



EUROPEAN SOCIAL POLICY NETWORK (ESPN)

National monitoring frameworks for public social spending

Belgium

Karel Van den Bosch and Anne Van Lancker



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Directorate D — Social Rights and Inclusion
Unit D.2 — Social Protection

Contact: Flaviana Teodosiu

E-mail: flaviana.teodosiu@ec.europa.eu

*European Commission
B-1049 Brussels*

European Social Policy Network (ESPN)

**ESPN Thematic Report on
National monitoring frameworks
for public social spending**

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Summary

In Belgium, most social protection is organised at the federal level. Family allowances, long-term care benefits and housing benefits are regulated by the federated entities' governments (hereafter referred to as "regional" governments); the latter also bear some of the investment costs of hospitals. The social integration income, including the guaranteed minimum income, is administered by municipal services on the basis of federal legislation, and with federal co-financing. At the federal level, some benefits are administered by the federal government itself while most social security benefits are administered by social security funds.

Statistics on social protection expenditure are published by the Belgian National Bank (BNB) in its tables on government finances. Data are broken down by the government level responsible (federal, regional, local). The grouping of expenditure in those statistics follows a national accounts logic in its main headings, and below that reflects the institutional organisation of social protection in Belgium. The BNB statistics do not cover all expenditure included in ESSPROS (European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics).

Total expenditure on social security and by Public Centres for Social Welfare, which administer social assistance, is monitored on a monthly or quarterly basis by the Monitoring Committee (a federal institution), as part of its role in monitoring the state's revenue and expenditure. These are the most up-to-date data. These statistics do not cover all expenditure included in ESSPROS.

The Federal Public Service for Social Security (FPS-SS) collects and publishes statistics on all social protection expenditure (and revenue) in Belgium. Apart from the ESSPROS and System of Health Accounts (SHA) data, the main publication is the "Vademecum", though this does not cover benefits administered by regional governments. The 2020 edition was published in 2021 and contains figures for 2014-2018. The FPS-SS also publishes budgetary data on social protection (projected or planned expenditure), which have the important advantage that they are available for the current and most recent years.

The Court of Audit publishes data on expenditure in its yearly Social Security Reports, and also discusses yearly changes in this expenditure.

Apart from these more or less comprehensive national frameworks, various government entities publish their own statistics, including the social security funds and departments and agencies of regional governments. There is wide variation in the accessibility, content and timeliness of these statistics. The federated entities as such do not monitor their overall social protection spending.

The Belgian Healthcare Knowledge Centre (KCE) analyses the performance of the Belgian health system as a whole, and reports on it using a range of indicators, in its five-yearly reports as part of "Health Systems in Transition".

The Flemish government has recently introduced a general budget-assessment process which involves the screening of spending by different departments, including on social protection measures. The Flemish, Brussels and Walloon regions publish indicators on the social situation of the population, which can be used to assess the effectiveness of social protection.

Though there are a number of monitoring tools and attempts at monitoring the social impacts of social protection spending, there is no unified framework for this, at either federal or regional level. A lot of data on social expenditure are available, often in considerable detail. However, data are scattered over many institutions, in particular those relating to regional benefits.

A promising development is the ongoing research project to create the "BELMOD" microsimulation model, which is co-ordinated by the FPS-SS, and in which several government entities and academic partners are co-operating. The finished BELMOD model would enable *ex ante* policy evaluations of the social impact of the Belgian social protection schemes and regulations.

1 Country-specific monitoring frameworks for public social spending

1.1 Country-specific dedicated monitoring framework(s)

1.1.1 Introduction

In Belgium, most social protection is organised at the federal level. Family allowances, long-term care benefits and housing benefits are regulated by the regional¹ governments; the latter also bear some of the investment costs of hospitals. The social integration income (including the guaranteed minimum income – *Leefloon, Revenu d'Intégration*) is administered by municipal services on the basis of federal legislation, and with federal co-financing. At the federal level, some benefits are administered by the federal government itself: civil servants' pensions, and means-tested benefits for disabled people of working age. Most social security benefits (and social security contributions) are administered by social security funds, which operate at the federal level. These are managed on a tripartite basis by representatives of organisations of employers and employees, and people appointed by the federal government.

