants by 5% by the end of the term of office was sharpened to -6%. Further structural economies will also be brought about in operating resources for the administration.
- Ultimately, the subsidies for enterprises will be used in a more result-oriented manner, which also fits in with the implementation of the New Industrial Policy.

The Government of Flanders wants to limit expenditure in a structural manner through a **nominal freeze of non-wage expenditure**. The Government of Flanders wishes to optimise its receipts through a more efficient recovery on the one hand and through increasing the effectiveness of the recovery on the other hand by excluding possible abuse. At the same time, the Government of Flanders opts for a modernisation of the registration tax in the broad sense of the term. As of 2013, the component Flemish Social Protection will be rolled out in the field.¹ The buffers provided in the 2012 budget will be used. Finally, there are still seeping effects from 2011 and an adaptation of the under-exploitation. All these measures provide that the 2012 budget will be balanced.

For the **2012-2014 period**, there will be a complete focus on a balanced budget without surpluses. Education, R&D and investments will be protected in this context, as growth engines in the long term. In this manner, space and time is made available to realise the new policy that has been included in the Flemish Coalition Agreement 2009-2014.

2.2. An efficient and effective government

The Government of Flanders sided with the objective “**To do better with less people**” and also further implements the **multi-annual programme ‘Decisive Governance’** comprising 12 key projects. Within the framework of the key project 'accelerate and simplify the procedures for investment dossiers', the Government of Flanders decided in July 2011 to introduce a **unique environmental permit**, integrating the environmental permit with the urban planning permission. From now on, entrepreneurs will only need one single environmental permit when they want to start a new operation. The Government of Flanders will transpose the new procedure in a Flemish Parliament Act before the end of 2012.

On 8 April 2011, the **White Paper on the Internal Reform of the Federated State** was approved. At present, the breakthroughs are translated into concrete projects and policy measures so as to realise important efficiency and effectiveness gains through the more simplified internal government organisation in Flanders. The Flemish authorities also focus on **administrative simplification and high-quality regulation**. The Flemish authorities aim for instance at achieving gains with regard to the quality, speed and transparency of public service provision through improving the exchange of information between authorities. By 2012 at the latest, the action plans with related reduction target of the different policy areas must lead to a concrete and perceptible administrative simplification. The Flemish authorities evaluate the instruments and design a new strategic policy framework for regula-

¹ Child premium, maximum invoice for home care, care insurance, pupil grant.

tory management. The regulatory impact analysis, the regulatory agenda, the forms policy and the administrative simplification action plans will be improved and optimised.

3. A competitive and sustainable economy

3.1. Flemish R&D objective

The Government of Flanders spends **3 % of its GDP** on R&D in 2020.

State of affairs:

In the year 2009, the Flemish gross domestic expenditure on R&D in proportion to the GDP amounts to 2.12%.

Provisional figure for 2010: 2.15%.

3.2. Ambitious strategy for R&D and innovation

Halfway through 2011, the Government of Flanders approved the **Concept Note Innovation Centre Flanders**, containing a long-term vision on the future (targeted) innovation policy linked to the great economic and social challenges. The note defines 6 “**innovation hubs**”: (1) transformation through innovation, (2) eco-innovation, (3) green energy, (4) care innovation, (5) sustainable mobility and logistics, (6) social innovation and societal modernisation. In order to draw up the strategic innovation policy, **innovation direction groups** (IRG) were created, among other things.² In 2012, different IRGs are active with respect to green energy and eco-innovation.

A first project has been approved from “**SOFI**” (Spin-Off Financing Instrument), a new fund with 10 million euros to create spin-off enterprises springing from research at the 4 Flemish strategic research centres.

The **action plan “Innovative Procurement”** has been extended after 2010 to the end of 2012. The 5 new innovation platforms have been started up at the end of 2011, while the start-up of the first pre-commercial procurement procedure has been postponed.

The agreements with a number of existing competence pools were extended in 2011 and a new initiative has been started up: Flanders Strategic Initiative for Sustainable Chemistry (**FISCH**). Other recent initiatives in the **renewable energy** sector are the non-profit organization 'I-Cleantech Flanders' and 'EnergyVille'. Regarding the **Testing Ground for Electric Vehicles**, 5 proposals are supported for a maximum amount of 16.5 million euros.

In 2011, the Government of Flanders invested 65 million euros of **additional resources** in R&D and it also approved a **growth path** for the resources in 2012-2014. The budget will increase cumulatively after 2011: 60 million euros extra in 2012, 70 million euros extra in 2013 and another 70 million euros extra in 2014. As a result, the budget for innovation in 2014 will amount to 200 million more than in 2011. Furthermore, an additional 97 million euros of payment resources were allocated for commitments that were entered into in the past for IWT projects (the Agency for Innovation by Science and Technology).

With the additional budgetary resources, the FWO (Scientific Research Fund) set up a number of large research programmes in the past years with a view to the further internationalisation of the Flemish research landscape. In addition to the existing Odysseus initiative to bring (back) researchers

² There have already been IRGs in the areas of automotive, sustainable chemistry, social innovation and construction.

to Flanders, the FWO established the **Pegasus** programme in 2011, aimed at attracting foreign post-doctoral researchers. The existing IWT programme for research mandates has meanwhile been transformed into **innovation mandates**.

The **Flemish Europe Platform** has been initiated. Until the end of October 2011, Flanders received 539.1 million euros from the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, which corresponds to a profit of 2.43%. For the participation in 4 ESFRI projects, the Government of Flanders provides resources for 2012.

With the policy plan **Science Communication** of January 2012, the Government of Flanders wishes to increase the social support for science and innovation.

As of 2012, the Flemish universities will receive a subsidy of 4 million euros each year in order to make the career of **young researchers** more attractive, through a range of measures (better training, career guidance, attracting more foreign researchers, more opportunities to work abroad...).

3.3. Environmental objectives and energy targets as leverage towards a green economy

3.3.1. Flemish climate and energy targets

The Flemish targets regarding the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the increase in energy efficiency³ and the increase in the share of renewable energy⁴ will be defined in accordance with the Belgian burden sharing.

State of affairs:

Greenhouse gas emissions: the total emission of greenhouse gas emissions in Flanders in 2010 amounts to 86,610 kiloton.

Use of energy: The gross domestic energy consumption in Flanders for the year 2010 amounts to 1703 (in PJ).

Renewable energy: the share of renewable energy in the final energy consumption for Flanders amounts to 3.4% for the year 2010.

3.3.2. The principal measures

In order to **limit the greenhouse gas emissions**, the Government of Flanders established the preparation pathway for the new **Flemish Climate Policy Plan** (VKP) on 1 July 2011. The VKP will be composed of two separate, but mutually strongly aligned, components: the Flemish Mitigation Plan (VMP) and the Flemish Adaptation Plan. The aim of the VMP is to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases in Flanders between 2013 and 2020. Round table conferences will be organised with the four large sectors that contribute to the non ETS emissions: agriculture, transport, buildings and non ETS industry/energy.⁵ The VKP will be submitted for approval to the Government of Flanders in the autumn of 2012. Every sector will have to take its responsibility and propose the measures to fulfil its legitimate part of the Flemish reduction objectives.

³ The Government of Flanders aims energy-saving of at least 9% in 2016, on the basis of the gross domestic energy consumption (2001-2015) in accordance with the objective of use of energy.

⁴ Concerning the share of green heat in the distribution of energy supplies, Flanders aims at 13% in 2020.

⁵ In this context, harmonisation is pursued with other ongoing initiatives such as the drafting of the Mobility Plan, the stricter energy performance regulations for buildings, the new energy covenants for the industry, etcetera.

The Government of Flanders focuses on improving the **energy efficiency**. On 17 June 2011, the Government of Flanders took note of the second **Flemish Energy Efficiency Action Plan**, in which the progress and modifications of the measures from the first Flemish Energy Efficiency Action Plan (2007) are described. Regarding the reduction of the energy consumption, Flanders is aiming at least at saving 9% of energy in 2016 on the basis of the average final energy consumption (2001-2005), in accordance with the objective of the energy efficiency directive.

In 2011, the Government of Flanders determined the **energy performance standards for new buildings** that apply as of 1 January 2012 (E70) and 1 January 2014 (E60). In 2012, a proposal for stricter rules of the EPB requirements will be developed until 2021. Within the framework of the transposition of the revised EPBD, a modification of the Energy Parliament Act was introduced on 18 November 2011, stipulating that at the latest on 1 January 2021, the EPB requirements for all new buildings correspond to the EPB requirements for **nearly zero-energy buildings** and that as of 2019 new public buildings be nearly zero-energy buildings. The **Energy Renovation Programme 2020** for existing houses will be implemented; in this context special attention is also paid to the implementation as of 2012 of the streamlined energy grants and the realisation of the social roof insulation projects. Furthermore, the publicity and quality of the **energy performance certificate for existing residential buildings** will be increased and the first preparations will be made in order to extend its scope to the **non-residential buildings**. At the same time, preparations are also made to increase the quality of the **energy experts** through a streamlining of the recognition regulations. The final step is a strong **enforcement** of the regulations regarding the energy performance and energy certification of buildings.

To improve the energy efficiency in enterprises, a lot of work is put into new **energy policy agreements** with the energy-intensive industry to replace the existing benchmark and audit covenants that expire at the end of 2012.

The Government of Flanders focuses on an **increase in the share of renewable energy and cogeneration** in the final energy consumption. Meanwhile, the Directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources 2009/28/EC has been transposed in Flemish regulation. The **Flemish Renewable Energy Action Plan 2020** will be adjusted in function of the intra-Belgian burden sharing of the renewable energy objectives 2020. In order to make the realisation of the objective regarding renewable energy possible, a strong growth of green heat is required. Within this framework, the Green Heat Action Plan was adopted by the Government of Flanders on 15 July 2011. This action plan provides, among other things, a **support mechanism** for large industrial installations for green heat production from biomass and waste heat recovery. In 2012, the implementation of a **minimum share of renewable energy in buildings** will also be prepared, the **Wind Plan Flanders** will be made concrete and preparations will be made to realise in one of the following years a **regulation of the certification of training courses** for the installers of small-scale renewable energy applications.

Flanders will reorient its waste policy towards the materials policy, aimed at better closing materials cycles. Subsequently, the economic set of instruments regarding waste and materials policy will be defined in the course of 2012.

Flanders also tries to reduce the impact of transport on the environment, among other things by making the tax system more environmentally friendly. The **tax on the entry into traffic service (BIV)** enters into force as of the 2012 tax year. As of 1 March 2012, environmentally friendly cars will pay lower taxes on the entry into traffic service (BIV). In the past, the BIV still depended on the horsepower of a car. The new, greened, BIV will be calculated on the basis of the environmental characteristics: CO₂ emissions, type of fuel and Euronorm standard.

3.4. Improve the investment and consumer climate and make the industrial basis more sustainable

Halfway through 2011, the Government of Flanders adopted the **White Paper New Industrial Policy for Flanders (NIB)**. It gives an overall view of the future of industry in Flanders that must be greener, more social, more creative and more innovative. The NIB contains 50 concrete actions and is based on four pillars: (1) new factory for the future, (2) competency and labour market policy, (3) industrial innovation policy, (4) infrastructure policy. An **Industrial Council** has been created to follow up and support the NIB. In projects that contribute to the “**Factory of the Future**” initiative, 7 million euros will be invested. The support can be allocated to industry groups whose project proposal contributes to the realisation of the transformation of the industry or focuses on an open production environment.

The **TINA** fund, created to transform the Flemish economy through innovation, adopted its first project early in 2012. It has 200 million euros at its disposal and focuses on innovative initiatives with strategic potential through large projects that can only be supported by consortia of companies and knowledge institutions.

The Government of Flanders also focuses on **more growing enterprises**. In 2012, a new regulation will be elaborated for **strategic and ecological investment projects**. This regulation is aimed at projects that offer a global or integral environmental or energy solution at company level with closed energy and materials cycles and process-integrated solutions and where no reference to technologies of the list of limitative technologies is possible.

The growth platform of the **Gazelle Leap** has been created and aims on the one hand at high-potential growers and on the other hand at the more average growth companies. In addition, the 9 pilot projects regarding growth guidance are running until the third quarter of 2012.

The Government of Flanders also developed instruments that make corporate investments possible. Since the creation of the **ARKimedes Fund II** halfway through 2010, 10 candidate ARKIVs have been selected that can altogether invest 200 million euros in innovative starters and fast-growing SMEs. The ARKIVs invest especially in high-technology and innovative companies, for instance in the sectors of nano-electronics, clean technologies, ICT and life sciences.

The Government of Flanders wants more and stronger entrepreneurs. With the new **Entrepreneurship Education Action Plan 2011-2014**, the Flemish authorities want to encourage the sense of enterprise and entrepreneurship with young people through education.

In early 2011, the **Win-Win loan** was extended to all SMEs (in the past, it was only for starters). The ecological grant was thoroughly reformed in 2011. The **Ecological Grant Plus (EP Plus)** has been introduced, with increased legal certainty and transparency. An ecological grant is allocated to best available technologies that are included on a limitative technology list (LTL). A new open system links the size of the subsidy to the environmental performance of the investment. In 2012, the new regulation will still be adjusted.

With the measure “**support for advice to pre-starters**”, starting entrepreneurs can receive inexpensive support to examine the feasibility of their commercial idea. They only pay 100 euros, and the Flemish authorities make up the remaining 800 euros. The announced pilot project of 2 years was initiated meanwhile, aiming at 2,500 feasibility studies. Whoever wishes to start up a new business, can thereupon establish a business plan with an expert of one of the employers' organizations UNIZO or VOKA. In addition, the following target groups can receive advice on the **specific difficulties** that constitute a larger threshold for them than for the average starters: starters with growth potential, people over 50, allochthonous entrepreneurs, occupationally disabled persons, women. The Flemish authorities invest a total amount of 4.5 million euros in the guidance for both measures.

The Master Plan **Acquisition and Succession** has been rolled out and the reception and guidance of bankrupt people will be provided.

4. More people at work, in more workable jobs and in careers that are longer on average

4.1. Flemish employment rate objective

The Government of Flanders wants that in 2020, over 76% of the persons that are between 20-64 years old are working.

State of affairs:

In 2010, the employment rate among Flemish persons that are between 20-64 years old picks up again, compared to 2009, amounting to 72.1%.

Provisional figure for 2011: 71.9%

4.2. Towards an increased labour market participation

4.2.1. The 17 February 2012 Career Agreement

The challenge 'More people at work, in more workable jobs and in careers that are longer on average' constitutes the action radius of the Government of Flanders and the Flemish social partners.

Following the Pact 2020, the Government of Flanders concluded, with the social partners, a new career agreement for the next 2 years on 17 February 2012. To this effect, an annual amount of 25 million euros is appropriated. With this agreement, the Government of Flanders is taking an important step towards **more customized employment on the labour market**. The individual distance between a person and the labour market will play a crucial role in this context. After all, not everybody needs the same education, grant or support to bridge the personal distance to the labour market. The ongoing reforms 'customized employment in the event of collective integration' within the social economy, geared to 'customized employment' in the event of 'individual integration' constitute important leverage. Also important are the alternatives for the "jobkorting" (the reduction on personal income tax) that have been adopted by the Government of Flanders on 16 December 2011.⁶ The career vision where individuals are encouraged to take their career into their own hands, and an adapted HR policy, are central in the Career Agreement.

Two vulnerable target groups - **young people with insufficient qualifications** and **persons over 50** - receive special attention in the Career Agreement. For both groups, there will be actions that should provide more opportunities for them on the labour market. Regarding older people, the systematic guidance approach will be extended and the grant scheme will also be thoroughly reformed. The guidance of young people will also be considerably strengthened to avoid and/or to remedy unqualified outflow: even more emphasis will be laid on diverse forms of informal learning such as work placements, workplace learning and the IBO. From now on, workers and job-seekers will be even more supported, at the start of the career as well as during the end of career.

The agreement also focuses on the **further elaboration of the career policy** as a priority in order to facilitate the transition from one job to another with a view to increasing mobility. Attention is also still paid to education and training in function of the enhancement of job-seeker skills and to remedy the bottlenecks on the labour market. Within the framework of the alternatives for the reduction on

⁶ Extensive IBO (individual vocational training), newly introduced C-IBO (curative individual vocational training), employment care and poverty pathways, child care

personal income tax, long-term job-seekers will receive more intense guidance through the curative IBO for instance.

4.2.2. People over 50 at work

Flanders is taking specific measures to prevent the **early retirement of people over 50** from the labour market and in doing so also provides an answer to country-specific recommendation number two for Belgium. As of 1 April 2011, the systematic approach has been extended to the category inflow of job-seekers between 52 and 55. **In 2012 as well, the activation of people over 50 remains a priority.** In implementation of the recent Career Agreement, concluded between the social partners and ratified by the Government of Flanders on 8 February 2012, the **systematic approach** will be further **extended to the inflow of 58-year-old job-seekers** as of 1 June 2012.

The Career Agreement provides a **reform of the 50 plus employment grant**. The employment grant will be subdivided in 3 scales **in function of period of unemployment and age of the job-seeker who is over 50**. Differentiation on the basis of these parameters must make the grant more effective.

In implementation of the Employment and Investment Plan (WIP), job-seekers who do not flow out to work within 3 months after outplacement guidance enter an **appropriate follow-up programme provided by VDAB** (the Flemish Service for Employment and Vocational Training) consultants. In the period from July 2010 through December 2011, 2,976 follow-up programmes were provided.

