

National report 2008 of the Flemish Community (Belgium)

“Education and Training 2010”

Editors

The editing team of the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training:
Gaby Hostens (chair), Maddy Bollen, Wilfried Boomgaert, Debby Peeters, Marie-Anne
Persoons.

With the collaboration of the Flemish Education Council.

1. PRESENTATION OF THE NATIONAL LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGY

Current state of play:

Through several policy briefs and notes and through the skills and competences agenda a comprehensive **lifelong learning strategy** has been designed and is being implemented. It is a strategy involving all stakeholders: public authorities as well as social partners, education and training providers and the public employment service. Meeting the twin challenges of efficiency and equity is central in the strategy.

The strategy is continuously being updated to meet new challenges and integrate new priorities. An effective lifelong learning strategy requires continuous reflection on new challenges and priorities. Input of all stakeholders is important, however, contradictory their expectations and demands may be.

Comprehensiveness, coherence and relevance:

The lifelong learning strategy covers all levels of education and training whether formal, informal or non-formal. A special emphasis is laid on pre-primary education for all children. A campaign is being launched to raise awareness among all families about the importance of early childhood education. The Flemish community has a high quality early childhood education system which is attended by the great majority of young children. However, a small percentage of children mainly from disadvantaged families are not enrolled or do not attend classes regularly, in despite of the fact that pre-primary classes are free of charge. Raising awareness of early childhood education can be an important tool to bring them to school. Early childhood education is important for social communicative and cognitive development of children, the more so from children for disadvantaged background.

Designing an overarching qualifications framework with effective integration of systems of recognition of informal and non-formal learning is another challenge and equity issue. Addressing participation of low-skilled people and immigrants in continuous learning is critical to enhance their employability.

Increasing the relevance of the education and training system is a continuing concern: constantly adapting the curriculum to societal expectations and new demands of industry.

Increased relevance of VET can contribute to increase participation and enhance its status. Major investments have been made in VET to achieve 2 objectives: upgrading infrastructure in VET schools (new and safe machines) and fostering access to more expensive studies through extra student grants.

The lifelong learning strategy is both comprehensive and coherent as it covers all levels and sectors of education and training and tries to achieve the twin objectives of efficiency and equity.

Main policy measures

In the **policy brief** 2004-2009:

1. Improving the transition from initial schooling to working life.
2. Designing a new funding mechanism in compulsory education : more resources for schools with many disadvantaged pupils.
3. Improving school leadership to pursue effective policies, f.e.
4. Improving the career of teachers.

are the main policy priorities.

In 2006, “**Skills and Competences Agenda**” initiative was launched by the Flemish Minister of Work, Education and Training. The agenda maps the needs for competence development and makes policy recommendations to tackle the skills gaps. During round tables the different **stakeholders** communicate their points of view. To enhance employability and to increase the employment rate and economic growth, an action programme for competence development of individuals and enterprises is drafted. Competence development will strengthen workers as well as enterprises to cope with transitions towards and changes in the labour market.

In search of further innovation, the Flemish Government is also implementing the action plan “Vlaanderen in actie” (Flanders in action), which includes several measures to foster innovation in the domain of education and training.

Within the department of Education and Training, a new unit was established, the Project Strategic Education and Training Policy. It deals with the implementation of the LLL-policy and involves several policy domains and the main goal is to implement policy priority 1 “**better linkages between education and the labour market**”. Improving workplace skills amongst pupils, students and the labour force is a major objective as is working towards better

alignment of the public education and training providers for infrastructure, personnel and study offer. In this respect better negotiation structures were sought for.

Improving the quality of workplace learning

In 2005-2006 a lot of work was done to establish a full time activity for all pupils in compulsory part-time education, if possible with work, and when that is not immediately possible, with preliminary courses and guidance. Late 2006, a green paper on the future Centres for Learning and Working was written to prepare new legislation about the **combination of learning and working** during compulsory education and for youngsters beyond the age of 18.

Since the end of 2006, policy lines concerning the quality of workplace learning have been drafted in order to reach following goals: comprehensive enhancement of competence development to have more qualified citizens. Based on a concept of quality assurance framework, a discussion about relevant quality indicators will be initiated. Outputs of this initiative will be incorporated in the “Skills and Competences Agenda”.