The statistical institutes (*Statbel* at the federal level, *Statistiek Vlaanderen* for Flanders, and *Institut Wallon de l'évaluation, de la prospection et de la statistique* – IWEPS – for Wallonia) are not involved in monitoring social expenditure.

1.1.2 Statistics from the Belgian National Bank

The BNB publishes data on social protection expenditure in its statistics on government finances. Data are broken down by the government level responsible (federal, regional, local). The main table of interest is the "Breakdown of social benefits", under "Non-financial".²

The grouping of expenditure in this table follows a national accounts logic in its main headings, and below that reflects the institutional organisation of social protection in Belgium. Table A1 (see Annex 1 to this report) shows the descriptions of the various rows in that table, with an indication as to which levels of government (federal, regional, local, social security funds) have expenditure in which rows. It must be emphasised that this BNB table does not cover all expenditure included in ESSPROS. A comparison between the entries in the BNB statistics and in ESSPROS has never been made.³

Another table in the BNB system of statistics – "Government spending by functions and transactions, by institutional sector" – also contains data on social protection (heading No 10), using the COFOG classification, so distinguishing between: Sickness and disability; Old age; Survivors; Family and children; Unemployment; Housing; Social exclusion not elsewhere classified (n.e.c); R&D social protection; and Social protection (n.e.c.). Most of these headings seem similar to the main categories of the ESSPROS tables, but, again, the

¹ That is, the language-based "communities" (Flemish, French-speaking, German-speaking) and "regions" (Brussels Capital Region, Flanders, Wallonia). See [Belgium, a federal state | Belgium.be](https://belgium.be) for an introduction to the way the Belgian federal state is organised. Communities and regions both have some responsibilities in the social protection domain.

² <https://stat.nbb.be>

³ Information from the civil servant responsible for ESSPROS. Apparently, there are many differences in all entries as regards the definitions and the sources for these two databases. The differences are not minor: according to the ESSPROS data, total expenditure on social protection in 2019 in Belgium was €130,905 million while for the same year the total of the BNB table is €117,056 million.

amounts reported for 2019 are not the same. Furthermore, this table splits total expenditure between capital expenditure (gross capital formation), and current expenditure (*inter alia*, compensation of employees, subsidies, social benefits in cash and in kind). It is known that the BNB tables and the ESSPROS tables are based on different definitions and different sources, but a systematic comparison has not been carried out.

Finally, aggregate figures for social benefits in cash and in kind, without further detail and without capital expenditure, are published in the Quarterly Government Account.

1.1.3 The Monitoring Committee

Overall monitoring of all government expenditure (and revenue), including that on social protection, is carried out by the Monitoring Committee (*Monitoringcomité, Comité de Monitoring*), part of the Federal Public Service Policy and Support (*Beleid en Ondersteuning, Stratégie et Appui*).⁴ Its mission is to monitor the evolution of the state's revenue and expenditure, to formulate forecasts and to report regularly and accurately on the current and future budgetary situation. It receives data from the federal, regional and local authorities, as well as other public bodies, notably those administering social protection benefits. Published data are based on EU Directive 2011/85/EU,⁵ and – as with the BNB tables – are structured according to the Belgian federalised state structure. The following entities refer to social protection.

- Social security (*Sociale zekerheid, Sécurité sociale*): These show monthly expenditure on benefits by branch for the sectors: Employees; Self-employed; Healthcare; and Civil servants' pensions. The latest published data are for February 2021.
- Public Centres for Social Welfare: These show, *inter alia*, quarterly expenditure by each region on transfers to households and enterprises, which can be assumed to consist almost exclusively of social assistance.

Not all expenditure included in the ESSPROS tables is covered, and the differences are not minor.⁶ Some expenditure on social protection is likely to be included in the entries on transfers by other entities (federal government, regional governments, municipalities) to households and enterprises, but there they cannot be distinguished from transfers that are not part of social protection.

1.1.4 Statistics published by the Federal Public Service for Social Security

The FPS-SS collects and publishes statistics on all social protection expenditure (and revenue). The statistics published by the FPS-SS include the ESSPROS and SHA data. As these are readily available on the EU and OECD websites, we do not discuss them further here.