4.2.3. Young people at work

The European Commission in its Annual Growth Survey as well as the Euro Plus Pact insist very strongly that the Member States take measures to reduce youth unemployment. With a view to **reducing youth unemployment**, Flanders will focus even more on the guidance and activation of young people in the future. To this effect, different measures will be taken. In dialogue with educational and social partners, the Government of Flanders will make additional agreements regarding the prevention of unqualified outflow.

The VDAB will elaborate a **differentiated approach for unqualified outflow**. The VDAB will put maximum focus on actions that offer work experience through an adapted work and training offer such as workshops and/or workplace learning with a view to guidance towards shortage occupations and the larger labour market. At the same time, the first steps are made to realise, in time, a **qualification obligation and work experience guarantee** for an entire group of unqualified school leavers.

For the group of unqualified outflow that did not gain any work experience after 6 months, **large work experience projects** will be set up. The objective is that, **on an annual basis**, about **1,000 young people** are given the opportunity to participate in these projects.

The new Career Agreement provides that young people who have completed a number of guidance or temporary pathways, will eventually be guided towards sustainable employment through **sustainability pathways**.

In addition, young job-seekers who are enrolled for a profession that is in little demand on the labour market will be encouraged by the VDAB to extend their job target in order to increase their employment opportunities. Finally, additional attention will be paid to the (metropolitan) **urban approach of youth unemployment** (in cooperation with the VDAB).

4.2.3. Vulnerable groups will not be forgotten

Flanders will also focus on an **increased effectiveness of the activating labour market policy** (AAMB) through a specific policy for target groups and specific measures for underprivileged groups and thus provide an answer to country-specific recommendation number 5 directed to Belgium.

For long-term job-seekers with a combination of problems, the **Curative Individual Vocational Training (C-IBO)** has been developed (alternatives for the reduction on personal income tax). In this context, the job-seeker receives guidance during the application, with the possibility of a prior work placement and intensive guidance. Furthermore, the employer does not owe a productivity grant during the first months of the C-IBO. **In 2012, 300 curative IBOs will be started.** This number will increase in 2013 to minimum 400 and in 2014 there will be at least 500 curative IBOs. In implementation of the WIP, 187.9 additional FTE work experience places have been approved. The allocated places were extended by one year.

Within the framework of the **extension of activation pathways for persons with a medical, mental, psychological and/or psychiatric problem**, the VDAB works towards the realisation of 230 launched activation guidances for the vulnerable MMPP target group with a RIZIV (National Service for Medical and Disablement Insurance) or OCMW (Public Centres for Social Welfare) status, in implementation of the WIP. Up to and including September 2011, 42 pathways were started each time for both target groups. Given the fact that making the experimental activation guidances available passed off with difficulty for the time being, there will be further focus on **adjusting the cooperation** between work and well-being (W² framework).

In the spring of 2011, an evaluation of the **pathways towards entrepreneurship** for job-seekers was carried out on the basis of quantitative data and an inquiry among the partners. The objective for 2012 is to continue growing from the current projects to a structural approach in supporting job-seekers to start their own business. In implementation of the WIP, an ESF call was also launched for **bankrupt job-seekers** in cooperation between SYNTRA Vlaanderen and the VDAB.

4.3. Improving the workability

There will be further investments in measures regarding child care, so that work and family can also be better combined. On 18 November 2011, the Government of Flanders adopted the **draft Flemish Parliament Act on the child care of babies and pre-schoolers**.

The Government of Flanders also provided 15 million euros for additional places in income-related child care (alternatives for the reduction on personal income tax) to increase the labour participation of vulnerable groups. With these resources, the number of day care places in self-employed child care is extended by 1,263 places and the compensation is increased to 28.95 euros per day.

Sectors are encouraged to set up actions to increase the **workability of jobs** through sectoral action plans that can be concluded as addenda to the sectoral covenants.

4.4. Competency development in function of the labour market

In addition to the extensive regular policy, the education and training systems will be further adapted to the needs of the labour market, and focus completely on the sectors where there are shortcomings in terms of skills and labour. The **action plan STEM** (*science, technology, engineering, mathematics*) focuses on strengthening the technical secondary education as well as on the industrial policy. In the field of ICT, a new ICT training profile in basic education is being developed, as well as a Media Literacy action plan.

In order to be able to respond faster and more effectively to future training needs, the Flemish social partners (VESOC) recognised the concept of the 'Centres of Excellence' on 29 March 2011. In 2012 will begin the development of a long-term strategy of innovative and efficient partnerships in the field of training and orientation between the different labour market and education actors.

From now on, Flanders will also provide more training courses in combination with a work experience and financially support the participants in adult education or in a vocational training. The Individual Vocational Training (IBO) remains an important inflow measure for the Flemish labour market. To that effect, the Government of Flanders and social partners provided in 2010 and 2011 each time 2 million euros to realise a growth path of 11,000 IBOs. With 11,801 and 12,251 IBOs initiated in 2010 and 2011, this growth path was realised. In the next years, the **IBO policy** will be further extended. Within the framework of the **alternatives for the reduction on personal income tax**, a growth path was outlined up to and including 2014 (17,000 IBOs). In the next 2 years, **5,000 additional IBOs** will be initiated.

4.5. Towards an improvement of the quality of the education and training systems

4.5.1. Flemish education objectives

The Government of Flanders wants to reduce the share of early school leavers to 5.2% in 2020 and the share of 30-to-34-year-old persons with a tertiary education diploma to 47.8%.

State of affairs:

The share of 30-to-34-year-old persons that successfully completed higher education amounted to 45% in 2010.

In 2010, according to a measuring on the basis of the Labour Force Survey (EAK), 9.6% of all Flemish 18-to-24-year-old persons did not have a diploma of lower secondary education and were not in training.

4.5.2. Principal measures

In order to reduce the share of early school leavers in Flanders to 5.2% by 2020, a **new truancy and other forms of unacceptable behaviour action plan** was elaborated. In this context, attention is also paid to special target groups. In the "learning and working" systems, the registration was refined so that bottlenecks are better detected. Furthermore, through the planned secondary education reform and through the planned pupil guidance landscape reform, work will be made on a more intelligent choice of study and a better school career guidance of young people. Within the framework of the new Career Agreement, it is provided that young people who have completed a number of guidance and/or temporary pathways, will eventually be guided towards sustainable employment through sustainability pathways. In this context, the aim is to realise, in time, a work experience guarantee for unqualified school leavers.

In order to achieve the objective of 47.8% of the 30-to-34-year-old persons with a tertiary education diploma, the emphasis will lay on the **further democratisation of higher education**. A distance learning action plan will for instance be set up. In addition, the Flemish Parliament Act on the modernisation and reform of higher education has been adopted. The plan will be operational as of the academic year 2013-2014 and includes, among other things, the integration of the master's programmes in universities and a structural increase of resources. Furthermore, the reform of the Fund for the Promotion of Diversity was initiated (making it possible to better reach underrepresented groups) and the mobility action plan with special attention for underprivileged groups and the Flemish Par-

liament Act on quality assurance were adopted. Through the Flemish Parliament Act on student facilities, the material and immaterial barriers for students will be tackled. In addition, extra emphasis will be laid on education qualifying training pathways and the recognition of competencies acquired elsewhere (EVC). The recognition of professional experience is also on the rise with a continuing growth of the certificate of experience.

Regarding the Euro Plus Pact obligations, the Government of Flanders also invests in **lifelong learning**. An increase in the participation in lifelong learning or second chance education is aimed at through the (financial) support of course members participating in adult education or vocational training. The study costs in adult education will be mapped out by the summer of 2012. Finally, a new literacy plan 2012-2016 was adopted and different actions will be set up in the field of distance learning in 2012. Through the comprehensive linguistic policy, Flanders wants to provide adapted support for foreign-language job-seekers within six months after registration in the form of a basic or further training programme Dutch as a Second Language (NT2-DSL) or of a referral to the "Huis van het Nederlands" (Dutch Language House).

5. High-level quality of life

5.1. Flemish poverty objective

Flanders aims at reducing poverty and social exclusion with 30% and at halving child poverty by 2020.

State of affairs:

In 2010, 14.7% of all Flemings lived in poverty or social exclusion.

In 2010, 11% of all Flemings between 0 and 17 years lived in a household that needs to get by on an income below the Belgian at-risk-of-poverty threshold.

5.2. Principal measures in the field of poverty reduction

Reducing poverty and social exclusion constitutes a top priority for the Government of Flanders. Consequently, the implementation of the Flemish Poverty Reduction Action Plan 2010-2014 (VAPA) is crucial to realise the ambitious Flemish poverty targets. The first **progress report 2010-2011** (of 25 March 2011) concluded that an acceleration and a deepening of the VAPA was imperative. To that effect, the Government of Flanders approved a list with 13 priorities in April 2011.

For the Government of Flanders, reducing child poverty constitutes a top priority. With the priority list, the Government of Flanders also approved the drawing up of a specific **child poverty reduction action programme** focusing on children from 0 to 3 years and their families. The results of a provincial consultation round with all relevant local actors will be compiled in the spring of 2012 in a **methodology book for local actors** that can serve as a basis for effectively dealing with child poverty within the municipality. On 18 November 2011, the Government of Flanders adopted the *draft* of the **Flemish Parliament Act on the child care of babies and pre-schoolers**. Disadvantaged people belong to the priority target groups in the priority policy of the child care sector. Projects '**family support with bridges education/work**' are rolled out with the aim of making disadvantaged children more privileged, of involving parents in what goes on at school, of encouraging the earliest educational contacts between parent and child, and of supporting parents in the first steps of a pathway towards activation. The actions to increase **pre-school children participation** are repeated annually. In addition, work continues on creating a better support of primary education (including nursery education). The new support system will normally start in 2012. This concerns an investment of 52 million euros.

The Government of Flanders want to provide access for everyone to **good-quality education**. The Government of Flanders ratified the **Flemish Parliament Act on the right to enrolment** on 25 November 2011. The right to enrolment will receive additional basic principles such as encouraging the social mix and protecting the education and enrolment opportunities of Dutch speakers in Brussels. Application procedures will be introduced to make the enrolment process more transparent and to avoid wait queues and camping. The Flemish Parliament Act will enter into effect on 1 September 2012 for the enrolments from the 2013-2014 school year onwards.

On 16 December 2011, the Government of Flanders adopted the preliminary draft of the **Flemish Parliament Act on student facilities**. This Flemish Parliament Act updates the organisation and financing of the social facilities for students at colleges of higher education and universities and integrates the social facilities non-profit organisations in the colleges of higher education. It also becomes possible to allocate additional grants to mobile students from underrepresented groups.

The student tutoring initiatives were embedded in the regulation (implementing order by the Government of Flanders of 12 September 2011 making subsidisation possible under conditions). In the 2011-2012 school year, 7 projects were subsidised.

The **Fund for the Promotion of Diversity** was made more result-oriented. The allocation of resources will be linked to the results achieved in the field of inflow, transition and outflow of students from underrepresented groups.

In order to further promote **affordable housing** in Flanders, the Government of Flanders adopted the implementing order establishing a **rent subsidy** on 30 September 2011. A rent subsidy can be allocated to persons that have been on the waiting list for a social rental house for 5 years, have a low income and rent a house on the private rental market. The rent grant provides for these tenants a temporary bridging pending the allocation of a social rental house. The system will enter into effect in the spring of 2012.

In the autumn of 2011, the DAB (Separate Management Service) "**Fund to reduce evictions**" was created by Flemish Parliament Act. The concrete fleshing out of the concept is further elaborated in close consultation with the actors concerned in the spring of 2012. A new recognition and subsidy decree for the **social lettings offices** was elaborated, with a view to reinforcing the activities and extending the offer of affordable, high-quality houses. It is expected that the decree will be adopted in late April 2012. The Government of Flanders grants guarantees for the loans that are issued by the Fund for the Reduction of the Global Energy Cost (FRGE) to the Local Entities. There are presently about twenty Local Entities that issue **cheap loans** to private persons, intended for structural energy-saving measures.

With the Flemish Parliament Act of 29 April 2011, the principle of **minimal energetic performances** was added in the Flemish Housing Code to the list of elementary safety, health and housing quality requirements that a house must meet. Rental houses without roof insulation may no longer be rented as of 2020. This measure will be introduced gradually as of 2015. Meanwhile, a grant remains available as an incentive. A draft implementing order stipulating the minimal energy performance requirement for roof insulation was definitively adopted in the autumn of 2011. On 23 September 2011, the Government of Flanders gave its definitive approval of the decree adapting the obligations in terms of public service that are imposed on the distribution system operators regarding the rational use of energy (see also 3.3.2.). As of 2012, the obligation to undertake action will be imposed on them as well to carry out **social roof insulation projects**. Thus, the transition is made from a number of pilot projects to a structural approach. Regarding social roof insulation projects, the distribution system operator is responsible for a defined target group of vulnerable tenants with respect to the entire programme counselling, including (partial or not) financing of the insulation works.

in 2011, the VEA (Flemish Energy Agency) and the VREG (Flemish Regulatory Body for the Electricity and Gas Market) evaluated the effectiveness and the efficiency of the existing **social obligations in terms of public service**. This is important, among other things, to prevent energy poverty as a result of a low income or high energy invoice. This evaluation led in late September 2011 to a study note with recommendations.⁷ On 9 December 2011, the Government of Flanders adopted the conceptual note on the realisation of the recommendations. In the course of 2012, the measures will be embedded in the regulation.

The **labour market integration** of people in poverty is an important means for social inclusion. Quality employment also implies the necessary attention for workability. Underprivileged groups, and people in poverty in particular, receive customised guidance with the pathway that is necessary to help them get that quality job, especially through (training) pathways, where both labour and well-being are being worked on. The activation of job-seekers with poverty problems is overcome through *specific pathways for people in poverty*. In late November 2011, 537 job-seekers had started a labour/well-being pathway within the framework of poverty. Within the framework of the alternatives for the reduction on personal income tax, up to **500 additional poverty pathways will be launched** (in addition to the 300-450 labour/well-being pathways) in 2012.

In order to give shape to a powerful and renewed social policy, a basic Flemish Parliament Act regarding the **Flemish Social Protection** will be realised in Flanders, paying attention to affordability and accessibility of care. The existing care insurance will be consolidated, a system of maximum invoices in home care is elaborated as well as a new regulation for the financial support of children. In a second phase, a Flemish hospitalisation insurance will be elaborated and a new system to limit the costs in residential facilities for the elderly.

For newcomers, Flanders provides a training and guidance pathway aimed at participation on the labour market and in society.

6. The contribution of the European structural funds to Europe 2020 in Flanders

The Government of Flanders tries to make optimal use of the resources that it has at its disposal within the framework of the EU structural funds (ERDF and ESF) in the period 2007-2013 to fulfil the Europe 2020 Strategy. In this way, the Government of Flanders also tries to respond optimally to one of the objectives of the AGS 2012, in particular to the promotion of growth and competitiveness.

On 6 October 2011, the EC set down its proposals for the realisation of the **cohesion policy** in the following programming period 2014-2020. The position of the Government of Flanders has been determined in a communication to the Government of Flanders of 4 June 2010 and a communication to the Government of Flanders of 21 January 2011. Regarding Europe 2020, the Government of Flanders has always explicitly argued in favour of a clear link between the cohesion policy and the Europe 2020 Strategy. Nevertheless, the Government of Flanders remains convinced that the Member States and Regions must be able to determine themselves which Europe 2020 priorities are aimed at with cohesion resources.

⁷ These recommendations pertained, among other things, to the provision of services by the suppliers, the use of the budget meter, the often difficult return of dropped clients to the commercial market, the status of protected customers, the functioning of the local advisory committee and the cutting off of energy.

Annex 4: Strategy Europe 2020: Contribution from Wallonia and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation to the Belgian National Reform Programme 2012

1. Introduction

The present document is the joint contribution from Wallonia/Wallonia-Brussels Federation to the Belgian National Reform Programme (PNR) 2012. Its aim is to contribute to the drafting of the PNR, and constitutes an appendix. The structure of the document is modelled on the Belgian PNR, which has been constructed in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Commission. In particular, the report for this year consists of the updating of initiatives announced in 2011, and pays particular attention to the implementation and response to the Council recommendations and guidelines for this 2012 half-year.

The major guideline policy and principle initiatives of the Walloon and Wallonia-Brussels Federation policies linked to the Europe 2020 Strategy, its integrated guidelines and its main objectives on the whole remain unchanged in relation to the 2011 report. Reference is made to the 2011 PNR for an extensive description of these basic components.

2. Implementation of National Reform Programme (PNR) 2011

2.1. Public finance

Wallonia and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation are in full compliance with the budgetary path presented by Belgium in April 2011 within the framework of its stability programme 2011-2014. Belgium has pledged to bring its deficit below the 3% GDP threshold as from 2012 and to restore the budget balance by 2015 at the latest.

The standard borrowing of Wallonia and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation for 2011 was discussed within the framework of the cooperation agreement, 3 February 2010, reviewed by the Budget and Finance Inter-ministerial Conference. For the Federated Entities, the objectives discussed correspond to the overall balance ESA95 (European System of National and Regional Accounts) in multi-annual projections developed by the different entities and set out in the General Principles relating to the initial 2010 budgets put before the different parliamentary assemblies. The 2011 total objective of the two Entities corresponded to a maximum deficit of -815.74 million €.