Further, more opportunities for work experience in the private, public and social profit sectors are sought for by means of covenants with certain professional sectors. This should enable young people from different types of education to gain genuine work experience to move more easily from education to the labour market. In September 2006, a **web-forum on practical training opportunities** was launched, where applicants and providers of trainee posts can meet. This web-forum of trainee posts is intended for prospective trainees and companies but also for the intermediaries, such as schools, training institutes, learning secretaries, interim offices. This forum is a good example of cooperation between adult education, compulsory and higher education.

Enhancing the dynamism of LLL

In this respect, the fundamental question is to figure out which instruments the government can implement to enhance the participation in LLL and raise the skills level of the population. As this is a very complex issue, the following issues are tackled first. Studies are being carried out to analyse systemic characteristics of countries that perform well as to participation in LLL, including the participation of groups at risk of exclusion.

Development of competences for labour market participation

The Flemish Government co finances many initiatives to stimulate **entrepreneurship** amongst students in compulsory and higher education (for example vzw Vlajo “Flemish Young Entreprises” and the “bridging projects economy-education”).

In Flanders, progress towards the EU benchmarks is being measured through the Pact of Vilvoorde, signed by Flemish Government and the social partners on 21 November 2001 and updated in 2005. Besides many of the EU benchmarks, specific national targets were included.

Measures to change attitudes to learning include improvements to the systems of **alternate learning** including an integrated approach towards workplace learning.

In 2005 and 2006, promotional activities for learning activities were continued using the L-label.

Impact of policy measures in education and training are being evaluated in several **evaluation studies** under various **research programmes** (OBPWO, VIONA, Steunpunt WAV en Steunpunt LOA). F.i. evaluation of the use of training cheques, timeout-projects, modularisation, ...

The goal of “**equal opportunities for all**” is the red thread through the education policy. For example, many policy measures focus on improving the knowledge of Dutch by foreigners. At the moment, in adult education there are no more waiting lists for the courses of Dutch as a second language (NT2). The budget for these courses was gradually increased during the last years.

Many policy measures are also directed at improving the pupils’ command of Dutch, the language of instruction.

The previous Flemish government approved an operational plan to **increase literacy levels** of the Flemish population. Implementation of this plan started in 2005-2006.

A screening instrument will be developed and made available to assess the problem and design more effective policies.

On 30 March 2007, the Flemish Government came to an agreement on the **reform of the education and care for pupils with a disability**. The new system, “leerzorgkader”, must guarantee that every child in the Flemish educational system receives tailored care. The new

system or framework includes both special education and mainstream education. It also focuses on widening access for pupils with a disability into mainstream schools by way of “inclusion”.

Development, implementation and dissemination of the strategy:

As a rule education and training policies in Flanders are discussed within the Flemish Education Council (VLOR), the advisory and consultative body for education and training policy (all education stakeholders are represented in this body).

A very important development since early 2005 is the implementation of **a new working structure for an integrated LLL policy** at the meeting place of Education, Training and Work. In this new structure, a distinction is made between three levels, each referring to one level of the policy cycle: policy decisions, policy support, and implementation of policy. The responsibility for education and training is divided across three different policy areas (Education and Training – Work and Social Economy – Culture), and several departments and organisations. Of course, each policy area in itself puts a lot of work in the implementation of LLL but the new working structure guarantees that all activities are communicated in a coordinated way and that those initiatives, where three policy domains are involved, are steered from that integrated structure.

At the central level, a strategic and coherent structure for the development and implementation of LLL policy has now been set up. However, working out an effective strategy for LLL policies at the local level remains a major challenge.

All relevant information on policy notes, discussion notes etc. can be consulted on the education and training website (<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be>).

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSVERSAL POLICY OBJECTIVES

Along the lines of the EQF, the Flemish Government is working on an **overarching (national) qualifications framework**. Since the concept of the Flemish qualifications framework comprises 8 levels, the connection with the EQF will be feasible. At this moment, a strategy involving all relevant stakeholders is being developed to approve and implement the Flemish qualifications structure, involving all relevant stakeholders. In October 2006, a green paper on the Flemish qualifications framework was submitted for advice to all official

advisory bodies in the field of education and training. At this moment the comments are being negotiated and this second consultation phase will result in a white paper leading towards a decree, establishing the Flemish qualification framework (proposed date: July 2008). At the end of 2006, 6 pilot projects were started to gain experience with the process of developing qualifications and relating them to a particular level of the structure. At the same time, the developmental process towards a qualifications databank was initiated.