As we saw for the BNB and Monitoring Committee, the social spending statistics published by the FPS-SS do not follow the functional classification of ESSPROS, but reflect the organisation of social protection (in so far as it is regulated at the federal level), with partially separate systems for employees, the self-employed and civil servants (as well as

⁴ <http://www.begroting.be/FR/monitorCom.html>

⁵ Council Directive 2011/85/EU of 8 November 2011 on requirements for budgetary frameworks of the Member States.

⁶ As an indication, in 2019 total expenditure on the entries listed above according to the Monitoring Committee tables was about €116,293 million, considerably less than the ESSPROS total of €130,905 million.

some small additional systems, e.g. for miners and seamen/seawomen), while healthcare and social integration are accessible for the whole population.

The main publication on statistics relating to social protection is the **Vademecum**.⁷ It covers all branches of social protection, including social integration allowances, except those administered by regional governments. For the systems regarding employees, self-employed persons and healthcare, both economic accounts and statistics are published. The **economic accounts** are accounting tables which show, by branch listed above, total expenditure on benefits, administrative costs, revenues and transfers between branches and systems.

The **statistics** on social protection cash benefits published by branch include the number of beneficiaries or reimbursed days or months (in the case of benefits which tend to be temporary, such as sickness/invalidity and unemployment benefits), the average benefit and total benefits paid.

In addition to the Vademecum and the ESSPROS statistics, the FPS-SS also publishes **budgetary data** on social protection: revenue and expenditure by the branches and systems presented above. These are drafted according to accounting practices, except that investment is aggregated with administrative costs. Although these tables contain projected or planned expenditure, not incurred expenditure, they have the important advantage that they are available for much more recent years than the statistics in the Vademecum. As they are updated each year, the data for previous years are presumably quite close to the final statistics.

1.1.5 The Court of Audit

The Court of Audit (*Rekenhof, Cour des Comptes*) exercises external scrutiny of the budgetary, accounting and financial operations of the federal state, communities, regions, public service institutions depending upon them (including the social security funds), and provinces.⁸ Each year it produces a Social Security Report, which examines the financial position in relation to social security, and introduces several audits on the financial management of social security institutions and on other themes regarding social security.⁹ The report shows expenditure in euros by the main branches of social security, and the growth in this expenditure compared with previous years. It also discusses the reasons for changes in expenditure.

1.1.6 Statistics published by the social security funds

The public organisations which are responsible for the administration of the various branches of social security (sickness and invalidity, pensions, unemployment) generally publish their own statistics. Table A3 in Annex 3 to this report provides an overview of the format and the timeliness of these sources. There is wide variation in the format, and also in the content of the statistics published. Nevertheless, it is clear that in many cases those statistics are available much earlier than the Vademecum. For example, statistics for the important branches of pensions and unemployment, and the sector of social assistance, can be found for the year 2020.

⁷ <https://socialsecurity.belgium.be/fr/publications/vade-mecum-des-donnees-financieres-et-statistiques-de-la-protection-sociale-en-belgique>

⁸ [Presentation | Court of Audit \(ccrek.be\)](#)

⁹ [Details | Court of Audit \(ccrek.be\)](#)

1.2 Separate monitoring framework(s) linked to schemes provided by employers

A dedicated website, organised by several public organisations, presents data on the number of people who are affiliated with an occupational pensions fund (i.e. for whom employers pay or have paid contributions into a fund).¹⁰ Distinctions are made between people for whom contributions have been paid, or not, in the reference year; by gender, age category, residence in Belgium or elsewhere; and between employees and the self-employed. Absolute numbers and participation rates are reported. Data are available in Excel format, in Dutch and French. The latest published data refer to 2020. However, these data do not cover payments to beneficiaries.

Otherwise, as far as we are aware, there are no monitoring frameworks for schemes provided by employers.

1.3 Distinction between current expenditure and capital expenditure

The table in the BNB system of statistics "Government spending by functions and transactions, by institutional sector", described above, splits total expenditure between capital expenditure (gross capital formation), and current expenditure (*inter alia*, compensation of employees, subsidies and social benefits in cash and in kind). As noted above, the definitions and sources for this table are different from those of the ESSPROS data.