Since the drafting of the initial 2011 budget, the Government has decided to accelerate its return path to equilibrium and has decided on an overall total balance of -594.032 million €, i.e. a favourable margin of 221.708 million € in relation to the official objective. During the 2011 budget adjustment, this favourable margin was increased to 252.154 million €, the total deficit being reduced to -493.633 million €.

This favourable margin of 252.154 million € enabled Wallonia to agree an intervention of 207.5 million in favour of Holding Communal, one of the principle shareholders in Dexia SA, within the wider framework of Belgian and French state intervention in favour of Dexia SA, while respecting a priori the official objective assigned to Wallonia and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation under the Stability Programme 2011-2014 tabled by Belgium in April 2011.

During the drafting of the 2012 budget, the Government again set down its return path to equilibrium by defining its objectives for 2012 to 2015:

<i>Million €</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>
<i>FWB</i>	-257.896	-202.890	-101.445	0
<i>Wallonia</i>	-201.700	-135.260	-67.630	0
<i>TOTAL</i>	-459.596	-338.150	-169.075	0

The Government limited the total deficit for 2012, to -459.596 million €, equivalent to 2.8% total revenue of Wallonia and the Federation (excluding borrowing). Regarding the objective laid down for the same year in the 3 February 2010 cooperation agreement discussed at the Budget and Finance Inter-ministerial Conference, the balance determined by the Government corresponded to an improvement of 112.833 million €. This improvement was confirmed during the budgetary control carried out in March 2012.

Finally, it should be remembered that since the 2009 budgetary year, a large-scale cost-cutting plan has been implemented in Wallonia and the Federation to ensure a return to equilibrium in 2015. This plan involves the freezing of a certain amount of primary expenditure at its 2009 level (zero nominal growth). In addition to this status quo, this expenditure represents net losses: -2.5 % in 2010 and -3.8 % in 2012 for Wallonia and -3.8% in 2012 for the Federation. The operational resources allocated to para-regional and para-community bodies were also frozen in nominal terms as from 2009, apart from increases offset elsewhere. In Wallonia, a particular effort has been made to improve the Region's own revenue collection.

Concerning **teachers' pensions** (cf. EuroPlus Pact), the draft order moving the age at which teachers may take early retirement from 55 to 58 years (DPPR - 'leaving before the age of retirement pension') was adopted in December 2011. The deferral is accompanied by measures allowing teachers to work part-time before taking full retirement, according to a 'melting pot' system of months accumulated over their career. Reforms carried out at federal level are in addition to new regulations yet to be determined.

2.2. The labour market

The Marshall Plan 2.Green puts the accent on qualification through work based learning (see section on 'Education and training') and the general trend for work experience undertaken by job seekers to be given professional status, particularly in the case of young people. Individual Support, during the drafting of action plans, allows different initiatives to be offered to **young job seekers** throughout their courses, according to their individual needs. These initiatives aim to obtain practical and appropriate responses for specific individual needs. In particular:

- A 'Skills Test': These tests are grounded in a methodology based on a presentation which immerses the target audience in the world of manpower shortages and career prospects - including the 'green' professions - on the labour market. The system set up by FOREM (the Belgian employment service) is being gradually extended to other operators;
- Group or individual sessions help a young person to position themselves in one or many professions and to identify a possible professional specialism adapted to suit their personal situation. These sessions also offer the opportunity to establish plans of action adapted to enable a young person to achieve their goals (observation stages, in-company placements, role plays);
- Organised dissemination of opportunities for young people in today's market: emerging and in-demand skills, etc.);

- Awareness of work opportunities in Flanders (close collaboration with VDAB - public employment service of Flanders) by supporting young people in their search for work in Flanders;
- Information on the possibilities of courses and employment overseas, from FOREM consultants on international mobility (linked to the EURES network - European Employment Services);
- The selecting of some young people for operators offering expertise specific to the young person's educational orientation and job market guidance;
- For the most vulnerable young people, a multi-dimensional career track (including the professional and social dimension). This route focuses on close collaboration with operators, enabling the job seeker to resolve any problems arising from the area of integration into the world of work alongside the fulfilment of job search related activities. This route can be taken over a longer period (max. 2 years). The young person can be sent to a social assistant (from 2011);
- Full information on employment aid, linked to the hiring of the job seeker by an employer (Belgian Hiring Plans - Plans activa, Win Win etc...);
- Access to education.

The initiatives mentioned in the section 'Education and training' within the framework of the fight against early school leaving and favouring an increase in the graduation rate has made an impact on fight against youth unemployment.

The 'Social Inclusion' axis of the 2007-2013 programming of Structural Funds, developed in the ESF (European Social Fund) programmes, enables all socioprofessional integration projects to be supported, particularly the training, carried out by actors in the pathways to integration. Projects specific to groups of priority beneficiaries are the main concern (job seekers distanced from the labour market, notably the poorly skilled, persons with disabilities, recipients of social integration income, persons of foreign origin). In addition, back-up measures for and on the labour market destined for young people and older workers are being developed.

Almost 50% of those helped to find work within the framework of the individual support system for job seekers, do not hold a 'Certificat d'Enseignement Secondaire du 2^{ème} Degré' (Education certificate/diploma awarded at the age of 16) and 36% are under 25 years of age.

The objective of the new APE (Employment Development Plan) merchant order to be adopted in 2012 will be to support small enterprises (TPE) during the setting up of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd employment. It will target the following groups: persons of 50 and over, persons younger than 30, persons who have been without employment for more than 2 years.

Current reforms concerning **an active policy of integration into the labour market** are detailed in the section on 'Employment'.

2.3. Industrial Policy, SMEs, and the Internal Market

The Walloon Government is pursuing its **policy of competitiveness and clustering poles** within the framework of its industrial policy.

Concerning the poles, the 7th call for projects was closed in 2011, with a total of 36 projects financed (29 research projects, 5 training and 2 investment projects), for a budget of 62 million €. The 8th call was launched in November 2011 (deadline: 30 June 2012). The call for 'sustainable development' is also open to clusters.

At cluster level, 31 December, 2011, 11 clusters were recognised under the decree of 18 January 2007, grouped together approximately 1,150 members. Enterprises predominate, with 80% members listed. The 2011 budget dedicated to this policy amounts to 1.4 million €. An external evaluation was carried out in 2011.

Works related to the Decree perpetuating these policies have continued: its adoption should not however take place before 2013.

In 2011 particular emphasis was placed on the internationalisation of poles and clusters, particularly through the European network 'Innovation Express' and the CIP (Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme) calls, as well as participation in many INTERREG (Innovation and Environment Regions of Europe Sharing Solutions) projects, and the support of AWEX (Walloon Export Agency) for the internationalisation of the poles. In the first half year 2011, AWEX also financed 75 projects promoting the exports and international visibility of the poles, including the implementation of the initiatives 'Scientific Liaison Officer' and pole ambassadors, and led 17 targeted activities overseas. From the point of view of foreign investors, the 96 dossiers brought to fruition from 2006-2011, covered an investment of 570 million € and the creation of more than 1,700 jobs.

In 2011, the Walloon government launched a Plan of Action favouring the creation and development of SMEs, in accordance with the recommendations put forward by the Commission through the Small Business Act. The **Walloon SBA** endorses four priority principles: (1) The promotion of all forms of entrepreneurship, (2) The development of initiatives to facilitate access to credit financing for SMEs, (3) The development of technological and non-technological innovation, (4) the internationalisation of SMEs and their access to both internal and external markets.

It is intended to supplement regional support policies for SMEs, on the basis of an analysis of the specific needs of Wallonian SMEs, and the level of implementation of the European recommendations. The development process of this Plan is intended to be participatory, involving the social partners, the representative organisations of the SMEs and the SMEs (the organisation of an 'SME Parliament'), as well as the actors on the ground. A Walloon 'SME Envoy' has been appointed.

In addition, new initiatives concerning the support for SMEs have since been launched, especially in terms of **access to financing** (strengthening of the business transfer guarantee mechanism, a blend of guarantee and loan for TPEs, the self-employed, liberal professions and artisans, micro-credit for female entrepreneurs and failed entrepreneurs), of business **transfer and internationalisation** (the training cheque for internationalisation), as well as **support for the entrepreneurial spirit** (development of pedagogical tools and courses for students, female entrepreneurship). Note that different initiatives supporting these objectives are implemented with Structural Fund support.

As regards the financing of the SMEs, a reflection was initiated for the mobilisation of European-level instruments (EIF, EIB - European Investment Fund, European Investment Bank - and Structural Funds), in relation to the period 2014-2020. New mechanisms are also under discussion. The strengthening of different support systems for the internationalisation of SMEs is anticipated for 2012 (identification of partners, clustering, adaptation of the Portage Programme, strengthening of the export cluster mechanism, stimulation of training).

As for the entrepreneurial spirit element, the focus for 2012 will highlight consideration of the SMEs needs in higher education, university entrepreneurship, business acculturation courses for future teachers and communication regarding business transfer. The integration of courses aiming to develop the entrepreneurial spirit in initial teacher training is also under discussion, as well as the establishment of a training module on entrepreneurial spirit in higher education networks.

Also envisaged is the opening up of the 'EXPLORT' programme to partnerships with higher education institutions. These partnerships take the form of free courses overseas on behalf of Walloon enterprises.

Regarding **activity creation** support, initiatives have been developed where self-employed work is the main occupation through initiatives favouring those whose self employment is their supplementary occupation: extension of accessibility to cheque training and length of time for cheque usage, support for candidate entrepreneurs through employment auto-creation support organisations (SAACE, a 12th SAACE is expected in 2012), the implementation of the '**Airbag**' plan for the settling into self employment as a main occupation for those whose self-employment has been a supplementary occupation for more than three years and for those who have received training as a supervisor or who have followed a SAACE course. The legislative process concerning the new system is almost complete; this system should enter into force in the 1st half of 2012.

In 2011, the Walloon and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation continued to implement their **administrative simplification plan** (Let's Simplify Together Plan 2010-2014 and the Industry Action Plan), with the focus on the simplification of regulations, the simplification and dematerialisation of processes (mainly concerning SME access to public markets and environmental permits, aspects which will still receive special attention in 2012), the evaluation and reduction of the administrative charge, the deletion of obsolete texts (15 new texts have been proposed for deletion). The principal of expectations was introduced as a pilot in October 2011. The development of an 'SME Test' is planned for 2012.

3. Thematic coordination: Europe 2020 strategy objectives

3.1. Employment

In order to try and increase the employment rate, Wallonia and the French Community of Belgium have developed a strategy based around three priorities:

- Pursuing and promoting an active labour market integration policy
- Promoting lifelong learning (see "Education and training")
- Developing a framework that facilitates the creation of quality business and employment opportunities (see Chapter 2).

In terms of the first priority, two major reforms are currently being implemented, as evidenced by the following developments.

Provision of one-on-one support for jobseekers

At present, the aim is to offer support:

- In the month following the month of registration, for under-25s registering as newly unemployed upon leaving education with pre-university level qualifications (no higher than CESS)
- In the two months following registration, for under-25s registering as newly unemployed upon leaving education with university or other higher-level qualifications (those with university degrees will be contacted by the call centre from the first month onwards)
- No later than six months after registration for other jobseekers

- Once the support period is over, when individuals will be contacted by the National Employment Office (ONEM) with the offer of additional low-level support.

This one-on-one support process has been phased in since January 2010, with the gradual introduction of employment advisors.

Based on the objectives for one-to-one support and the available financial resources, the Walloon Training and Employment Agency (FOREM) aims to provide a total of 528 advisors in 2012. This will ensure that support can be given to the anticipated number of jobseekers (130,000), taking into account the impact of federal government measures (work experience for young people and encouraging people over the age of 50 to return to work).

The outcomes for 2011 were as follows: 500 FTE advisors (698 individuals) were involved in the support scheme, providing help to almost 95,000 people. In addition to these 500 advisors, a network of FOREM social workers (20 individuals, or 16 FTE) provided support to people with specific problems. These social workers help jobseekers deal with any issues that are making it difficult for them to look for work. Once these issues have been resolved, the jobseekers are referred back to the advisors, who will help them enter the labour market.

In addition to internal restructuring, the increased demand for advisors in this new role has required the implementation of a specific training programme.

In terms of the technological developments required to implement the new support scheme, in 2011 these focused mainly around targeting potential service users, the creation of an action plan, the classification of skills based on standardised nomenclature and a tool to connect jobseekers with operators.

Since 2010, the FOREM has implemented two new policies:

- Every individual is now provided with support for one year (rather than just young people who register upon leaving education)
- The length of time between registration and the assessment interview for jobseekers other than young people has been reduced to ensure people receive support no later than six months after they register.

Particular attention has been paid to supporting women (50%), under-25s (36%) and low-qualified people. 16% of the latter held the CEB (qualification obtained at the end of primary school), while 34% held the CESDD (taken at age 16).

The decree covering one-to-one support for jobseekers and the cooperation scheme was adopted by parliament and published in the Belgian Official Journal in January 2012. It is set to be implemented by July 2012.

Improving the effectiveness of the Walloon Training and Employment Agency in accordance with the FOREM management contract and decree

The main aims of the reform are to set out the task at hand (getting jobseekers into the labour market, with a view to providing quality, long-term employment and ensuring employers' recruitment needs

are met), refocusing FOREM on its core objectives and restructuring it as necessary, and ensuring optimal allocation of resources to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

The main achievements in 2011 were:

- 31 March 2011: Walloon Parliament adopts a decree formalising the creation of a strategic committee, an executive board and an auditing committee for the FOREM
- 13 September 2011: management contract signed
- December 2011: Walloon Government adopts the FOREM decree on its second reading.

The key dates for 2012 are:

- March 2012: third reading of FOREM decree before the Walloon Government
- Second quarter of 2012: finalisation of strategic operational and interdepartmental plans for the implementation of the management contract and internal performance indicators.

The new priorities set out in the management contract will apply to the period 2011-2014.

The implementation of policies designed to promote **lifelong learning** is ongoing (see also Section 3.3). These include increasing targeted training opportunities (green jobs, languages, competitiveness clusters, ICT), supported by Structural Funds; linking up regional and community-level education and training policies; and striking a better balance between supply and demand, notably through the development of dual and vocational education and by working more closely with business sectors (sectoral agreements).

In terms of languages, the “Wallangues” language training programme was launched in 2011, with the aim of enrolling 150,000 people by the end of 2012 (80,400 were enrolled as of February 2012). In addition, 97,152 training vouchers were used to access language training in 2011.

In May 2011, representatives of higher education institutions and three business sectors (new technologies, construction and chemistry) signed a framework agreement aimed at helping young people gain experience through dual programmes offering higher education courses combined with work experience. The agreement is also intended to encourage more young people into higher education and make these priority sectors more attractive to jobseekers.

3.2. R&D and innovation

Both governments are continuing their work to increase investment in R&D and innovation, and to improve the effectiveness of policies in this area. This involves both promoting excellence in scientific research and further encouraging and valuing research and innovation within the economy as a whole, as well as improving the way in which the various components of the regional innovation system work (broad-based innovation). The integrated 2011-2015 Research Strategy and the “Creative Wallonia” plan have been developed to put these ideas into action.

The key achievements of the **2011-2015 Research Strategy** in 2011 were:

- The governments of Wallonia and the French Community of Belgium approved the “Wallonia-Brussels Jobseekers Partnership” in May 2011, which contains six key objectives broken down into

25 measures. A long-term budget of €1 million has been made available for this project in the Marshall Plan 2.Green.

- The first call for “public-private partnership” (PPP) projects was launched in November 2011, with an indicative budget of €6 million. PPPs combine regional finances with investment from businesses and research institutions to respond to the technological needs of a given business sector.
- The Walloon Government agreed to provide annual funding of €5 million to support cutting edge research infrastructures that will enable research teams to claim their place on the ESFRI roadmap.
- A new scheme entitled “First International” was launched. The aim of the scheme is to fund research projects likely to have a positive effect on economic and social development and the creation of long-term employment opportunities. It will also train researchers in emerging technologies and give them the chance to gain experience in the international scientific community by undertaking a minimum of six months' work in a foreign research organisation. The scheme should provide funding for ten full-time research positions.
- The "WB Green" scheme was launched at the end of November 2011 to fund sustainable development and environmental projects, with an indicative budget of €10 million. This is the first programme of its kind to enable universities, other higher education institutions and research centres from both Wallonia and Brussels to work together on the same research project. Sponsorship is open to businesses with sites in Wallonia and/or the Brussels-Capital Region.

As part of the Marshall Plan 2.Green, €125 million was allocated to R&D projects within competitiveness clusters in 2011 (sixth and seventh calls for projects). The eighth call for projects is currently underway.

The **Creative Wallonia** plan, launched at the end of 2010, aims to stimulate innovation and creativity in Wallonia, both in the economy and the population as a whole. The plan takes an open approach to innovation, but also targets particular groups, including students, jobseekers, civil servants, businesses and designers. The aim is to develop new ways of raising awareness, promoting the spread of technology, creating innovation ecosystems and stimulating the launch of new products and services. A number of actions were launched in 2011 and will continue to be built upon throughout 2012:

- Organisation of a Creativity Week in November 2011
- Involvement of university departments in multidisciplinary research and training projects in the fields of creativity and innovation
- Adoption of an ICT Master Plan (to be implemented in 2012)
- Creation of a trend analysis centre to support Walloon employers
- Call for coworking projects (shared workspaces offering different services and promoting knowledge growth): eight projects selected, with a budget of €600,000
- Call for “smart work centre” projects: six to eight projects should receive equipment funding in 2012, to a total of €300,000
- Introduction of a specialised consultancy scheme aimed at supporting an innovation audit of SMEs, which will be up and running in 2012

- End of call for projects for the “Boost-Up” scheme, aimed at self-employed people and SMEs in the creative industries sector looking to launch innovative prototypes: six projects selected, 2011 budget of €400,000 (set to double in 2012)
- “Wallimage Crossmedia” (€570,000 of funding for eight projects): this scheme is designed to support innovative digital marketing campaigns for film productions aimed at attracting audiences through alternative forms of media
- Introduction of a scheme designed to support the development of innovative technological products, from prototype to production to launch.