Furthermore, the Flemish Government will soon start issuing certificate supplements that will be delivered to people who hold a vocational education and training certificate.

Implementation of a **qualification framework for higher education**

Legal framework

Dublin descriptors and ECTS ranges for bachelor and master degrees and learning objectives for the Ph.D. in relation to the Ph.D. thesis are legally stipulated in the Decree on the Structure of Higher Education, 04.04.2003.

Implementation on institutional level

Implementation at the level of higher education institutions is currently going on through a **learning outcome oriented curriculum reform**.

The Flemish Bologna Promoters' team plays an important role in animating this process by organising information sessions, seminars, discussion groups etc. The implementation is not limited to the generic QF but also applied in the context of concrete disciplines. On December 20, 2006, the Bologna Promoters' team has organised a seminar on which 3 pilot project of a Flemish QF for specific disciplines were presented (medical science, music, social work). The project on higher music education also took on board the work of in the context of TUNING prepared by AEC, which was also involved in the Flemish project.

Integration of LLL perspective in higher education (recognition of prior learning)

The procedures for **recognition of prior learning** which were already integrated in the Decree on flexible learning in Flemish Higher education (2004) but have been simplified and improved in the Decree on the establishment of measures for restructuring and flexibility in higher education (2006).

Each "association" (cooperation platform between universities and university colleges) is legally obliged to set up an agency for the validation of prior learning.

This validation of prior learning and/or of professional experience may lead to:

- access to higher education programmes
- shortening of study duration.

Procedure:

1. Applicants have to introduce a portfolio presenting prior learning experiences
2. Assessment by the validation agency of the “association” taking into account the learning outcomes of the programme applied for
3. Issuing of a competence certificate.

The system of appeal against the decisions of the validation agency has also been improved with the last Decree of 2006.

Identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning

Identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning is a **high priority** on the Flemish agenda as well, and that from different perspectives.

In 2005 the Flemish Government finished the union-making process on the acquisition of a professional title. With this aim, in 2006, a user-friendly service was set up. As this is an enormous challenge it will be established in stages, one for a group of professions every year. The Social-Economic Council of Flanders (SERV) advises on this list of professions every year and frames the uniform “standards” that outline the competences, derived from the occupational profiles. The latter are the minimum requirements to exercise a certain profession. The SERV carries out these activities in close cooperation with the sectoral social partners. In September 2006, a number of assessment bodies began to recognise and assess the competences linked to 6 different professional titles. At the end of the process, the assessment body provides a recommendation to the Flemish Government, which in his turn awards the professional titles to the people who have successfully passed the assessment procedure.

Flanders is participating in the **OECD-study** on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. The review or site visit is planned for May 2007 and it will involve Education and Training, Work, Culture, Youth and Sports. The background report for the study gives an overview of all current initiatives in Flanders. The initiatives concerning recognition of non-formal and informal learning are numerous but seem disparate and too little co-ordinated.

The skills Agenda has set a goal in establishing an overarching and broad policy on the recognition of acquired competences.

Until recently, guidance policies and systems focused separately on target groups like pupils, unemployed people or employed people. With the elaboration of the Skills Agenda, study and career guidance initiatives will be better co-ordinated and aligned strategically toward a **lifelong guidance approach**. F.e.: pupils, teachers and parents must be better informed about the world of work and its opportunities; a portfolio, useful for all policy domains and for the whole lifecycle, will be developed.

The future relation of the Flemish Qualifications Structure to the EQF will facilitate transnational mobility.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSVERSAL POLICY OBJECTIVES IN SCHOOLS, HIGHER EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT EDUCATION

Because of the constitutional provision of freedom of education pedagogical and organisational autonomy has always been a key characteristic of the education and training system. Providers of education enjoy a large autonomy in pedagogical, organisational and personnel matters within a broad regulatory framework laid down by Parliament and the government.

Meeting quality and legal requirements is a condition to be funded by the State.

However, we do want to **strengthen leadership** in all schools as improving school leadership is central to delivering quality education for all. Strengthening leadership is critical to effectively implement a knowledge-rich environment for all schools. Tests and surveys are tools by excellence to create such an environment. We want to give schools a mirror in which they can see their own performances and benchmark them against performances of schools with a comparable intake and study profile. According to us a knowledge-rich environment is more conducive to long-lasting improvements of school performances than external exams and ranking of schools.