1.4 Type of monitoring: level and outcomes

All national monitoring frameworks only monitor the level of spending. The FPS-SS also monitors social outcomes, but through a specific tool, mentioned in Section 2.

1.5 Level of granularity of public social spending

The **BNB** system of statistics "Government spending by functions and transactions, by institutional sector" contains data on social protection (heading No 10) using the COFOG¹¹ classification, so distinguishing between: Sick and disabled; Old age; Survivors; Family and children; Unemployment; Housing; Social exclusion n.e.c.; R&D Social protection; and Social protection n.e.c. (see Table A1 in Annex 1 to this report). Amounts are in euros in current prices.

As regards social protection, the data of the **Monitoring Committee** are presented as follows (in euros in current prices).

- Social security: These data show monthly expenditure on benefits by branch for the social protection systems for employees and for the self-employed, and also for the social protection schemes for healthcare and civil servants' pensions.
- Public Centres for Social Welfare: These data show, *inter alia*, quarterly expenditure by each region on transfers to households and enterprises – which can be assumed to consist almost exclusively of social assistance.

The social spending statistics published by the **FPS-SS** do not follow the functional classification of ESSPROS, but reflect the organisation of social protection (in so far as it is regulated at the federal level), with partially separate systems for employees, the self-employed and civil servants (as well as some small additional systems), whereas healthcare and social integration cover the whole population. The Vademecum covers all

¹⁰ www.pensionstat.be

¹¹ Classification of the Functions of Government.

branches of social protection listed in Annex 2 to this report. For the systems regarding employees, self-employed persons and healthcare, both economic accounts and statistics are published. The **economic accounts** are accounting tables which show, by branch listed above, total expenditure in euros in current prices on benefits and administrative costs, revenue, and transfers between branches and systems.

In the Social Security Report by the Court of Audit, expenditure is broken down by system (employees, the self-employed, government) and branch (pensions, unemployment, disability), with a little more detail on healthcare expenditure.

1.6 Breakdown of public social spending

All data published by the BNB, Monitoring Committee and Court of Audit refer to the population as a whole. The FPS-SS **Vademecum statistics** on social protection cash benefits reported by branch include the number of beneficiaries or reimbursed days or months (in the case of benefits which tend to be temporary, such as sickness/invalidity and unemployment benefits), the average benefit and total benefits paid. Statistics are almost always broken down by gender, sometimes by age category, and generally by characteristics relevant for the particular branch. Table A2 in Annex 2 to this report provides further details on these. Statistics published by social security funds are often broken down by gender and by age category, and generally by characteristics relevant for the particular branch, but there is no unified breakdown system.

1.7 Timing and public accessibility of data

BNB statistics are published in English, Dutch and French through an online application; extraction to Excel files (or other formats) is possible. Detailed data under "Breakdown of social benefits" are published yearly near the end of the year after the reference year (though provision figures are available around April). This is more timely than the schedule required by COFOG. Provisional aggregate data in the quarterly accounts are available a few months after the end of each quarter.

The **Monitoring Committee** publishes its data in Excel tables in Dutch and French. Being updated on a monthly (social security expenditure) or quarterly (other social protection expenditure) basis, these are the most timely data available – considerably more timely than is required by COFOG.

Each Vademecum edition for year T is published in year T+1 and contains figures for the years up to T-2 (so less timely than the COFOG data). It is available online in Dutch and French, as a portable document format (pdf) file. The **FPS-SS budgetary data** on social protection are published in Excel tables in Dutch and French versions. These are drafted according to accounting practices, except that investment is aggregated with administrative costs. While these tables contain projected or planned expenditure, not incurred expenditure, they have the important advantage that they are available for the most recent years, and even including the current year. They are therefore much more timely than the statistics in the Vademecum and ESSPROS, or the COFOG data. As they are updated each year, the data for previous years are presumably quite close to the final statistics.

The **Court of Audit** publishes its Social Security Reports as pdf documents on its website in Dutch and French, in yearly instalments. Reports are approved in the second half of the year after the latest reference year.

1.8 Sub-national frameworks

At the level of the regions and communities, data on social protection expenditure as such are not gathered or published apart from the statistics collected by the BNB and the Monitoring Committee.