A new green innovation consultancy scheme designed to support SMEs was also launched in 2011. Finally, a peer review of the Wallonia regional innovation system, headed by the OECD, is currently underway, and will conclude in 2012.

3.3. Education and training

The regional and community governments are committed to the promotion of lifelong learning, notably through the development of partnerships between education and training providers and by offering quality education and training opportunities for all.

The common aim of all the education programmes is to enable every individual to succeed by tackling failure and school drop-out rates, as illustrated by the following projects.

Vocational education overhaul

A number of different initiatives are underway, notably the provision of support for the work of the French-speaking Professions and Qualifications Agency (SFMQ) and the introduction of “qualification by units” (CPU), which is the French Community of Belgium’s response to the implementation of the ECVET system. Other initiatives include the development of dual education, the development of career guidance based on labour market requirements and the expansion of adult education opportunities.

The key developments in each of these priority areas are:

- CPU, which replaces the requirement for failing students to repeat the last two years of compulsory secondary education with a continuous remedial education scheme, was gradually introduced in two formats in 2010-2011, and the trial will continue in 2012-2013, offering five qualifications in one single format adopted by all the schools involved. The five qualifications will be fully rolled out in 2013-2014, and further qualifications will be added later. The initial results are encouraging.
- An extensive teacher training programme has been designed for the CPU project, and more than 800 people have received training to date.
- Special education levels 3 and 4 are also affected.
- At European level, the work of the CPU-Europe project is ongoing. Visits to local projects in Finland, France, Luxembourg and the German-speaking Community have already taken place. Following a call for projects from the Commission, a group of ECVET experts are now working in the French-speaking Community.

- New **Advanced Technology Centres (CTAs)** continue to open (14 opened in 2010-2011, nine are set to open in 2011-2012 and eight in 2012-2013), supported by Structural Funds.
- The **Interagency Vocational Education Steering Committees (IPIEQs)** ran a number of campaigns to raise awareness of different types of trades and technical education programmes in 2010-2011. These committees aim to raise the profile of vocational education, but in 2011-2012 their work focused primarily on restructuring secondary-level vocational education by supporting the creation of options leading to employment and maintaining less popular options through integration. The first projects to group options together will be ready for 2012-2013, and an assessment will be undertaken.
- **Dual education reform:** The aim is to introduce a single dual education contract for all young people enrolled on a workplace training course alongside their compulsory education (with the IFAPME [Wallon Institute for Dual Education, Sole Traders and SMEs], SFPME [Brussels SME Training Agency] or a CEFA [Dual Education Centre]). This will replace the apprenticeship contract and vocational training agreement (CISP). It will also be possible to obtain the CQ6 certificate for the IFAPME and there are plans to develop a pathway between management training courses and undergraduate degrees (EPS/IFAPME partnership).
- Since the French-speaking Office for Dual Education has yet to be created due to legal difficulties, the governments have decided in the meantime to launch a steering group tasked with promoting and supporting dual education. By the end of the school year 2011-2012, a single dual education contract should be available, making dual education more accessible and practical for both students and businesses.
- Since 2009, it has been possible to obtain a certificate in recognition of skills acquired outside the education system (ReCaF: Recognition of Skills Acquired through Training). This training is linked to the needs of the labour market, with a specific job in mind. The certificates are awarded at the end of the training period following skills testing, and follow a standardised format.
- Promotion of **trades and technical education programmes:** Euroskills 2012 will be held at the Spa-Francorchamps racetrack. In preparation for this event, trade villages were set up for the qualifying rounds. These were visited by more than 2500 young people. This joint initiative may be renewed in the future.
- The **catchment areas and synergy centres** should result in a cooperation agreement by the second half of 2012. The working groups were set up in 2011 and began consulting with the relevant bodies at the start of 2012.
- **French-speaking Professions and Qualifications Agency (SFMQ):** Following a trial phase in school year 2010-2011, the SFMQ began producing a series of new occupation and training profiles in 2011-2012. These training profiles have been approved by all the key players in the field of education and training, and will be developed into training programmes and courses.

Pilot studies aimed at preventing pupils having to repeat a year

This is the first stage in a long-term initiative addressing different areas of the school curriculum and involving a variety of different players.

- The “Lift off!” scheme targets children aged 2, 5 and 8 years old and the adults who support them, and is designed to achieve a gradual reduction in the number of children being kept back a year or a key stage at primary school. Timetable: information sessions in March and launch of pilot projects in September.
- Call for differentiated instruction projects aimed at 12-14 year olds. The aim is to support pilot studies into different methods of adaptive, supportive learning designed to help pupils meet key skills targets at 14, for pupils who have received their CEB (qualification obtained at the end of primary school).

Draft decree on the education of newly-arrived immigrant pupils

At the start of 2012, the Government of the French Community of Belgium approved the first and second readings of a draft decree aimed at introducing a **welcome and education programme for newly-arrived immigrant pupils** (known as DASPA), which would replace the 2001 decree aimed at integrating newly-arrived immigrant pupils into the education system (the “bridging classes” decree). This new, more flexible programme should be in place by the start of the new school year, in September 2012. It is designed to welcome, orientate and integrate newly-arrived immigrant pupils and to offer educational support adapted to pupils’ individual needs. It also introduces a transition period, of limited duration, when the pupils will be taught separately before joining the mainstream classroom.

Pilot “well-being” scheme

Since September 2011, 80 schools of all different types have been taking part in a pilot “well-being” (personal and social education) scheme, which will last for two years. The aim is to promote the introduction of various wide-ranging and sustainable prevention projects in schools, which will take into account their diversity, needs and resources and require those involved to work together and respect each other’s roles and objectives.

Class size agreement

At the start of 2012, the Government of the French Community of Belgium officially acknowledged the agreement on **class size in primary and secondary schools**. This agreement, drawn up in December 2011 between the unions and school authorities, calls for the optimal use of school resources, the ultimate aim being to set a maximum number of pupils per class.

Inclusion of pupils with special needs in mainstream education

Following two years of gradual introduction, in 2012 this process is now being assessed, in partnership with those involved.

Since 2009, the French Community of Belgium has been engaged in a vast programme to **modernise its higher education system**. This programme involves a wide range of different measures, to be developed and implemented over a number of years.

Some of the more recent developments, taken in line with the modernisation strategy set out by the Commission, include:

- The decree of 19 July 2010 on free and democratic higher education. A new decree on inclusive higher education, which is currently being drawn up, has the same objective: to improve disabled students' access to teaching.
- The decree of 6 October 2011 on course documentation, which guarantees access to syllabi and other course materials for all students, not only represents a significant step towards tackling drop-out and failure rates, but is also a guarantee of quality in education.
- The decree of 20 October 2011 on higher-level dual education, which allows students to acquire a proportion of the skills required to achieve a higher education degree from work experience, begins to draw together education and business on both a structural and pedagogical level. In addition, dual education master's degrees are currently being trialled by higher education colleges in the French Community of Belgium.

Moving forward, these achievements need to be consolidated and the ideas currently under consideration need to be further developed. The modernisation of higher education in the French Community of Belgium will require a radical restructuring of the sector. The proposed new structure is based on the creation of a single governing body tasked primarily with increasing the visibility of our higher education system at an international level, along with a number of smaller bodies responsible, among other things, for improving quality and efficacy in close cooperation with socioeconomic partners in their local areas.

3.4. Social action and social cohesion

Social cohesion is a political objective in Wallonia, defined as the ability of a society to ensure the well-being of all its members and a dynamic process consisting of all the measures taken ensure that everyone has access to their basic rights. Social cohesion is created through the strength of the ties that bind a group together, and depends on all citizens having access to housing, employment, healthcare, culture and leisure activities. It therefore requires a comprehensive, joined-up approach.

In terms of helping people find employment, Wallonia has a global policy, but focuses specific attention on supporting certain categories of jobseeker, particularly those who are furthest from the labour market. The main focuses of the regional social inclusion policy are education, training and labour market integration, most notably through employment support services and development of the social economy. Wallonia has also developed an integrated approach to tackling extreme poverty, over-indebtedness and barriers to housing access.

The region supports the three priorities of the Belgian Platform against Poverty EU 2020: active integration of people excluded from the labour market, combating homelessness and housing instability, and tackling child poverty.

Regarding the priority measures, the following areas of progress can be emphasized:

- **Improving the work-life balance by increasing the supply of childcare services and personal assistance services,....** : To address the constraint generated by the end of the scheme notified to Europe as part of State assistance, there will be three separate schemes under the EPA: merchant, non-merchant, and local authorities. In this regard, a new EPA decree for the merchant will be finalized in 2012 for implementation by 2013. This new EPA merchant decree will aim to support small businesses during the creation of their first, second and third employment positions. It will especially target the following groups: those 50 and older, young people under 30, and those who have been inactive for more than 2 years.

- At the end of 2011, 2300 EPA/PTP FTE were maintained. For new positions, the Walloon Government decided to open 260 EPA positions in 2012 in sectors targeting people with disabilities, seniors and others.
- **Strengthening support for those who are isolated from the job market:** In literacy, a multi-year agreement (2011-2013) between the Walloon Region and Reading and Writing in Wallonia was signed in September 2011. This agreement concerns four work areas: supporting the logical development of territorial action plans for literacy, developing illiteracy detection, increasing the supply of training programs, and especially for those (re)enrolling in social security, support for worker training. An overview of these actions was carried out in 2011, and will be supplemented by an external evaluation in 2012.
- The refinancing of the program of Article 61 of the Institutional Act of the PCSAs, on the hiring by businesses of SIA beneficiaries, up to 50%, was decided in 2011 and came into force in early 2012. Training and information at the PCSAs were developed.
- **Housing:** The policy of increasing and improving the quality of the housing supply is continuing. This includes increasing the public housing stock and renovating the existing stock, in particular to improve energy efficiency and award housing and energy subsidies for improving private housing.
- **Structural funding for overnight shelters:** Discussions are continuing on this project and consultation with public partners and voluntary associations will continue in 2012, as well as the search for financial resources.
- **Combating excessive debt:** As part of prevention, a portal will be launched in March 2012. The reorganization and professionalization of the sector is under way (legislation passed on the first reading in October 2011, second reading in the first half of 2012). Refinancing of the sector was obtained, and 37 EPA positions will be dedicated to it.
- **Increasing access to basic rights at the local level:** The Social Cohesion Plan of the cities and municipalities of Wallonia (SCP) 2009-2013 aims to support Walloon municipalities that commit to promoting social cohesion in their territory. The SCP promotes the exercise of six fundamental rights under regional jurisdiction (the right to a decent income, the right to health protection and to social and medical assistance, the right to decent housing and a healthy environment, the right to work, the right to receive training, the right to cultural and social development) and activates two levers: The social development of neighbourhoods and the fight against all forms of deprivation, poverty and insecurity in general.
- The SCP encourages social cohesion in 147 Walloon municipalities for an estimated employment level of around 670 FTE. In total, the Plan provides almost € 34 million (2010). In total, there are 1,699 actions distributed in four areas: social and professional integration (24%), access to housing (12%), access to health care and addiction treatment (19%), rebuilding social, intergenerational and cultural bonds (43%).
- The impact assessment of the first Social Cohesion Plan 2009-2013 will be performed by the end of 2012. It must also identify possible improvements in preparation for the next SCP 2014-2019.
- **"The Rights of the Child" Action Plan 2011-2014** in Wallonia and the Brussels-Wallonia Federation addresses two areas : information, training and education about the rights of the child and the fight against social inequality and discrimination. It consists of concrete measures to guarantee all children an adequate standard of living, which requires paying particular attention to housing for

children, parenting support, to ensure every child a home, and quality teaching and education, to fight against health inequality and fight against abuse.

3.5. *Energy and Climate*

The Walloon energy policy rests on four fundamental areas: promoting the rational use of energy (including energy efficiency), developing renewable energy, ensuring universal access to energy, and supervising liberalized electricity and gas markets.

Moreover, the Marshall Plan 2.Green is dedicated to transversal integration of sustainable development issues, and in particular energy and climate issues, which implies an integrated approach mobilizing various intervention areas: research and innovation, land planning, financing, guiding and supporting businesses, employment, training, industrial policy, etc.

As part of the **regional strategy for renewable energy development**, the overall goal is to reach 20% renewables in final energy consumption in 2020, including a contribution of 8,000 GWh of electricity from renewable sources on Walloon soil.

The following measures and developments can be emphasized in relation to this goal:

- Setting a goal of 4,500 GWh of wind power by 2020. This goal is part of updating of the current reference framework. It will include a positive mapping and the establishment of a law-making framework. Socio-economic benefits linked to the growth of the wind sector can be envisioned following a skills inventory of Walloon companies in the different segments of the sector, from design to installation.
- The support system for solar energy was adjusted. Concerning solar photovoltaic installations under 10 kW, the number of green certificates is now declining over time. Thanks to this measure, the time to achieve a favourable return on investment is maintained despite the decreasing number of green certificates over the life of the installation. Subsidies for thermal solar on new housing were also adjusted to include them in the support mechanism for efficient new homes, while maintaining a specific incentive for that sector.
- Work related to the support mechanism for green electricity through green certificates is ongoing as part of improving the current system to include reasonable comprehensive support by sector. Green certificate quotas post-2012 were finally adopted, giving visibility to green electricity investment to 2020. The adjustment of the green certificate mechanism should be finished in 2012.
- Certain players in the biomass energy sector were solicited following an illustrative study on the potential of this energy in Wallonia. Work will continue in order to arrive at a 'sustainable biomass' strategy, including biomass for heat and cogeneration at the end of 2012.
- As part of the transposition of Directive 2009/28/EC, the establishment of a certification procedure for installers of energy production from renewable sources is planned, in partnership with other federal and federated entities.

The Multi-Year Plan on the **first Employment-Environment Alliance** (EEA) was adopted in September 2011 by the Walloon Government, as well as around 40 multi-sector contracts. The purpose of these contracts is an adherence in principle to the overall objectives of the Alliance and the commitment to contribute to the actions planned in one or more specific objectives. Its implementation will span the period from 2011 to 2014.

The overall objective of the first EEA is to improve the quality of Walloon construction and related energy efficiency, while ensuring the transition of the entire construction industry towards a more sustainable approach and increasing its level of employment

This overall objective is divided into three specific objectives:

1. Stimulate demand for sustainable renovation / construction of private buildings

One specific objective of the EEA is to stimulate demand for renovation of private housing by creating a coherent and attractive incentives program. This program will consist of a Public-Household Partnership (PHP).

The PHP must be seen as a plan to gradually reform and rationalize existing incentive programs, complemented by new financial and non-financial measures (support and guidance). It will focus on four major areas:

- Creation of a single window, commitment of "ecopassers" (support of households) and setting up a construction "passport" (Ecopass);
- A reform of the system of "energy-housing" subsidies currently available to citizens in order to streamline the programs;
- Making attractive EEA financing available to households that embark on at least two different types of sustainable renovation projects;
- Additional incentives, especially for renters and for the transposition of the Directives on energy efficiency, energy services and energy efficiency in buildings.

Regarding private sector businesses, different incentives will be adapted or created.

- Pilot experiment on third-party investors relating to electricity savings of independent merchants (support and financial mechanism);
- Analysis and redirection, if needed, of the energy savings assistance program for companies (AMURE);
- The 16 branch agreements of the first generation will expire at the end of 2012. The second generation of agreements could integrate renewable energy and the product life cycle;
- Call for project proposals for the creation of exemplary works in the service sector;
- Establishment of a guarantee scheme for investments in energy efficiency in SMEs.

2. Stimulate demand for sustainable renovation / construction of public buildings

This goal will be achieved through a set of actions targeting:

- Public contracts: integrating social and environmental clauses in specifications, creation of an unregulated performance reference system, ...

- The implementation of a **public housing renovation plan (WOODPECKER Plan)**. Following the calls for project proposals launched in 2011, these will be implemented in 2012 (4,000 housing units);
 - The completion of pilot projects in public housing;
 - The development of collective boiler rooms in the public housing sector;
 - The launch of two calls for UREBA project proposals for schools, municipal buildings and the voluntary sector, and the energy renovation of administrative buildings in Wallonia.
3. *Strengthen the capacity of the construction sector, including providing training for sustainable renovation / construction of buildings*

Several categories of actions are planned:

- The implementation of a comprehensive, integrated plan for “green” training programs. Many sectors are concerned and different partners are involved. Several audiences are targeted: job seekers, apprentices, students and their teachers. Actions involve sector training and promotion as well as orientation. This comprehensive program aims to adjust the training offered to the new needs of businesses in order to help maintain and create employment in labour-intensive sectors.
- Specific support of businesses in construction and promotion of entrepreneurship, the creation of entrepreneur clubs for sustainable construction, the creation and implementation of a business quality label;
- A call for "green materials" project proposals to develop new sectors in Wallonia.