The inspectorate is one of the pillars of the **quality assurance mechanism**. A team of inspectors monitor the quality of schools. The system of school reviews is currently being scrutinised with the objective to improve their efficiency and impact. Having a more focussed

review based on risk indicators is one possible avenue to increase accountability for schools-at-risk.

Recently, school reports by the inspectorate have been published and analysed by newspapers. Schools have not been ranked. Publishing school reports by the inspectorate on the departmental website is another strategy to improve accountability.

A joint Dutch-Flemish accreditation agency was set up within the framework of the Bologna process. Currently, they are monitoring quality in higher education institutions and accrediting them.

Currently, a **new funding mechanism** is being designed to be implemented in 2008. Using indicators of student background (educational attainment of mother, family income, neighbourhood characteristics, language spoken at home) as drivers for school resources is central in the new mechanism. The main policy objective is to increase resources for schools that have a large intake of SEN-students. In this way schools will have the resources they need to cope with major challenges.

In **higher education** the focus is on the issue of **international recognition of quality assessments** as a basis for mutual trust necessary for future automatic recognition of degrees and qualifications.

The Joint Accreditation Body of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) is actively working in the framework of the European Consortium for Accreditation on the mutual recognition of accreditation decisions of its members.

The Decree on the Structure of Higher Education, 4 April 2003, contains a framework for general and automatic recognition of degrees and qualifications based on recognition of the quality assurance system. E.g. art. 87 : "The Flemish Government will stipulate the general recognition of higher education degrees and certificates from countries where the Lisbon Recognition Convention of 11 April 1997 is applicable with the corresponding Flemish certificates and degrees upon favourable advice of the Flemish Interuniversity Council and the Flemish Council of University Colleges. The advice concerns the question whether an equivalent system of QA is in operation making use of equivalent accreditation frameworks. Such advice will be considered as given if not received within the delays set".

Developing partnerships with all stakeholders is key in developing effective educational policies. Institutions such as the Flemish Educational Council (VLOR), representing all

stakeholders, the University Rectors' Conference (VLIR) and the University College directors' Conference (VLHORA) are instrumental in such partnerships. The VLOR is representative for the providers, the teaching unions, parents, students, etc.

3.2. Schools

Raising awareness of the **importance of pre-primary education** is one important strategy plank to strengthen this level of education. At the same time, investments in human resources for pre-primary education are being increased. Development of linguistic skills is important at this stage for all children, but often the home language is not the language of instruction. Additional pre-primary school teachers will contribute to smaller classes thus providing more opportunities for teachers to develop communicative skills in the language of instruction. Being fluent in the language of instruction is critical to improving school performances, enhancing integration in society and improving employability.

Investments for **additional staff pre-primary education** are being increased but substantial funds are also invested in making basic education free of charge. Schools receive additional resources for operational expenses. Access to grants for secondary school students is widened and opened for primary school students. They will prove to be major contributions to making basic education free of charge for all students.

Developing key competences has always been a central feature of our education and training system and the core curriculum has always focussed on them. Still, we have benchmarked the core curriculum against the key competences laid down by the European Parliament. We found out that the EU key competences are well integrated in the Flemish core curriculum. In cooperation with the EC we organised a peer learning activity to disseminate good practice. The PISA 2000 and 2003 results show that we deliver excellent average results in the 3 domains (mathematical, scientific and reading literacy). Yet, the impact of socio-economic background of students is strong and the gap between the best performing students and the weaker performers is very wide. First and second generation immigrant students do not perform well either.

High quality teachers are critical to high quality and high equity. A major reform of initial teacher training focussing on more effective practice during initial training and on better mentoring during the induction period will contribute to a teaching force better equipped to

tackle the challenges ahead. At the same time, the curriculum of initial teacher training institutions will focus strongly on the basics: mathematics, language of instruction, use of ICT, etc. **A new core curriculum for teacher training institutions** has been drafted and will be implemented as of the academic year 2007-2008.

Reducing early school leaving is one of the objectives of a comprehensive truancy reduction plan.

Schools must communicate to the department of education the names of all the students that have been enrolled. This procedure will enable the department to effectively monitor enrolment of all students under 18.