Since these social benefits were regionalised, some statistics on family/child allowances and on benefits related to disability or dependency (mostly for older people aged 65 or over) are published separately by the regions and communities, without co-ordination, mostly in annual reports of the government departments or agencies responsible for these benefits. However, many of those are not easily accessible, as these reports are in Dutch or in French only, and cover many other matters; and it is often not clear what the reported amounts represent – benefits in cash, benefits in kind or working costs. In addition, they tend to be published one to two years after the reference year. For the purpose of monitoring, these scattered and difficult-to-process data seem of very little use. We provide some descriptions and references for the most important social expenditure in each region.

1.8.1 The Flemish region/community

In the Flemish region, family/child allowances are part of the Growth Package, and reported on in an annual report (in Dutch) on the most important data regarding child allowances in Flanders, by the responsible administration (*Agentschap Opgroeien*); the latest report is for 2020.¹² A distinction is made between the basic allowance and various additional allowances. Some of these allowances are means-tested, others are targeted at categories of children in need (orphans, children with disabilities), while some are conditional on the child being in school or daycare. Amounts are in 2019 prices.

Data on expenditure on a number of benefits related to disability are published in the annual report (in Dutch) of the Flemish Agency for Social Protection (*Agentschap Vlaamse Sociale Bescherming*), with a delay of about one year.¹³ This report distinguishes between the following benefits.

- Care budget for severely dependent people (*het zorgbudget voor zwaar zorgbehoevenden*). This is a fixed non-means-tested cash benefit.
- Care budget for older people with care needs (*het zorgbudget voor ouderen met een zorgnood*). This cash benefit used to be a federal allowance. It is available only for people aged 65 or over, means-tested and graded by five levels of dependency.
- Care budget for people with disabilities (*het zorgbudget voor mensen met een handicap*). This is a non-means-tested cash benefit.
- Allowance for mobility aids (*de tegemoetkoming voor mobiliteitshulpmiddelen*). A non-means-tested benefit in kind (providers of these aids are reimbursed directly).
- Residential care (*de residentiële ouderenzorg*). A non-means-tested benefit in kind (residential care providers are reimbursed directly).

The implementation and personal administration of these benefits is delegated to six care organisations (*zorgkassen*), which are reimbursed for their administrative costs. These are also reported in the annual report.

Other benefits for children with disabilities and adults below age 65 are administered by another agency of the Flemish government, the Flemish Agency for Persons with Disabilities (*Vlaams Agentschap voor Personen met een Handicap*). This provides a range of benefits and allowances, the most important of which by far is the personal budget (*Persoonsvolgend budget*), a non-means-tested benefit that beneficiaries can use to buy support from various organisations. Total expenditure is reported in its Financial Annual Report, published around June.¹⁴

¹² <https://www.groepakket.be/documenten/jaarverslagen/jaarverslag-groepakket-2020>

¹³ <https://www.zorg-en-gezondheid.be/jaarverslagen-agentschap-vlaamse-sociale-bescherming>. The number of cases is available until 2020 (https://www.zorg-en-gezondheid.be/cijfers?f%5B0%5D=pas_43%3A45&f%5B1%5D=pas_11%3A425).

¹⁴ <https://extranet.vaph.be/jaarverslag/2020/media/files/het-vaph-in-cijfers-2020-financieel-verslag.pdf>

1.8.2 The Walloon region

For the Walloon region, a range of benefits are administered by the Agency for a Good-Quality Life (*Agence pour une vie de qualité*). It publishes an annual report in French (with a delay of about one year), which includes data on total expenditure.¹⁵ Benefits listed include:

- family allowances (*allocations familiales*), single amount without subdivisions;
- mental health services (*services de santé mentale*), provided in centres devoted to this;
- residential care and daycare (*hébergement et aide en milieu de vie*) for the elderly, single amount without subdivisions;
- support for people with disabilities living in the community (*aide individuelle et maintien à domicile*);
- residential care and daycare for people with disabilities (*hébergement et aide en milieu de vie*) for the non-elderly;
- personal home care (*service d'aide aux familles et aux aînés*); and
- Walloon social protection (*protection sociale wallonne*). This includes the allowance for help for elderly people (*allocation pour l'aide aux personnes âgées*), a non-contributory social assistance allowance.