Annex 5: Programme National de Réforme de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale

1. Introduction

Bruxelles, à un tournant de son histoire, est confrontée à 5 défis majeurs :

- **Le défi de l'essor démographique** qui commande une concentration des moyens pour la construction de nouveaux équipements, de logements, de places dans des crèches et des écoles accessibles à tous, une mobilité performante, le maintien de services de qualité à toute la population et une réflexion sur l'organisation des fonctions dans la ville; la croissance prévue de 14.000 habitants/an (1,3%) est plus du double de celles de la Flandre et de la Wallonie. Elle provient pour une bonne part de la croissance naturelle (8.000), et des migrations qui se caractérisent par un solde positif important des migrations externes (avec l'étranger 21.000) et un solde négatif avec le reste de la Belgique (- 15.000). Les conséquences sont multiples : rajeunissement de la population (jeunes en augmentation de 30%) et croissance plus forte de la population active que de l'emploi (d'où augmentation du chômage), Les migrations externes sont composées pour 2/3 par des populations aux faibles ressources et à la faible qualification, ce qui entraîne une baisse significative du revenu moyen/habitant (à 85% du revenu moyen belge et inférieur aux revenus moyens flamand et wallon) et menace l'équilibre des recettes financières régionales.
- **Le défi de l'emploi, de la formation et de l'enseignement**, rendu plus important que jamais suite aux effets de la crise économique provoquée par la crise financière conjugués à l'essor démographique qui amène de plus en plus de jeunes sur le marché de l'emploi.

Bruxelles est le premier bassin d'emploi du pays avec près de 715.000 emplois dont la moitié sont occupés par des navetteurs (dont environ 130.000 résidant en Wallonie et 234.000 en Flandre), mais connaît un taux de chômage à 20% ,soit 2 fois supérieur à la moyenne nationale (30% chez les moins de 25 ans). Le couplage croissance économique/croissance de l'emploi est particulièrement significatif à Bruxelles, où les nouveaux emplois créés nécessitent de hautes qualifications, ce qui les rend inaccessibles aux demandeurs d'emploi. L'économie résidentielle et de proximité, ainsi que les secteurs événementiels et horeca sont susceptibles de croître avec les fonctions internationales, et de fournir de l'emploi aux peu qualifiés.

Un jeune sur 4 quitte l'enseignement sans diplôme du secondaire : l'école doit fondamentalement revoir son fonctionnement et retrouver sa capacité d'intégration et de promotion sociale.

- **Le défi environnemental** qui implique que Bruxelles devienne un modèle en matière de développement durable. Il y va de la protection de la qualité de vie de ses habitants (mobilité, qualité de l'air, prix de la consommation d'énergie,...), de la solidarité envers les générations à venir et de sa responsabilité en tant que capitale internationale amenée à montrer l'exemple (notamment en matière d'émissions de gaz à effet de serre). Il s'agit également d'une source économique majeure pour la création d'emplois et de la promotion de l'image internationale de la Région. Le Gouvernement s'est engagé à réduire la production de gaz à effet de serre de 30% d'ici 2025.
- **Le défi de la lutte contre la dualisation de la ville et la pauvreté** qui nécessite la poursuite et l'intensification des politiques transversales et territorialisées dans les domaines sociaux, économiques et culturels en ciblant les dispositifs dans les zones et les quartiers les plus fragilisés et en luttant activement contre toutes les formes de discrimination.

- **Le défi de l'internationalisation** qui constitue plus que jamais la vocation de Bruxelles mais qui doit réussir à mieux inclure et à profiter davantage aux habitants de la ville. Cette dynamique doit bénéficier à toutes les couches de la population, en particulier les moins qualifiés et contribuer activement à lutter contre les risques de l'exclusion sociale.

Contexte économique bruxellois

Les indicateurs conjoncturels montrent qu'après la reprise observée en 2010, l'activité économique bruxelloise est restée dynamique au premier semestre 2011 même si le rythme de croissance a sensiblement fléchi au cours du deuxième trimestre. Cette évolution est en ligne avec le net ralentissement conjoncturel observé au niveau national et international durant la même période. Au deuxième trimestre 2011, l'activité à Bruxelles a continué de progresser dans le commerce de gros, la construction et les branches industrielles. Seule la branche « immobilier, location et services aux entreprises » a enregistré un tassement. Si de nombreux secteurs n'ont pas encore retrouvé leur dynamisme d'avant la crise, l'impact de celle-ci a tendance à s'atténuer. Ainsi, toutes les branches ont renoué avec des niveaux d'activité comparables à ceux observés avant le déclenchement de la crise, à l'exception de la construction. En ce qui concerne la dynamique entrepreneuriale, le nombre d'entreprises actives a progressé plus rapidement sur le territoire de la Région qu'au niveau de la Belgique au cours du premier semestre 2011. À la mi-2011, Bruxelles totalisait 83.638 entreprises en activité, soit 2,3% de plus que l'année précédente.

Les dernières valeurs observées au niveau des indicateurs de confiance des entreprises et des ménages laissent présager une conjoncture plutôt morose durant le premier semestre 2012 au sein de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale même si le ralentissement observé depuis la mi-2011 devrait rester modéré. Au vu des récentes révisions des chiffres de la croissance au niveau belge et du recul généralisé de la confiance des ménages et des chefs d'entreprises à Bruxelles, les dernières projections de croissance du PIB bruxellois réalisées durant l'été 2011 – qui tablaient sur une progression en volume de 2,4% en 2011 et 1,7% en 2012 – devraient être revues à la baisse pour ces années. La correction devrait être particulièrement sévère en 2012, avec une évolution attendue de seulement 0% pour le PIB national. À moyen terme, la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale retrouverait un rythme de croissance réelle proche de son évolution tendancielle, avec des valeurs d'environ 2% entre 2013 et 2016. Cette croissance serait essentiellement soutenue par la progression des services marchands et, en particulier, par la branche « immobilier, location et services aux entreprises », par les services financiers ainsi que par les secteurs « transports et communication » et « commerce et horeca ». Par ailleurs, le processus historique de contraction de l'activité dans les branches industrielles devrait avoir tendance à s'atténuer dans les années à venir si bien que la part de l'industrie dans la valeur ajoutée régionale se stabiliserait.

Sur le marché du travail bruxellois, le nombre de salariés domiciliés dans la Région a continué à augmenter au premier trimestre 2011. L'indicateur basé sur le nombre d'heures prestées dans les activités intérimaires confirme la bonne tenue de l'emploi au deuxième trimestre 2011 même si le rythme a semblé se ralentir. La seconde moitié de 2011 s'annonce d'ailleurs nettement moins favorable sur le plan de l'emploi. Globalement pour cette année-là, les dernières projections régionales prévoyaient une augmentation de l'emploi intérieur bruxellois d'environ 6.000 unités. La croissance pratiquement nulle de l'activité économique attendue pour la Belgique en 2012 devrait peser lourdement sur la création d'emplois. À moyen terme, la progression de l'emploi intérieur sur le territoire de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale atteindrait 1% par an, soit un rythme identique à celui de l'ensemble du pays. Cela correspondrait à la création d'environ 29.000 postes de travail au total entre 2013 et 2016. Bien que cette hausse de l'emploi intérieur ne suffirait pas à absorber la totalité de l'accroissement de la population active résidente, elle devrait être assez dynamique pour augmenter le taux d'emploi.

En effet, Bruxelles se caractérise par une évolution démographique spécifique et particulièrement rapide qui se traduirait à moyen terme par une forte croissance de la population d'âge actif (+ 1,6% annuellement de 2013 à 2016). Du côté de l'offre de travail, l'évolution de la population active suivrait un rythme de croissance identique et donc légèrement inférieur à la progression attendue pour la population active occupée (+ 2,1% entre 2013 et 2016). Cette dernière bénéficierait de la croissance soutenue de l'emploi intérieur et de l'évolution des flux de navetteurs favorable à l'emploi des résidents bruxellois. En conséquence, le taux d'emploi de la Région devrait évoluer légèrement à la hausse à moyen terme. En parallèle, on assisterait à une diminution graduelle du taux de chômage bruxellois. Il conviendra cependant d'assurer un enseignement et une offre de formation adéquate ainsi que toute mesure permettant de créer de façon massive des emplois accessibles aux Bruxellois pour faire face à l'évolution démographique attendue.

2. Objectif - Taux d'emploi

Bruxelles est le premier bassin d'emploi du pays avec près de 715.000 emplois dont 357.000 occupés par des navetteurs en provenance de Flandre et de Wallonie. Entre juin 2009 et juin 2010, le nombre d'emplois salariés a augmenté en RBC. On assiste en effet à une croissance nette de l'emploi de 1,4% (DynaM³) qui s'observe principalement dans les PME.

Afin de soutenir cette évolution positive, La Région de Bruxelles-Capitale poursuit notamment la mise en œuvre :

- du **New Deal** (le Pacte de Croissance Urbaine Durable) qui a pour priorité l'emploi des Bruxellois à travers la synergie « Emploi-Environnement-Economie-Formation ». Il repose sur 5 domaines d'action : l'Environnement, le Développement international, dont le tourisme, le Commerce & l'Horeca, le Non-marchand & les Services de proximité, ainsi que la fonction publique et les Secteurs innovants. Signé en 2011, il mobilise l'ensemble des acteurs publics et privés en faveur de l'emploi.
- du **Plan Langues pour les Bruxellois** qui a pour objectif la promotion, l'intensification et l'amélioration des connaissances linguistiques des Bruxellois, et des demandeurs d'emploi en particulier, afin de faciliter leur insertion et leur intégration sur le marché de l'emploi. Il repose sur un renforcement des collaborations en matière d'Emploi, de Formation et d'Enseignement entre les différentes institutions compétentes.

En outre, pour atteindre les objectifs en matière d'emploi fixés par le PNR et conformément à sa Déclaration gouvernementale 2009-2014, la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale se concentre et travaille en priorité sur **les actions transversales** suivantes qui visent à répondre à l'ensemble des objectifs de la Stratégie Europe 2020 :

2.1. Poursuivre le développement de l'activité économique de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale afin de continuer à créer de nouveaux emplois de manière massive, notamment pour des profils peu qualifiés, en exploitant au maximum les gisements d'emploi que constituent différents secteurs porteurs.

Bruxelles est le premier bassin d'emploi du pays avec près de 715.000 emplois. Sur les 5 dernières années et malgré la crise économique, près de 40.000 emplois ont été créés en Région bruxellois. Entre juin 2009 et juin 2010, on a assisté à une croissance nette de l'emploi salarié de 1,4%, principalement dans les secteurs du commerce, de l'entreposage et de l'horeca. Cette croissance de l'emploi s'observe d'abord dans les PME qui concernent près de 95% du tissu économique bruxellois. Des dispositifs tels que le New-Deal, l'Alliance « Emploi-environnement », l'Economie sociale ou encore l'Economie plurielle (BRUSOC) continueront à être soutenus à l'avenir. En outre, ACTIRIS poursuivra son travail de

sensibilisation auprès des employeurs de la Région au travers notamment de la signature de chartes d'engagement ou de conventions de collaborations.

2.2. Renforcer l'accompagnement des demandeurs d'emploi avec une attention particulière pour les jeunes, public vulnérable en RBC

Le dispositif de « Construction de Projet Professionnel » obligatoire (« CPP ») pour les jeunes de moins de 25 ans s'inscrivant après études a débuté le 30 juin 2010. Cet accompagnement, qui commence par un « screening » immédiat du demandeur d'emploi, vise à prévenir au maximum l'enlèvement des jeunes demandeurs d'emploi dans le chômage en agissant précocement, dès la première inscription chez Actiris, par le biais d'un accompagnement qualitatif, formalisé, personnalisé et différencié selon le niveau d'étude et le plan d'action. Une première analyse longitudinale (juillet 2011) a montré que le taux de mise à l'emploi des jeunes sortis de l'école ayant bénéficié du CPP en 2010 est supérieur de 10,6% à celui du même groupe de jeunes 1 an auparavant. Par ailleurs, on a constaté que le dispositif profite d'autant plus aux faiblement qualifiés (maximum CESS). La différence, en termes de mise à l'emploi, entre les deux cohortes étudiées varie en effet de 21,2% pour les faiblement qualifiés à 5,6% pour les hautement qualifiés.

En outre, depuis le mois de juin 2011, la formule CPP concerne tous les demandeurs d'emploi âgés de moins de 50 ans venant s'inscrire chez Actiris. L'intensité de l'accompagnement est également fonction du niveau d'étude du demandeur ainsi que du contenu du plan d'action. Cependant, l'intensité reste plus forte pour les jeunes de moins de 25 ans. L'extension de l'obligation devra se faire en concertation avec les partenaires sociaux, conformément à la Déclaration gouvernementale.

Outre le CPP, les mesures telles que les projets «Jeep et Jump», les CPE «expérience d'emploi formatrice», le Programme de Transition Professionnelle, les bureaux sociaux d'intérim, les « Job days », la diffusion des plans d'embauche fédéraux auprès du public cible et des employeurs ou encore le dispositif de formation professionnelle individuelle en entreprise (FPI) ont fait l'objet d'un soutien important en 2011 touchant près de 5000 jeunes et seront soutenues de façon permanente voire amplifiée en 2012. Enfin, de nouveaux projets novateurs, comme le projet Labo-jeunes, sont également en cours.

2.3. Mobiliser tous les acteurs autour de la formation des demandeurs d'emploi

Bruxelles a investi fortement dans le rapprochement et le développement des synergies entre l'emploi et la formation en 2011 vu le nombre important de demandeurs d'emploi infraqualifiés et les exigences des offres d'emploi notamment au niveau linguistique. Ainsi, le budget consacré aux Chèques Langues est passé de 1 à 8,7 millions € entre 2004 et 2012.

Ainsi, près de 12.000 tests langues ont été effectués par ACTIRIS, 4.560 demandeurs d'emploi ont bénéficié des chèques langues et plus de 700 demandeurs d'emploi ont bénéficié, dans le cadre d'une collaboration entre ACTIRIS et Bruxelles Formation, d'une formation en langue orientée vers un métier déterminé, en vue d'une insertion plus efficace. Grâce à leur chèque -langue, la possibilité était donnée aux chercheurs d'emploi, via la *Huis van het Nederlands*, de s'adresser également aux *Centra voor Volwassenen Onderwijs* (Centres pour enseignement pour adultes) pour suivre des cours de néerlandais. Par ailleurs, près de 1.500 demandeurs d'emploi ont bénéficié de chèques TIC et formation.

En outre, d'autres dispositifs seront renforcés en 2012, notamment les Ateliers de Recherche Active d'Emploi (ARAE) dans le cadre du partenariat d'ACTIRIS ou encore les Centres de Références professionnels (CDR).

Un nouveau CDR orienté vers les « métiers de la ville et de la fonction publique » est en cours de création. Enfin, tenant compte du contexte institutionnel à Bruxelles, les synergies entre l'emploi et la

formation continueront à être renforcées notamment via la conclusion en seconde lecture début 2012 d'un accord de coopération sur les politiques croisées "Emploi-Formation". La problématique du chômage en RBC étant fortement liée au faible niveau de qualification des chercheurs d'emploi, une collaboration optimale entre les régisseurs ensemble de l'emploi (ACTIRIS) et de la formation (Bruxelles Formation, EFPME/SFPME, Syntra) est indispensable. Cet accord de coopération est au cœur des réalisations du New Deal.

La Commission communautaire flamande (VGC) prévoit un encadrement supplémentaire devant continuer à améliorer les possibilités d'emploi des groupes à risque. En collaboration avec les trois maisons bruxelloises de l'emploi et l'asbl Tracé Brussel, la VGC s'efforce de promouvoir l'offre de formation néerlandophone à Bruxelles en publiant un guide et en cofinçant un salon pour la formation et l'expérience professionnelle. Ces instruments sont connus auprès des organisations des autres secteurs qui sont également en contact avec des groupes à risque spécifiques de chercheurs d'emploi de sorte à être suffisamment au courant des endroits où ces personnes peuvent s'adresser si elles souhaitent davantage d'informations ou d'encadrement sur le plan du travail et de la formation. La VGC se concentre sur la sensibilisation des groupes les plus fragiles et sur leur orientation vers les services réguliers existants.

2.4. Lutter contre la discrimination à l'embauche et promouvoir la diversité

Une expérimentation sur le CV Anonyme a été menée par le Pacte territorial pour l'emploi. Cette expérience a fait l'objet d'un rapport contenu un ensemble de conclusions et de propositions.

En outre, le Pacte Territorial pour l'emploi a mené toute une série d'actions, notamment des plans de diversité avec des entreprises de la Région (52 sont en cours actuellement).

2.5. Renforcer la mobilité des demandeurs d'emploi

Le développement de **la mobilité interrégionale des demandeurs d'emploi** a été renforcé, notamment au travers de la conclusion d'un nouvel Accord de coopération avec la Région flamande en juillet 2011. L'hinterland bruxellois représente une grande quantité d'emplois accessibles aux Bruxellois moyennant une connaissance du Néerlandais, un renforcement de la mobilité et enfin une bonne collaboration d'Actiris et du VDAB en ce qui concerne la transmission des offres d'emploi. C'est ce que prévoit ce deuxième et **nouvel accord de coopération avec la Flandre sur la mobilité interrégionale**. Ainsi, les objectifs du premier accord sont revus à la hausse étant donné son succès (placement de plus de 12.000 DE bruxellois dans des entreprises situés en Flandre depuis 2007). Il est prévu que le VDAB transmette au moins 1.500 offres d'emploi à destination de chercheurs d'emplois infra-qualifiés par an à Actiris qui, pour sa part, s'engage à mobiliser au minimum 6 demandeurs d'emploi par offre. Le placement de minimum 1.000 demandeurs d'emploi par an sera également poursuivi. L'accord prévoit en outre l'adhésion du VDAB au Réseau des partenaires pour l'Emploi d'ACTIRIS afin de faciliter les engagements prévus par l'accord. L'accord prévoit par ailleurs de dégager un budget complémentaire récurrent de 150.000 € à partir de 2012 pour des formations linguistiques organisées par le VDAB à destination de demandeurs d'emploi bruxellois ou encore de poursuivre la collaboration en cas de grosses restructurations d'entreprises.