3.3. Higher education

Recent legislative changes

- **Decree on the establishment of measures for restructuring and flexibility in higher education** in Flanders of 16 June 2006 (official publication 12.10.2006), also called “Mini-decree for higher education” provided further measures facilitating the implementation of the Bologna process in Flanders. It includes measures in the area of validation/recognition of prior learning, flexible learning paths, quality assurance and accreditation. The overall aim was to enhance the autonomy of the HEIs in those areas and to achieve a better accountability. Another important measure was the authorization of the accreditation body to recognize foreign accreditations and quality judgements provided that they comply with the Bergen Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.
- **Decree on study grants and provision for students in higher education** of the Flemish Community of 30 April 2004 (official publication 28.07.2004), adjustments of amount of grants 2005, 2006 : entails more and higher grants for more students
- **Decree on teacher training in Flanders** (voted in plenary by the Flemish Parliament, 6 December 2006)

Efficiency and equity in HE

- Monitoring is currently focussed on the access and retention of students from immigrants families. Special incentives are given to the HEIs tackling this problem. Study support facilities must help prevent students from disadvantaged families from dropping out.

- Future Decree on a new model of funding higher education (Concept document adopted by the Flemish Government 14.07.2006, draft decree foreseen Spring 2007, operational start foreseen for 01.01.2008) will be more output oriented and is expected to stimulate HEIs to pay attention not only to access but also to completion of studies of students (retention issues).

Universities and research

Universities are key players in **research** in Flanders. 51 % of public research budget goes to universities (direct funding or through Research Council), 49 % goes to other research institutions (project funding, applied public research, but about half of this funds find their way back to the universities).

The Flemish Ministry of Economy, Research and Innovation has increased the **appropriations** to the universities and the research council for post-doctoral positions. There is also a small increase of the funds for tenure positions at the universities.

Participation in MST is quite satisfactory in Flanders, especially when taking into account the increase of enrolments in neighbouring disciplines like pharmaceutical sciences and biomedical science, which also show a different gender balance (majority of female students).

3.4. Vocational education and training and adult learning

Improving the quality and attractiveness of VET.

Since 2004 (in the Flemish Community) the **modularisation** of adult education has been fully implemented. Basic Education for adults is now in transition towards modularised trajectories. That makes it easier for individuals to combine learning and work.

In order to enhance the synergy between all providers of formal adult education and training, the Flemish government is writing a **new decree on adult education**. The new legislation will not only stimulate co-operation between the different providers, it will also impose this if necessary. The innovations introduced by the previous decree from 1999 (for example the introduction of the modular system and minimal targets, the certification system and the recognition of acquired competences) will be strengthened.

In the Flemish Community the transferability of learning outcomes is not regulated within a credit system, but there are a lot of **possibilities to transfer learning outcomes** by the way of certificates. Recent regulations (such as the Decree 2004 on flexible learning in higher education) make it possible to get “exemptions” of subjects or examinations based on prior learning (early acquired certificates) or prior professional experience.

In 2005-2006 VET schools (secondary education) got extra funding for **investments in basic equipment**. Cooperation between VET schools of the same region was a condition to get this extra funding. Those extra resources were 200 € per pupil or 10,503,000 € for 206 VET schools.

During 2005-2006, the 6 Regional Technological Centres were working hard to facilitate secondary schools (both pupils and teachers) to get **easy access to high-technological infrastructure**. Many projects concerning sharing or buying infrastructure were set up, heavily supported or driven by sectoral organisations.

Reinforcing links between VET and labour market

In the Flemish Community we have several **cooperation platforms** that are useful to identify skill needs of the labour market:

- at ‘national’ level: the Flemish Social Economic Council (SERV), which among other things is responsible for designing professional profiles; the expertise network ‘Steunpunt WAV’ that is responsible for qualitative and quantitative monitoring of the labour market; the yearly report of VDAB on labour market developments and mismatches between vacancies and available skills/certificates;
- at regional level: the ERSVs (Recognised Regional Collaboration Associations) and RESOCs (Regional Social Economic Consultation Committees) that collect and study the socio-economic data of regions.

Pathways to further and higher education.

We have an **open access system to higher education**. Only for two programmes (Medical Science and Dentistry) entrance examinations are organised and all those who succeed can enroll.

For **Bachelor programmes** (both professional and academic) the general admission requirement is the Flemish ‘Diploma van secundair onderwijs’, the secondary school-leaving certificate.

If a foreign qualification is recognised on the basis of a Flemish decree, a Belgian law, a European directive or an international convention, the holder will have direct access to Bachelor programmes. Admission may also be granted to foreign students, after individual assessment of their secondary education diploma, if it gives access to higher education in the student's country of origin. The higher education institution boards are also allowed to admit people who do not meet the general admission requirement.