1.8.3 The Brussels region

The annual report for 2020 of the Brussels agency Iriscare consists of a series of linked webpages. One of these mentions (in text) total expenditure on some services and benefits, including family allowances (*prestations familiales*), residential care (*maisons de repos*), and personal home care (*aide aux personnes*).¹⁶

2 Reporting/review tools for public social spending

Though there are a number of monitoring tools and attempts at monitoring the social impacts of social protection spending, there is no unified framework for this, at either federal or regional level.

The main and most comprehensive monitoring report is in fact the "Analysis of the evolution of the social situation and social protection in Belgium", drafted and published each year by the FPS-SS; the latest edition refers to 2020.¹⁷ The report monitors the social situation in Belgium and the progress towards the social objectives and priorities of the National Reform Programme in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy. It assesses the social situation in Belgium on the basis of the EU social indicators framework, and provides an in-depth analysis of important social problems. The 2020 edition also explains the methodological changes in data collection for EU-SILC and describes the impact of COVID-19. It does not, however, assess the effectiveness of social budgets. As this is well known at the EU level, it is not discussed further in this report.

¹⁵

https://www.aviq.be/handicap/pdf/documentation/publications/revues_rapports/rapport_annuel/rapport_annuel_AVIQ_2020.pdf

¹⁶ <https://rapport.iriscare.brussels/fr/2021/06/un-budget-2020-impacte-par-la-crise-sanitaire/>

¹⁷ <https://socialsecurity.belgium.be/en/publications/analysis-evolution-social-situation-and-social-protection-belgium>

2.1.1 Monitoring by the Federal Planning Bureau

The Federal Planning Bureau (FPB) is an independent public agency that makes forecasts, carries out research, and analyses public policy measures. The FPB produces studies and projections on economic, social and environmental policy issues, and on the integration of these policies within a sustainable development context. As regards expenditure on social protection, its main efforts are concentrated on the budgetary and macro-economic effects of these, as reported in the regular publications *Economic Perspectives (Perspectives Economiques, Economische Perspectieven)*¹⁸ and the *Economic Budget (Budget Economique, Economische begroting)*.¹⁹

However, there are also some elements of monitoring of the social impact of policies, as follows.

The Study Commission on Ageing (*Comité d'étude sur le vieillissement, Studiecommissie voor de vergrijzing*) is charged with reporting on the budgetary and social consequences of ageing.²⁰ Its report – published in Dutch and French each year in the first half of July – contains a chapter on the evolution of the at-risk-of-poverty rate among older people in Belgium, and the changes in the level of minimum pensions and the guaranteed minimum for the elderly relative to the at-risk-of-poverty threshold. This chapter also contains long-term projections (currently up to 2070) of the poverty risk and inequality among pensioners, relating these to demographic and economic projections and the current policy on pensions. The instrument used for these projections is the dynamic microsimulation model "MIDAS".²¹

The FPB has been charged with an assessment of the overall economic and budgetary effects of measures included in the election programmes of Belgian political parties. The first time this assessment was done was at the federal elections of 2019.²² The impacts calculated included:

- on the disposable income of households, by income decile, socio-economic position and demographic composition; and
- on work incentives (i.e. the difference in income when working and not working) by a number of personal and household characteristics.

The instrument used for these calculations is a microsimulation model called "EXPEDITION", which is based on administrative data for a large sample of households and individuals.²³ This model is still being developed. However, it has intermittently been used for estimating the effects of specific measures or schemes – for example, those of recent reforms of the family allowances,²⁴ and the income distribution effects of some measures taken to cushion the impact of losses of earnings due the COVID-19 crisis.²⁵ While these

¹⁸ <https://www.plan.be/publications/publication-2130-en-perspectives-economiques-2021-2026-version-de-juin-2021>

¹⁹ <https://www.plan.be/publications/publication-2157-en-budget-economique-previsions-economiques-2021-2022-de-septembre-2021>

²⁰ <https://www.plan.be/publications/publication-2136-fr-comite-d-etude-sur-le-vieillissement-rapport-annuel>

²¹ Dekkers, G., De Vil, G. and Desmet, R. (2010), "The long-term adequacy of the Belgian public pension system: An analysis based on the MIDAS model", FPB Working Paper 10/10, Brussels: Federal Planning Bureau <https://www.plan.be/uploaded/documents/201005110837500.wp201010.pdf>.