Enfin, en 2011, Actiris a reçu : 23.766 offres du FOREM, 87.260 offres du VDAB. Soit au total : 111.026 offres d'emploi ont été présentées aux demandeurs d'emploi bruxellois

2.6. Développer et mobiliser des outils publics performants en faveur de l'emploi

La poursuite du travail en termes de mise à niveau des outils publics a été effectuée en 2011. L'octroi de moyens supplémentaires (+3.170.000 €) à ACTIRIS en 2011 a permis de finaliser la modernisation

de l'Office (décentralisation dans 18 communes sur 19 + mise en place d'une nouvelle direction) et de renforcer l'accompagnement de l'ensemble des chercheurs d'emploi grâce à l'engagement de 38 ETP conseillers emploi supplémentaires en 2011 chez ACTIRIS et une cinquantaine sont encore prévus en 2012.

Contribution de la Formation professionnelle à l'objectif emploi

Etroitement articulé aux domaines d'intervention prioritaires du New Deal (Pacte de Croissance urbaine durable), **le Plan stratégique de formation** sera finalisé dans le courant de l'année 2012, et cela afin de prendre en compte tant les résultats des consultations menées que les grands chantiers actuels liés à la 6ème réforme de l'Etat. Ce Plan a pour ambition de doubler l'offre de formation à l'intention des Bruxellois à l'horizon 2020.

En termes d'actions mises en œuvre en 2011 en vue de poursuivre le développement de l'offre de formations, on mentionnera que plus de **4 millions de moyens supplémentaires ont été dégagés pour le budget de la Formation professionnelle**, en provenance pour partie de la Cocof (1.200.000 €) et pour partie de la Région (3.120.000 €) dans le cadre de l'appel à partenariat pluriannuel du New Deal, de l'Alliance emploi-environnement ou encore du Plan langues pour les Bruxellois.

Ces moyens ont permis le renforcement et la diversification de l'offre de formation. Ils seront poursuivis en 2012-2013 par :

- la création du nouveau pôle de Bruxelles Formation « Tremplin jeunes » renforçant l'information, l'accompagnement et l'offre de formation à destination des jeunes de moins de 25 ans;
- l'augmentation et la centralisation de l'offre de formations en langues orientées métier ;
- l'accompagnement pédagogique de demandeurs d'emploi qui entreprennent une formation préparatoire à l'obtention du CESS ;
- la mise en œuvre de nouvelles formations pour demandeurs d'emploi dans le domaine de l'éco-construction et de la rénovation durable ;
- la création du Carrefour Formation+Emploi, espace de travail partagé par Bruxelles Formation et ACTIRIS pour les demandeurs d'emploi et les travailleurs bruxellois.
- une information accrue sur l'offre de formation de la Commission communautaire française à l'attention des demandeurs d'emploi;
- l'élaboration d'un outil de suivi longitudinal du parcours des demandeurs d'emploi en formation professionnelle et dès lors, indirectement, des politiques mises en place ;
- la poursuite de la simplification des procédures administratives pour les opérateurs partenaires de Bruxelles Formation, d'ACTIRIS et de la Commission communautaire française. En 2011, le dossier unique de rapport d'activités a été finalisé;
- le focus sur l'égalité de traitement entre hommes et femmes en ce qui concerne l'accès à la formation et à la promotion professionnelles ainsi que l'égalité des chances pour tout Bruxellois désirant entreprendre une formation professionnelle.

Plus de 6.600 m² de surfaces nouvelles dédiées à la formation ont été loués par Bruxelles Formation en 2011. La recherche de surfaces de ce type sera poursuivie en 2012.

Par ailleurs, **deux accords de coopération entre la Région et la Commission communautaire française** ont été élaborés en 2011 et sont actuellement soumis à l'assentiment des Parlements.

Le premier est conclu dans le cadre du New Deal et concerne le financement par la Région et sous contrôle de la Région d'une offre de formation organisée par Bruxelles Formation (voir ci-dessus).

Le second est relatif aux politiques croisées Emploi-Formation et formalise les collaborations et les complémentarités indispensables entre ACTIRIS et Bruxelles Formation ; cet accord de coopération fera l'objet d'un accord de collaboration et de plans d'action annuels entre les deux organismes mettant en œuvre plus de **20 chantiers prioritaires de l'interface emploi-formation**.

Dans le cadre du New Deal, un accord de coopération a été conclu en 2011 entre la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale et la COCOF d'une part et avec la VGC d'autre part pour soutenir Bruxelles-formation dans l'organisation de formations francophones et l'organisation de formations néerlandophones via les associations suivantes : Intec Brussel, Groep Intro, Jes vzw et Syntra.

3. Objectif - R&D et innovation :

Les moyens dévolus à la R&D se sont accrus de 5% entre 2011 et 2012 . L'ensemble des dépenses en R&D atteindra 44 millions d'€ en 2012, créant un effet mobilisateur tant pour le secteur public que pour les entreprises.

Le Gouvernement de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale s'efforce de mettre en œuvre toutes les mesures de soutien à la Recherche en privilégiant les circuits les plus courts entre les résultats de la recherche et leurs retombées en termes de valorisation économique et de création d'emplois.

Les nouvelles mesures applicables depuis 2011 ont accru le soutien aux petites entreprises mais ont également élargi l'éventail des aides disponibles. Plusieurs d'entre elles seront budgétairement renforcées en 2012 afin de multiplier le nombre de bénéficiaires. Sont tout particulièrement visées les aides à la réalisation d'un doctorat en entreprise, l'aide à l'innovation de produits et de procédés ou encore les aides au montage de projets européens.

La Région continuera ainsi à soutenir les acteurs bruxellois désirant participer à des programmes européens de recherche et d'innovation en permettant l'accès non seulement à une aide financière au montage du projet, mais également à un service de conseil auprès d'experts spécialisés dans le processus de positionnement, de montage et de gestion des projets.

Soucieuse d'assurer le financement des projets sur toute la chaîne de l'innovation, la Région Bruxelles Capitale a en outre mis en place en janvier 2012 **un nouveau fond de maturation, doté pour 2012 d'1.600.000 €, destiné aux jeunes entreprises innovantes de la région**.

Conformément à ce qui avait été annoncé, après celles dédiées aux technologies de l'information et de la communication initiées en 2010, **deux nouvelles plateformes stratégiques** ont été créées en 2011 dans le domaine des sciences du vivant (essais cliniques et toxicité des nanomatériaux). **En 2012 deux nouvelles plateformes seront également lancées dans deux autres secteurs porteurs d'innovation : l'éco-construction et l'environnement** (énergie éolienne pour habitations urbaines).

En 2012, la Région poursuit le développement d'incubateurs dans les secteurs porteurs d'innovation, ainsi que les initiatives de sensibilisation aux carrières scientifiques et techniques.

Pour finir, la région de Bruxelles-Capitale est actuellement en train d'élaborer une nouvelle stratégie de RDI dont certains éléments seront mis en œuvre en 2012 et dont les objectifs sont les suivants:

- Elaboration d'une **stratégie de spécialisation intelligente** pour la région et identification de secteurs porteurs pour l'investissement régional en cohérence avec la stratégie UE 2020.
- Cohérence des instruments financiers et **couverture de toute la chaîne de valeur** des projets
- Optimisation et renforcement de la **coopération interrégionale**
- **Evaluation à long terme** de la politique de recherche et d'innovation de la Région.

Mesures clés : poursuite de l'effort budgétaire; soutien plus élevé aux petites entreprises; nouvelles mesures d'aides aux entreprises; création de plateformes stratégiques; poursuite du développement d'incubateurs; renforcement des moyens pour la coopération européenne et internationale.

4. Objectif – Éducation

4.1. Lutte contre le décrochage scolaire

La lutte contre le décrochage scolaire est une compétence gérée par la Communauté Française et par la Communauté Flamande. Cependant, dans le cadre de ses compétences, la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale a pris des mesures relatives à l'accrochage scolaire qui ne visent pas à venir renforcer les dispositifs existants mais bien d'effectuer les missions qui actuellement ne sont pas ou peu exercées. Ces dispositifs régionaux sont organisés en deux axes :

Axe prévention :

Le public cible concerné par ce dispositif est tout jeune, en âge d'obligation scolaire ou non, scolarisé ou en décrochage, habitant la commune ou fréquentant un établissement scolaire établi sur le territoire de la commune. Les médiateurs scolaires actifs au sein de ce dispositif remplissent une ou plusieurs des missions suivantes :

- réunir à des fins de diagnostic, toutes les données qualitatives et quantitatives permettant de mesurer l'absentéisme et le décrochage scolaire sur le territoire communal ;
- obtenir une vue globale et à jour (observations, besoins et attentes) de tous les dispositifs existants sur la commune et du travail de chaque acteur concerné quel que soit son identité ou le niveau de pouvoir qui le soutient;
- développer des projets en collaboration avec les écoles ;
- en collaboration avec les services communautaires compétents, assurer un accompagnement individuel, permettant d'aborder les situations d'élèves confrontés à un absentéisme récurrent et de définir les mesures d'accompagnement adaptées;
- dans le cadre du contrôle de l'obligation scolaire, les médiateurs scolaires en collaboration avec le service communal de la population, et avec la zone de police veilleront à identifier les jeunes en âge d'obligation scolaire qui sont non inscrits ou en décrochage complet et ce, de manière à assurer l'accès à l'enseignement à tout élève inscrit au Registre de la population.

Ce dispositif occupe également des travailleurs de rue et des gardiens de la paix. Les travailleurs de rue sont un maillon essentiel en vue de maintenir ou de réinsérer les jeunes dans le parcours scolaire. Les travailleurs de rue doivent établir le contact avec les jeunes se trouvant en rue pendant et en dehors des heures scolaires. Le médiateur scolaire doit ensuite prendre le relais dans le suivi du par-

cours de ces jeunes. Les gardiens de la paix se doivent quant à eux de veiller à sécuriser le chemin de l'école. La crainte d'être racketté peut pour certains jeunes être une cause de décrochage.

Axe accrochage scolaire :

La Région de Bruxelles-Capitale mène également des actions au sein même des écoles via le Dispositif d'Accrochage Scolaire (D.A.S) en finançant plus de 300 projets éducatifs qui visent à diminuer l'échec scolaire et l'absentéisme.

Par ailleurs, le développement des synergies entre les acteurs de l'éducation et de la formation sera renforcé via la mise en place du Bassin de vie bruxellois et des Pôles de synergies qui y sont liés. Ceci vise à proposer une offre d'éducation et de formation de qualité à l'ensemble des Bruxellois, en mettant un accent particulier sur les moins qualifiés. Un groupe de travail réunissant communautés et la Région bruxelloise est chargé de réaliser un inventaire de toutes les politiques menées en matière d'accrochage scolaire. L'objectif est d'améliorer l'articulation des politiques et d'en accentuer l'efficacité.

La Commission communautaire flamande (VGC) vise à encadrer qualitativement le contenu didactique des cours afin d'agir préventivement sur l'absentéisme scolaire. Le Onderwijscentrum Brussel (OCB) (enseignement primaire et humanité), l'asbl VBB (enseignement primaire), l'asbl BROSO (enseignement humanité) apportent une importante contribution. Depuis 2011, la VGC investit dans le développement des Brede School (école au sens large), une école qui accorde de l'attention au développement au sens large et aux chances d'épanouissement de tous les enfants. En 2012, 20 nouvelles Brede School seront créées à Bruxelles. Enfin, la VGC soutient le projet Time-Out Brussel, visant à éviter un décrochage scolaire prématuré d'élèves causant des difficultés à l'école ou étant fort démotivés. L'objectif de Time-out est de donner une nouvelle chance aux jeunes fréquentant les écoles secondaires néerlandophones à Bruxelles et connaissant des difficultés dans leur parcours scolaire, de trouver un nouvel intérêt dans l'enseignement. Grâce à un coach à l'école ou un trajet externe court ou long, time-out offre une réponse compréhensible aux problèmes des jeunes.

4.2. Contribution de la Formation professionnelle à l'objectif Enseignement et formation tout au long de la vie

Le développement de synergies entre les acteurs de l'éducation et de la formation se traduit à travers différentes mesures proposées directement aux citoyens, notamment dans le renforcement du partenariat de Bruxelles Formation avec l'Enseignement de promotion sociale (développement des formations préparatoires à l'obtention du CESS) ainsi que dans la mise en place d'instruments communs. En cette matière, la Commission communautaire française, signataire d'un Accord de coopération avec la Communauté française et la Région wallonne, contribue à la mise en place du **Service francophone des Métiers et des Qualifications** (SFMQ), notamment à travers un apport financier et la mise à disposition des ressources de Bruxelles Formation aux travaux du SFMQ.

Ce Service a pour mission essentielle d'effectuer une description des métiers, de les traduire en profils métiers (ou de qualifications), et d'élaborer, sur cette base, des profils de formation adoptés par tous. Ces derniers sont élaborés en concertation étroite avec les Services publics de formation (dont Bruxelles Formation).

La Commission communautaire française, à travers son Service public de formation, participe aux travaux de mise en œuvre du **Cadre Francophone des Certifications et de déploiement de la validation des compétences**. Ces outils visent entre autres à encourager la mobilité individuelle au sein des dispositifs belges mais aussi étrangers.

Le Consortium de validation des compétences a mis à jour et a diffusé un tableau indiquant les dispenses possibles pour les porteurs de titres de compétences lors d'une reprise de formation chez les opérateurs du Consortium.

5. Objectif - Climat/Environnement :

En ce qui concerne les objectifs UE2020 en matière de climat et d'énergie, la Région bruxelloise s'est définie une politique ambitieuse. Si le potentiel renouvelable en RBC est limité en raison du caractère urbain de la Région, celui-ci est cependant exploité et la Région se concentre également sur la réduction de la demande énergétique et sur l'amélioration de l'efficacité énergétique. En 2011, la Région bruxelloise est entrée dans une nouvelle démarche d'intégration de ses politiques relatives à l'air, au climat et à l'énergie, thématiques souvent abordées jusque maintenant de manière sectorielle ou sur des échelles de temps différentes, alors que, dans un contexte essentiellement urbain comme celui de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, elles sont intimement liées. Parallèlement à cette démarche, le Gouvernement bruxellois a prolongé certains projets qui avaient déjà fait leurs preuves dans le passé, et lancé de nouvelles initiatives, dans un souci constant d'atteindre les objectifs européens relatifs au climat et à l'énergie.

5.1. Le Code bruxellois de l'Air, du Climat et de l'Energie (COBRACE) a été élaboré en s'appuyant sur les constats en matière de qualité de l'air et de santé de la population et se veut également une réponse aux problématiques des ressources énergétiques limitées et du réchauffement climatique dû aux émissions de gaz à effet de serre. Le COBRACE a été adopté en première lecture par le Gouvernement, et sera soumis au Parlement bruxellois dans le courant de l'année 2012. Le COBRACE coordonne les différentes mesures et inscrit ces trois matières dans une même et seule réglementation, claire, cohérente et structurée. Il fixe également de nouvelles mesures à la hauteur des défis environnementaux et sociaux auxquels notre Région doit faire face. Parmi elles:

- la possibilité de l'aménagement de zones de basse émission;
- la création d'un label pour les bâtiments à haute performance énergétique et environnementale;
- l'instauration de normes strictes en matière de performance environnementale pour les véhicules des flottes publiques et les taxis.
- une rationalisation des parkings hors voirie via le permis d'environnement ;

la création d'un Fonds « climat » destiné à permettre à la Région bruxelloise de respecter ses engagements internationaux dans la cadre du Protocole de Kyoto et de financer des mesures ambitieuses notamment en matière de transport ;

5.2. Le Plan Iris 2 vise à réduire la charge de trafic automobile de 20% sur le territoire de la Région et **lutter contre la congestion automobile** au profit du transfert modal vers les transports publics, cyclistes et piétons. A cet égard, le Gouvernement approuvera en 2012 le premier plan piéton qui vise à augmenter la part des déplacements à pied. Concernant les cyclistes, la Région poursuit le déploiement des équipements (14 km de pistes cyclables supplémentaires et suggérées en 2011) mais également des mesures de sensibilisation. La Région travaille en coordination avec les Communes sur ces matières dans le cadre des Plans communaux de Mobilité adoptés par 17 communes sur 19.