Participants in adult education must have finished full-time compulsory education -, but not necessarily hold a diploma of secondary education. For some training programmes, specific entry requirements apply.

The higher education sector is also running pilot projects aiming at facilitating progression from adult education programmes to higher education degree programmes. The universities have bridging programmes in place in order to facilitate transition of students with a professional higher education degree to an academic master course programme.

From 2006 onwards, a new kind of educational pathway is being designed to so-called “**higher professional education**” (to be compared with the so-called “short degrees”). It offers short professional programmes to achieve a relevant labour market qualification at EQF-level five.

In 2005-2006, a **modular pathway** specifically for **adult teachers, trainers and instructors** was developed. It will be implemented in experimental form as of September 2007.

General involvement of social partners

At ‘national level’ the Flemish Community has a long tradition of a **well-structured dialogue** in organisations in which the public authorities, **social partners** and NGO's are represented:

- the Flemish Social Economic Council (SERV): the advisory and consultative body for social and economic policy, bringing together the Flemish social partners (employers and employees).
- the Flemish Economic and Social Negotiation Committee (VESOC): forum for negotiations between the Flemish Government and the Flemish social partners.
- the Flemish Education Council (VLOR): advisory and consultative body for education and training policy.

Such platforms do improve the delivery of VET.

One example: the professional profiles that are developed by the SERV are useful benchmarks to update/modernise the content of VET, to work out standards (as for the assessment of prior learning) and for description of qualifications.

Since 2002 agreements (sector covenants) have been concluded between the minister of Work and the social partners of 24 different economic sectors, both from industry and services. In these agreements, provisions are made to improve the transition between education and labour market and the LLL strategy in different economic sectors.

In the period 2005-2006 these covenants were renewed and performance targets are quantified (e.g. numbers of disabled persons or migrants that can participate in training organised or funded by the sector).

The new educational pathway “higher professional education” will enable early school leavers to obtain an official diploma of secondary education while they are studying to obtain a qualification at EQF-level 5.

As part of the Skills Agenda, a comprehensive approach towards early school leavers is being developed. F.e.: better co-operation between educational partners and the VDAB in order to improve qualifications of this vulnerable group of youngsters.

Financial measures to increase adult participation in lifelong learning

In order to help individuals invest in the development of their competences, the Flemish Government has decided to share this training cost by means of **training vouchers**.

In addition to the training vouchers for companies, Flemish Government introduced training vouchers for workers in the private or public sector. With these vouchers, workers can finance training, career advice and competence assessment. Per calendar year, workers can buy vouchers for up to a maximum of 250 EUR of which they pay half the amount. The Flemish Government pays the other 50%. The Flemish Government entrusted the coordination and implementation of this system of training vouchers to the Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB). The training vouchers are very popular. The first year (2003) there were about 100,000 requests for vouchers, in 2005 the amount of requests grew above 200,000.

Since 1 September 2004, three new measures have been launched:

1. Workers with a diploma of secondary education, who want to study a higher education course of considerable duration, can obtain additional training vouchers for up to 250 EUR per calendar year.
2. Low-skilled workers who enroll for second chance education can get their contribution of 50% of the training vouchers reimbursed.
3. Since 1 September 2005, the ceiling of 250 EUR can be lifted.
for workers who at the time of their request for career guidance belong to the vulnerable target groups (disabled, older workers, migrants, low-skilled).
The value of the voucher can be increased to cover the cost for career guidance.

In the Flemish Community CVET is offered in a variety of forms, such as e-learning, modules, weekend and evening courses, and on-the-job training.

This objective of better information and guidance is pursued by different instruments: a **central database on training** offer ‘wordwatjewil’ (www.wordwatjewil.be), Public career guidance centres and competence centres from the VDAB (Flemish Employment Service).

Since 2005 sixteen centres for career guidance to Flemish workers have been certified by the Flemish government. But the Flemish Public Employment Service (VDAB) is also offering career guidance for workers. The career guidance in the centres must result in a personal development plan which describes the steps to be taken in order to build up the desired career. Starting a training course can be one such action.

VDAB’s competence centres provide four services: training for unemployed and employed people including blended learning, career guidance for workers, certification including validation of prior learning and information on the labour market, work, education and training. These competence centres have now been fully implemented and consolidated in the Flemish and Brussels Regions.