En complément, seront définies à Bruxelles des zones de basses émissions dont l'accessibilité en voiture serait limitée selon des critères tels que la période et la performance environnementale du véhicule. Le stationnement constitue un levier majeur de la politique de mobilité La Région de Bruxelles-Capitale s'engagera dans une politique mesurée de transfert de la capacité de stationnement hors voi-

rie pour rendre l'espace public aux autres usagers. . Le Plan de Politique régionale du stationnement est en cours d'élaboration en exécution de l'ordonnance du 22 janvier 2009. Le Plan Iris 2 et le Programme national de réforme 2011, prévoient qu' « un travail d'étude et de concertation sera entrepris en vue d'une mise en œuvre du système de tarification intelligente aussi vite que possible ». Ce système de tarification intelligente s'est concrétisé dans le cadre d'un Accord Politique en date du 21 janvier 2011 entre la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale, la Région Wallonne et la Région Flamande. Les objectifs d'ici 2013, inscrits dans le présent Accord sont les suivants : la tarification kilométrique pour les camions, poids lourds de plus de 3.5 tonnes qui remplacera l'eurovignette et l'E-vignette pour véhicules légers, un programme permettant de s'enregistrer via Internet.

En première ligne de la **lutte contre la congestion automobile**, la Région de Bruxelles-capitale poursuit également ses programmes d'investissements conséquents en matière d'infrastructure de transports publics.

En 2012, le budget des investissements dans les transports publics à Bruxelles s'élève à 273 millions d'euros. Il s'agit du budget d'investissement de la STIB, voire la contribution de Beliris, et du budget pour les infrastructures. En 2012, la Région consacra un montant de 80 millions d'euros à l'infrastructure des transports publics bruxellois. Ce montant sera utilisé pour réaliser des travaux de réparation, la rénovation de stations, l'installation d'ascenseurs ou pour effectuer des études visant l'extension du réseau de la STIB.

En ce qui concerne l'offre de transport, la STIB va augmenter la fréquence sur différentes lignes en attendant la réalisation des grands chantiers d'infrastructure qui permettront d'augmenter considérablement la capacité des transports publics. . La Région améliore également la circulation des TP de surface en leur donnant la priorité de passage (équipement de télécommandes des carrefours à feux, sites propres immunisés de la circulation, etc).

En 2012 la STIB étend encore sa flotte de véhicules pour pouvoir transporter un nombre sans cesse croissant de clients confortablement. 2 nouveaux trams/ mois supplémentaires sont prévus en 2012 auxquels s'ajouteront des bus "verts". Le Metro se voit quant à lui doté de 6 trains boas supplémentaires afin d'augmenter la fréquence de passage des métros.

En 2013, 15 trams de type T4000 (d'une longueur de 43 mètres) seront livrés en vue de compléter l'offre de transports publics et désengorger l'axe Nord-Sud et la Grande Ceinture actuellement saturés.

En 2012, le budget alloué à l'optimisation de la vitesse commerciale des transports publics bruxellois s'élève à 25 millions EUR alors que le budget global de la STIB en faveur des transports publics régionaux représente à lui seul près de 25% du budget régional.

5.3. L'Alliance Emploi-Environnement vise la structuration et le développement de secteurs économiques liés à l'environnement et ainsi à mettre les entreprises bruxelloises en capacité de capter les fruits de la croissance dans ces secteurs (aujourd'hui, la construction durable, l'eau et les déchets) et de valoriser l'important potentiel d'emploi, y compris moins qualifié. L'Alliance Emploi-Environnement contribue à mobiliser et à coordonner les acteurs publics, privés et associatifs dont les partenaires sociaux autour d'actions concertées.

- Le 1^{er} axe de l'Alliance Emploi-Environnement est le secteur de la construction durable. **L'Alliance Emploi-Environnement - Construction durable** a en effet été adoptée par le Gouvernement de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale en février 2011. L'objectif est de développer, d'une part une offre d'entreprises locales capable de répondre au défi des nouvelles ambitions énergétiques des bâtiments et, d'autre part, une adaptation de l'offre de formation (formation continue, formation qualifiante, insertion de chômeurs par le travail) en vue d'avoir des travailleurs formés éga-

lement à ces nouveaux défis. Lors de son adoption, un plan d'action précis a été défini pour toucher autant l'Enseignement, que la Formation, l'Insertion, les Outils de soutien aux entreprises et le Financement des investissements, la Recherche et l'Innovation, les Références Techniques et l'Excellence. Depuis un an, la très grande majorité des actions avancent avec des objectifs clairs et enregistrent les premiers résultats concrets : sur les 44 actions identifiées, 37 respectent le calendrier initial.

- Le deuxième axe de l'Alliance Emploi-Environnement lancé en 2012 est consacré à l'eau. Le but est d'accroître significativement le nombre d'emplois en faveur des jeunes demandeurs d'emploi bruxellois dans les secteurs d'activités liés au cycle de l'eau par le biais d'actions de stimulation économique, de soutien aux entreprises, d'insertion, de formation, etc.
- Le troisième axe de l'Alliance Emploi-Environnement est le secteur des Déchets, avec un accent sur la prévention, le réemploi et le recyclage. Les travaux de l'alliance garderont le même souci de saisir toutes les opportunités économiques et d'emplois public, privé et d'insertion dans le secteur des déchets. Les activités de collecte, de maintenance, de réparation, les déconstructions sélectives et la commercialisation de produits de seconde main sont les plus pourvoyeurs d'emplois locaux.

5.4. Concernant les marchés de l'électricité et du gaz, la RBC a transposé les directives 2009/72/CE et 2009/73/CE en juillet 2011. Les nouvelles ordonnances adoptées dans ce cadre ont permis de renforcer les compétences, les missions ainsi que l'indépendance de l'autorité de régulation régionale. Une simplification d'accès au marché pour les fournisseurs a été organisée et la protection et l'information des consommateurs renforcée (guichet d'information, service des litiges, mécanisme d'indemnités forfaitaires, ...) tout en renforçant la garantie d'accès à l'énergie. Une série de mesures visant à améliorer l'efficacité énergétique ainsi que la promotion de l'électricité verte ont également été prises. Cette transposition répond à la recommandation (6) de la Commission européenne d'introduire des mesures pour renforcer la concurrence sur les marchés de l'électricité et du gaz en améliorant l'efficacité des autorités sectorielles de régulation et de concurrence.

5.5. En termes de réduction de la consommation énergétique et d'efficacité énergétique, plusieurs initiatives ont été prises, visant tant les particuliers, que les entreprises, les collectivités et les pouvoirs publics :

- Le **Défi énergie** continue de sensibiliser les Bruxellois, plus de 3000 ménages ont ainsi été encouragés de manière ludique à réduire leur consommation énergétique, ainsi qu'à émettre moins de CO₂.
- L'appel à projets « **bâtiments exemplaires** » a pour objectif de soutenir des projets performants afin de démontrer leur faisabilité technique et financière, et d'encourager le secteur dans ce type de démarches.
- L'exemplarité des pouvoirs publics dans les bâtiments se traduit par le respect au minimum du standard passif pour les constructions neuves et du standard très basse énergie pour les rénovations lourdes dans le cadre des investissements immobiliers de tout organisme dépendant de la Région.

5.6. En termes de réduction de la consommation énergétique, plusieurs projets ont été poursuivis, à destination tant des particuliers, que des entreprises, des collectivités et des pouvoirs publics:

- Le régime des **Primes Énergie** a été renforcé en 2012 par une augmentation de budget de 50%, passant 12 à 18 millions d'euros. En outre, les démarches administratives ont été simplifiées.

- Le **Défi énergie** continue de sensibiliser les Bruxellois de manière ludique (plus de 3.000 ménages ont ainsi été encouragés) .
- L'appel à projets « **bâtiments exemplaires** » a été relancé en 2012. Il a pour objectif de soutenir des projets performants afin de démontrer leur faisabilité technique et financière, et d'encourager le secteur dans ce type de démarches.
- L'exemplarité des pouvoirs publics dans les bâtiments se traduit par le respect au minimum du standard passif pour les constructions neuves et du standard très basse énergie pour les rénovations lourdes dans le cadre des investissements immobiliers de tout organisme dépendant de la Région.
- Le **Plan Local d'Action pour la Gestion Energétique- PLAGE** a aussi été poursuivi. Il a pour objectif d'améliorer l'efficacité énergétique d'un parc de bâtiments. Le Cobrace crée une obligation de mettre en place un PLAGE pour les grands gestionnaires immobiliers privés mais aussi pour les pouvoirs publics.
- Créée en 2011 et inaugurée en 2012, la **Maison de l'Energie et de l'éco-construction** propose un service d'accompagnement des ménages dans leurs démarches d'économies d'énergie dans leur logement, que ce soit en matière de choix techniques et de matériaux ou d'accès aux incitants.
- **En matière de propreté publique**, il convient d'ajouter les deux mesures suivantes :
 - La création d'un centre de biométhanisation qui devrait permettre - par le traitement annuel de 40.000 tonnes de déchets verts et organiques - la production de l'ordre de 8.496.840 KWh d'électricité verte par an et d'un même ordre de grandeur pour la chaleur ;
 - L'utilisation de camions hydrauliques de collecte des déchets qui devraient permettre une diminution d'environ 14 tonnes par an et par véhicule des rejets en CO2 (et autres gaz) et qui devraient connaître une consommation moyenne de carburant réduite de 29%.

6. Objectif - Cohésion sociale/ Lutte contre la pauvreté :

6.1. Stratégie générale & Objectifs spécifiques :

La Note de politique générale relative à la lutte contre la pauvreté 2009-2014 rédigée et approuvée de concert par le gouvernement bruxellois et les Collèges des 3 Commissions communautaires de Bruxelles, est construit autour de 34 objectifs stratégiques concrets et trace un cadre ambitieux permettant de relever le défi que constitue la lutte contre toutes les formes de pauvreté au sein de la Région. A ce titre, il est primordial que tout citoyen puisse participer à la vie sociale et économique et ce, dans des conditions qui contribuent au bien-être individuel comme à la prospérité de la société tout entière. L'objectif est de mener une politique commune qui favorise la qualité sociale de notre Région. La stratégie qui est suivie à cet effet consiste à investir dans la promotion et la consolidation de la politique sociale, en misant sur une politique préventive, plurielle et participative :

- une politique préventive permettant d'éviter à quiconque les situations de pauvreté;
- une politique plurielle permettant de lutter contre l'inégalité de traitement, la discrimination;
- une politique participative tenant compte des connaissances et des éclairages de tous les acteurs concernés par la pauvreté.

6.2. Mesures en vigueur :

La Note de politique générale 2009-2014 forme la base des plans d'action biennaux de lutte contre la pauvreté : le Plan d'action bruxellois de lutte contre la pauvreté 2010 en étant le premier plan opérationnel. Le plan 2010 donne, pour chacun des 34 objectifs stratégiques, un aperçu des actions menées par les différentes autorités bruxelloises, et contient plus de 200 actions sur plus de 10 domaines. A titre d'exemple de concrétisation de certaines mesures, on peut noter:

- Réalisation du droit au logement : € 206.000.000 en vue d'accroître et de développer le parc des logements sociaux bruxellois (2010-2013), € 1.007.000 afin de promouvoir la protection sociale au sein des marchés libéralisés de l'électricité et du gaz (indicateur de déprivation matérielle).

6.3. Mesures planifiées :

D'une part l'élaboration du Plan d'action 2012, d'autre part la mise en œuvre des mesures planifiées dans le Plan d'action 2010.

1. Le Plan d'action 2012 cible la problématique de la pauvreté des jeunes adultes (16-25 ans), et plus particulièrement à la période de transition à l'âge adulte. La communauté française et flamande ainsi que les CPAS bruxellois sont impliqués dans l'élaboration de ce plan.
2. Le suivi du Plan d'action 2010:
 - Le développement d'un test d'impact sur la pauvreté pour chaque décision politique.
 - En matière de logement : on note le développement du logement social et plus particulièrement l'objectif de garantir dans chaque commune dans les 10 années à venir un taux de 15% de logements de qualité à gestion publique et à finalité sociale, la lutte contre les logements vides et insalubres, le renforcement des aides aux personnes sur le marché locatif, la mise en place d'un Fonds régional et mutuelliste des garanties locatives, la mise en place d'un système d'encadrement des loyers, le développement d'un cadre législatif pour éviter dans la mesure du possible les expulsions sans proposition de relogement et l'amélioration de la performance énergétique des logements.
 - La promotion de l'accès à l'enseignement et la formation mettra en avant les actions préventives, les campagnes et projets contribuant à une diminution du décrochage scolaire.

Contribution de la Formation professionnelle à l'objectif de cohésion sociale

En tant que vecteur de lutte contre l'exclusion sociale, la formation professionnelle pour les demandeurs d'emploi est orientée prioritairement vers les publics fragilisés sur le marché du travail et vise à les positionner au mieux. Outre son offre de formation propre, Bruxelles Formation agit dans le cadre de dispositifs coordonnés d'insertion socioprofessionnelle avec une septantaine de partenaires issus de l'enseignement, de l'insertion socioprofessionnelle et des fonds sectoriels, principalement.

7. Matières transversales

7.1. Les fonds structurels

La politique de cohésion vient en support des politiques sectorielles développées au sein de la Région. Tout comme pour la période 2007-2013, il y avait une obligation de marquage de la stratégie de Lisbonne pour l'objectif compétitivité du FEDER et pour le FSE, la stratégie Europe 2020 sera sans nul doute le fil rouge de la prochaine période de programmation. Enfin, le troisième volet du FEDER, la

Coopération territoriale européenne, joue également un rôle non négligeable dans la mise en œuvre de cette stratégie, permettant notamment le développement d'échange de bonnes pratiques avec d'autres régions d'Europe.

a. Fonds Social Européen (FSE)

Le FSE, principal instrument financier de la politique de cohésion, vient en soutien de politiques publiques en matière d'emploi, de formation, d'insertion et donc en soutien de dispositifs mis en place par les autorités dans le cadre du Programme Opérationnel FSE Objectif "Compétitivité régionale et Emploi" conjoint au Gouvernement wallon, au Gouvernement de la Communauté française et au Collège de la Commission Communautaire française de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale. Le volet bruxellois soutient et coordonne les opérateurs actifs dans les domaines de la formation/insertion professionnelle ainsi que de la formation qualifiante accessible au plus grand nombre. En termes de cofinancement pour l'ensemble de la période de programmation, ce sont pas moins de 91 millions d'€ qui sont octroyés à des opérateurs soutenus par la Commission communautaire française.

Le programme FSE tel que mené par ACTIRIS participe à l'atteinte des objectifs emplois de la Stratégie Europe 2020 en développant trois thèmes prioritaires:

- **l'accompagnement des demandeurs d'emploi** et des personnes en situation ou menacées d'exclusion en vue d'accroître leurs possibilités d'accès au marché du travail et d'améliorer leurs capacités d'intégration professionnelle.
- Cette priorité est mise en œuvre via l'opération Guidance/Recherche Active d'Emploi réalisé par les services d'Actiris et par ses partenaire, via l'accompagnement des bénéficiaires du revenu d'intégration sociale et via l'opération Accompagnement à la création de son emploi.
- **l'augmentation de la participation des femmes au marché du travail**, notamment par une meilleure conciliation de la vie professionnelle et de la vie privée.
- Cette priorité se concrétise par la mise à disposition de places d'accueil dans un réseau de crèches partenaires pour les enfants dont les parents suivent une action d'insertion professionnelle.
- **le renforcement de la démarche partenariale** et sa coordination au service des demandeurs d'emploi et des employeurs et l'amélioration de la réponse aux besoins du marché du travail par une démarche prospective d'analyse des besoins.

Cette priorité est mise en œuvre par l'intermédiaire de plusieurs réseaux thématiques : la coordination méthodologique du RPE (Réseau des plateformes locales pour l'emploi), la coordination méthodologique du Pacte territorial pour l'emploi en RBC et le dispositif ENIAC (ESF NAP Impact Assessment Cell). L'anticipation des besoins du marché du travail à charge de l'Observatoire bruxellois de l'Emploi fait également partie de cette priorité.

b. FEDER

Le diagnostic établi par la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale dans son Programme opérationnel 2007-2013 a permis d'établir les besoins d'une Zone d'Intervention Prioritaire (ZIP) sur le territoire de laquelle peuvent intervenir les moyens du FEDER.

Quatre groupes d'opération contribuent à renforcer les politiques régionales et à mettre en oeuvre la stratégie Europe 2020 :

- Le soutien au développement et à la création d'activités économiques;

- Le soutien à la mise en place d'un pôle de développement urbain lié aux secteurs économiques de l'environnement.;
- L'amélioration de l'attractivité et l'image de la Zone d'Intervention Prioritaire.
- Le renforcement des infrastructures de proximité en lien avec l'emploi et la formation.

Exemples de la contribution du FEDER aux objectifs 2020

BRUSOC vise le soutien de 520 projets de création d'entreprises (microcrédit et fonds d'amorçage) et 255 prêts de trésorerie dans une perspective de création de 1300 emplois. Les prêts de trésorerie ont pour objectif le maintien d'activité économique dans la ZIP et visent à éviter la faillite de certaines activités en manque de trésorerie. Parallèlement à ces aides, BRUSOC accompagne de façon régulière et structurée les candidats. BRUSOC a soutenu actuellement 166 projets et créé 360 emplois.

VILLAGE FINANCE attribue des bourses d'un montant variant entre 6.200 et 18.600 euros. Ces bourses peuvent être destinées : à la création de très petites entreprises dont le porteur est en situation d'exclusion bancaire ainsi qu'à la création ou à la progression d'entreprises d'économie sociale et de business verts. Les bourses sont attribuées en complément d'un crédit de minimum 3.500 euros obtenus par le bénéficiaire. Ce sont actuellement 32 bourses (et autant d'emplois) qui ont été octroyées pour un total de 193.250 EUR.

Au niveau des CENTRES DE TECHNOLOGIES AVANCEES ce sont deux centres qui ont déjà ouverts leurs portes pour former des jeunes dans les secteurs de l'électricité résidentielle et industrielle ainsi que dans les énergies vertes et renouvelables.

7.2. Les Contrats de quartiers durables

Les Contrats de quartier durables jouent un rôle de premier plan dans les politiques transversales de renforcement des quartiers fragilisés. Ils constituent le principal outil intégré de mise œuvre de la Ville Durable à l'échelle des quartiers. Ces contrats auxquels les habitants sont étroitement associés via un dispositif de participation très important, permettent à la Région et aux Communes de réaliser des programmes pour améliorer le cadre et les conditions de vie des citoyens par des réalisations concrètes, comme l'aménagement d'espaces publics et de parcs, la production de logements et d'équipements collectifs. Ils fédèrent également une large gamme d'actions tournées vers la formation, l'insertion socioprofessionnelle et la cohésion sociale.

Depuis le 28 janvier 2010, une nouvelle ordonnance a permis de réformer le dispositif en y intégrant les enjeux du développement durables et les préoccupations environnementales propres à une Ville durable au 21ème siècle. En 2011, 4 nouveaux Contrats de quartier Durables ont été sélectionnés et totalisent plus de 43.600.000 € d'investissements destinés pour la période 2011 – 2015 au renforcement durable des quartiers fragilisés du territoire de la RBC.

En agissant sur l'ensemble des dimensions de la durabilité à l'échelle des quartiers populaires de la RBC – cohésion sociale, excellence environnementale, développement économique- cet outil de rénovation urbaine intégrée participe pleinement aux objectifs fixés par la Stratégie Europe 2020.

7.3. Simplification administrative et modernisation de la fonction publique

Actuellement, il existe trois enjeux en matière de simplification administrative en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale. Tout d'abord, la simplification administrative doit réduire les charges administratives des PME et des ménages, ainsi que les frais qui y sont liés (correspondances, déplacements, frais de

personnel,...). Ensuite, elle doit revaloriser le travail des agents et contribuer à une image positive de la fonction publique bruxelloise. Enfin, elle doit réduire les dépenses réalisées par la Région pour des fins administratives. Afin de faire face à ces trois défis, le Gouvernement de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale a lancé, le 15 novembre 2009, **le Plan bruxellois pour la simplification administrative**. Ce plan a pour objectif de réduire les charges administratives de 25% d'ici fin 2012, sur base de 11 chantiers. Chaque année, depuis 2009, 400.000 euros sont dégagés pour la coordination générale et le mesurage des charges administratives à l'aide du « Standard Cost Model (SCM) ».

Les étapes suivantes ont déjà été entreprises :

- **Diminuer les charges administratives dans le cadre d'adjudications publiques**. La plate-forme e-Procurement a été obligatoirement introduite. Depuis le 1er décembre, les autorités doivent mettre en ligne l'ensemble des cahiers des charges via l'application e-Notification, ce qui permet aux autorités de faire rapidement une économie de quelques centaines de milliers d'euros. Le deuxième volet, autorisant les entreprises à introduire des offres électroniques, a été lancé en 2011. Entretemps, la déclaration sur l'honneur et l'utilisation obligatoire de Digiflow ont également été introduits. De ce fait, seule l'entreprise la mieux classée doit maintenant prouver qu'elle répond aux obligations administratives. L'administration ne peut uniquement réclamer les documents dont elle ne peut disposer électroniquement. Tout ceci équivaut à une économie administrative de 85% des charges pour les adjudications publiques.

- **Diminuer les charges administratives des textes de loi**. Le 22 décembre 2010, le gouvernement a approuvé l'introduction du test « Sans Tracas ». Les modalités du test « Sans Tracas » ont ensuite été fixées par le Gouvernement le 24 mars 2011. Ce test est une version légère d'une Analyse de l'Impact de la Réglementation (AIR) et doit entraîner une réduction drastique des charges administratives pour la nouvelle réglementation bruxelloise.

- **Modernisation des formulaires de demande**. Ce projet est actuellement divisé en trois parties. Tout d'abord, l'objectif est de simplifier tous les formulaires, pas uniquement au niveau du contenu mais également la manière de demander les informations. L'objectif est que les formulaires soient compréhensibles pour le public cible. La deuxième partie concerne **la mise en ligne de tous les formulaires**. A cet égard, le Gouvernement a décidé le 17 novembre 2011 qu'IRISbox serait le guichet électronique pour l'ensemble de la région. Tous les nouveaux formulaires devront être mis en ligne sur Irisbox à partir du 1er janvier 2012. Les formulaires en ligne déjà existants ont encore le temps jusqu'au 1er janvier 2014. Ainsi, tous les formulaires du Ministère, des Organismes d'Intérêt Public et des communes figureront sur une seule plateforme. Plus tard dans l'année, les premiers formulaires seront reliés à l'application interne de l'administration, ce qui simplifiera également le travail des agents. Pour cette année, **l'application NOVA est prioritaire** (plateforme Web pour la gestion des dossiers relatifs aux demandes de permis d'urbanisme, de permis de lotir et de permis d'environnement, ainsi que des dossiers liés à la performance énergétique des bâtiments).

A l'heure actuelle, Nova permet aux administrations communales et régionales en charge des permis d'urbanisme d'instruire ces dossiers et de s'échanger les informations dont elles ont besoin.

Depuis le 1er mars 2012, la Région a mis en ligne sur le portail régional de l'urbanisme une application de « permis en ligne », avancée majeure en termes de simplification et de communication sur les procédures administratives relatives aux permis d'urbanisme demandés, octroyés, non octroyés en Région de Bruxelles-Capitale.

Dans la foulée de cette application et de l'adaptation des formulaires de demande de permis, une démarche complète de dématérialisation sera engagée pour donner aux citoyens la possibilité donnée aux citoyens d'introduire leur demande de permis directement en ligne.

Par ailleurs, pour l'année 2012, la Région bruxelloise se concentra également sur une ordonnance horizontale qui établit un équivalent électronique pour les signatures, formulaires, annexes ou recommandés papier. Ceci doit permettre, dans le cadre de chaque législation, de **communiquer électroniquement avec la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale**.

En dernière priorité, l'objectif est de réduire le nombre d'envois recommandés de la part des entreprises, citoyens, associations et autorités. Afin d'avoir un net aperçu de l'ampleur des charges administratives, la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale utilise le SCM. En priorité seront calculés les coûts de la législation pour l'Economie et l'Emploi, l'Environnement et les Impôts régionaux. En 2011, le coût des charges pour la législation de l'Economie et l'Emploi ont été calculées pour l'année 2007. Le coût s'élève à € 4.169.391. Le Plan bruxellois, une fois exécuté, entrainera une économie de 21%, soit € 880.791 sur les charges administratives. Lors de ce screening, des propositions supplémentaires de simplification administrative ont été présentées, entraînant une économie supplémentaire de € 373.979, soit une économie de 30% au total.

Annex 6: Regional Development Concept for the German-Speaking Community (DG): Living East Belgium – 2025

What makes life special in the DG? What makes it such a great business location? What can we do to protect and develop these qualities? What are our long-term development goals for the region and how do we envisage our Community in 2025?

These and other related questions were on the notepad when the Regional Development Concept (REK: Regionales Entwicklungskonzept) was being created. The process was initiated in May 2008 with a comprehensive stock-taking and regional analysis, whereby the strengths and weaknesses, chances and challenges of the DG were closely examined. On the basis of this study, strategic approaches and concrete recommendations were then identified in a wide-ranging round of talks with the key stakeholders. The results of this participatory dialogue were crystallized into a mission statement which characterized the DG as a Frontier Region, an Economic Region, a Learning Region, a Caring Region and a Living Region. The mission statement was published as REK volumes 1 and 2. In April 2011, with the addition of a third volume, the initial implementation phase of the REK with its 16 main projects and 48 sub-projects was described in detail. This present text summarizes the projects and their different approaches.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Crossing frontiers doing business naturally equal access to education securing good health for all building together living frontiers stimulating innovation supporting quality standards in schools social services hand in hand preserving the landscape interacting alliance for business and employment pathways to professionalism diversity wanted enjoying east Belgium youth is the future.

DG – THE FRONTIER REGION

A BRIDGE BETWEEN CULTURES, IDENTITIES AND BUSINESS LOCATIONS

It is our goal to use the unique cultural identity of the DG to further extend our role as a communications bridge for Wallonia and Flanders as well as the Netherlands, Germany and Luxemburg. For the development of networks and synergies in a spirit of transparency and openness, citizen volunteers also play a structurally vital part.

CROSSING FRONTIERS

Cooperation with our inland and foreign partners is a significant strength, one that we intend to systematically extend and expand, to feature the DG more strongly in its frontier neighbourhood and its European regional context. This involves active and sustainable participation in the development of the Meuse-Rhine Euregio, as well as with our Francophone neighbours and European partners. The bridge function of the DG, as a portal between linguistic and cultural homelands plays an important role here. Beyond such initiatives as „The World in East Belgium“, or „East Belgians Abroad“, we intend to increasingly involve our citizens in inter-frontier cooperation, while systematically refining an understanding of our own history.

LIVING FRONTIERS

Promoting an active and conscious frontier culture is vital for us, as our language and cultural identity justify our very existence as the DG. Our strategic goal is thus the conscious perception and advancement of this culture as a significant basis for the DG as a political community. This policy should rest on three pillars: the development of an innovative concept for cultural development, the advancement of youth culture as well as the preservation of the DG's cultural identity through a systematic approach to the recording of its immaterial heritage.

INTERACTING

We see a lively associative climate and the concomitant strengthening of voluntarism as further important contributions to maintaining and developing our identity. Both of these help to integrate our young people and to foster intergenerational dialogue in rural and urban districts. „Interacting“ will be developed in close collaboration with local authorities and will deal with inter-district issues, such as the creation of an Office of Voluntary Service to inform and consult with voluntary helpers, societies and clubs, organize specific training and promote an associative, opt-in culture of participation and voluntarism.

DG – THE ECONOMIC REGION

INNOVATION, COOPERATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

By 2025 we intend to significantly raise the profile of the DG as a region for skilled workers, trades and service industries, by advancing the scope of small to medium-sized firms through the effective implementation of professional support networks. Subjects such as sustainability, regionally based economic cycles, and openness for creative innovation will be high on the agenda.

DOING BUSINESS NATURALLY

Our intention is to consciously promote quality of life and a healthy natural environment as trump cards when choosing a business location, and to augment the value of these natural assets by concentrating on sustainable economic development. Developing a market strategy for regional production and pitching the DG as a model for energy efficiency and the use of renewables in Belgium will considerably enhance this incentive. Clear examples of how this future orientation can be implemented are the training of human-resource capacity for an energy-efficient and ecological construction industry, as well as the development of reference projects.

STIMULATING INNOVATION

Encouraging innovation in East Belgian companies leads naturally to an increase in competitiveness and easier access to research institutes, innovation clusters and business associations. Our aim is to encourage the various actors from „Creative Industries“ to interact more and network with other firms beyond our borders. Thanks to a variety of instruments available and the cooperation of local and foreign partners, this “innovation consulting“ can now accompany a firm from the inception of an idea to its full implementation. The creation of a network of partners from fields such as R&D, financial services, patents and intellectual property etc. can play an important part in stimulating innovation.

ALLIANCE FOR BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

Our goal is to ensure that the DG, as a business location, enjoys long-term economic prospects that develop in sync with the growth and expertise of its local workforce.

This means that we must enable our young people to make a seamless and meaningful transition from school to the workplace. In turn this also calls for employment policies that can ensure a suitable job for everyone who is experiencing short or long-term unemployment. Exemplary for this future-oriented project are our current initiatives for more mature unemployed people, who frequently possess valuable experience. In the field of „lifetime learning“, we aim to provide a high quality, client-oriented, simply and clearly-structured further education model.

DG – THE EDUCATIONAL REGION

OUR CAPITAL FOR THE FUTURE

Fairness and justice in education, a high quality standard for education and training, as well as comprehensive measures to ensure participation of all our young people: these are the strategic goals in this area.

EQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Success at school should not depend on your social background. This is why we make a strong mark for educational justice, creating a common primary section that takes every child up to eighth grade, while affording a maximum of individual attention.

This spirit of innovation also extends to the way we encourage the less advantaged, as testified by our „advancement decree“, which has launched such new projects as the homework school, integration modules for immigrant children and the „Time-Out-Project“. In addition this project features a newly structured Psycho-Medical Monitoring Service for schools (PMS) and health centres for school pupils, as well as other social services tailored to the needs of children and youth.

SUPPORTING QUALITY STANDARDS IN SCHOOLS

In order to ensure good educational results, not only good methodology, but also appropriate practise-oriented standards are required. When implementing educational standards that are rooted in competence acquirement, multi-lingual skills play a central role. Another strategic goal lies in the area of ongoing educational training. We intend to launch a broadly based information and further education offensive, featuring a programme of modular training elements designed for school directors and teaching staff, with the aim of developing a middle management level in our schools.

PATHWAYS TO PROFESSIONALISM

Taking into account the European Qualification Framework, we shall continue to develop a practically-rooted, professional and efficient vocational education sector. For young people, increased job aptitude improves employment chances, while also ensuring an up-to-date skills pool for regional companies to draw on. To this end, the barrier between school and vocational education needs to become more porous, and cooperation between educational systems needs our encouragement. We intend to ease the transition from school to vocational training for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds. At the same time, professional and technical education needs to become more attractive, offering a coherent path from apprenticeship through to a Bachelor’s degree.

YOUTH IS THE FUTURE

The range of opportunities available for youth, the intensive promotion of youth federations and open youth work, as well as the available structures to better integrate youth into the public dialogue are all designed to keep the DG attractive for its young people. Examples of this are the broad funding of open youth work and the assistance given for the vocational training of youth workers and

voluntary youth leaders. New to this is the pan-disciplinary approach, which places young people in the centre, taking into account their attitudes and the kind of world they live in.⁷

DG – THE CARING REGION

MAINTAINING SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL SERVICES

By 2025 we intend to have further extended the DG's citizen-centred, basic health service and the efficiency of its attendant care structures, thereby also ensuring high quality. Taking into account the demographic shift, disadvantaged citizens – whether in health, social or economic terms – and the strategic goal of increased caring and solidarity in the population will be given particular attention.

SECURING GOOD HEALTH FOR ALL

Our goal is to provide and further develop a health care model that is contemporary and appropriate. Important factors are the definitive anchoring and consolidation of the twin hospital locations Eupen and Saint Vith, as well as the promotion of a comprehensive network of family doctors. Raising the profile of caring professions is a further significant element of this project.

SOCIAL SERVICES HAND IN HAND

Our concern is to gather the existing social services together into a collegial network throughout the DG, a web of caring that can ensure high quality services for all strata and age-groups. This will require new synergies and optimized organizational models, so that the number of steps a person has to take before receiving a particular service can be kept to a minimum. Since the restructuring of the PMS and child care health centres have already been allotted to one of the region's educational projects, „Social Services Hand in Hand“ will be primarily concerned with services to adults and senior citizens.

DIVERSITY WANTED

Everyone who lives here should have the chance to take part in the life of the DG to the fullest degree of their capacities. The four sub-projects of this initiative are there to strengthen solidarity and caring within the community as a whole, thereby advancing the cause of social justice and equity. The leit-motif of this project is mirrored in each of these objectives: fighting poverty and exclusion of minorities, the inclusion of the disabled or challenged, and the socio-professional integration of those who find it most difficult to gain work.

DG – THE LIVING REGION

QUALITY OF LIFE IS IN OUR NATURE

We would like the DG to go on developing into a living space that offers high quality of life, with a wide diversity of culture, landscape, flora and fauna. This living space must guarantee the continuing harmony and development of rural areas, villages and towns, for the benefit of all who live here and all who would like to visit us: turning tourists into friends.

BUILDING TOGETHER

Acquiring the government competences of regional planning, urban development and housing represents both an opportunity and a responsibility for the DG. The transfer of these control authorities enables us to set the agenda for maintaining the DG as a living space and economic region, as much

for the more densely populated areas as for the rural heartland. The assumption of these fields of responsibility will be prepared in two working groups. These have already begun to refine the initial guiding principles that will underlay those programmes and planning instances, which will form the framework for the ongoing development of living, agricultural, economic and natural spaces.

PRESERVING THE LANDSCAPE

Natural and cultural diversity are important quality of life indicators in the DG. They are therefore decisive factors in maintaining the attractiveness of the region for future investment as well as for tourism. Agriculture and forestry need to be fully integrated into any future-oriented development plan for the preservation of this diversity. One example of this is the greater involvement of the High Fen-Eifel Nature Park (Naturpark Hohes Venn–Eifel) in the work of the Community, as well as the introduction of a Geographical Information System (GIS) for the nine local authorities of the DG.

ENJOYING EAST BELGIUM

We aim to shift the focus on East Belgium as a tourist destination by realigning the structures of tourism. This project concentrates on shaping the external marketing aspects of „East Belgium – the tourism region“ in cooperation with neighbouring local authorities in the North and South of the DG, as well as within the larger context of European Trade Federations. To better meet current and future demand, we shall help tourism service providers train their staff as well as to take advantage of the Quality Management System envisaged. In addition, a mission statement will be drawn up to serve as the basis of all planning for future-oriented tourism facilities in the DG.