²² <https://www.dc2019.be/>

²³ De Vil et al. (2018), "Description et utilisation du modèle EXPEDITION", Federal Planning Bureau, Working Paper DC2019_WP_03. (Only in Dutch and French). <https://www.plan.be/publications/publication-1849-fr-description-et-utilisation-du-modele-expedition>.

²⁴ Nevejan, H., Van Camp, G. and Vandelannoote, D. (2021) "Regionale kinderbijslaghervormingen Een impactanalyse met het microsimulatiemodel EXPEDITION", Federal Planning Bureau Working Paper 4-21. https://www.plan.be/uploaded/documents/202105180544440.WP_2104_12405.pdf.

²⁵ This report [12246] has not been published, by the FPB, though it is summarised in an article in the *Revue Belge de Sécurité Sociale* (2020-1): <https://socialsecurity.belgium.be/sites/default/files/content/docs/fr/publications/rbss/2020/rbss-2020-1-crise-de-la-covid-19-simulation-de-l-impact-de-la-perte-de-salaire-et-de-la-perte-de-revenus.pdf>.

studies look at the impact of social protection schemes/measures on income inequality and the risk of poverty, the effectiveness of social protection is not an explicit general concern of the FPB.

The FPB maintains a website with indicators which provide information on social, environmental and economic issues.²⁶ Together, they describe the evolution of people's well-being and of Belgian society. This includes indicators on the standard of living, poverty and inequality. Most of these indicators are the same as, or very similar to, indicators on these themes published by Eurostat.

2.1.2 The Federal Public Service for Social Security

BELMOD is a research project (2019 to mid-2022) funded by DG Employment – EaSI²⁷ of the European Commission and co-ordinated by the Belgian FPS-SS, co-operating with the University of Essex, the University of Antwerp, the Federal Pension Office, the National Institute for Sickness and Disability Insurance, the Belgian FPB (the EXPEDITION team) and KU Leuven. It is aimed at integrating the current microsimulation model “MIMOSIS” (which has the advantage of a very large sample) with the user-friendliness of the European model EUROMOD. Within the project, an inventory will be made of policy proposals to reduce non-take-up. In addition, the BELMOD model has already been used for some *ex ante* policy evaluations on Belgian social protection.²⁸

The FPS-SS also regularly funds studies on social protection, for example a study on poverty and disability (*Armoede en handicap in België, Pauvreté et handicap en Belgique*).²⁹ It also publishes a journal, the *Revue Belge de Sécurité Sociale (Belgische Tijdschrift voor Sociale Zekerheid)*, which contains various – mostly academic – studies on the system of social protection and its outcomes in Belgium.

2.1.3 The Belgian Healthcare Knowledge Centre

The KCE is an independent research centre that provides scientific advice on topics related to healthcare. It carries out studies and clinical trials at the request of public authorities and other stakeholders in healthcare. Its expertise includes (*inter alia*) the organisation and financing of healthcare in the broadest sense and the evaluation of medical technologies.³⁰ In the context of this report, its analyses of the performance of the Belgian health system as a whole are the most relevant. These are based on a range of indicators covering: the accessibility, quality and efficiency of healthcare; the sustainability of the healthcare system; equity and equality in healthcare; and specific domains of healthcare.³¹ Accessibility includes financial accessibility, which is measured by a number of indicators referring, for example, to out-of-pocket payments and unmet need for medical care due to financial reasons. Indicators on equity and equality of healthcare include catastrophic out-of-pocket payments, and impoverishment due to such payments. Sources for these indicators are generally published reports and databases (including international ones, such as the SHA). When last checked on 14 November 2021, the reference year for the indicators mentioned varied between 2015 and 2019.

In collaboration with the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, the KCE drafts and publishes the five-yearly reports on “Health Systems in Transition (HiT):

²⁶ <https://www.indicators.be/>

²⁷ Employment and Social Innovation.

²⁸ <https://socialsecurity.belgium.be/en/shaping-social-policy/belmod-project>

²⁹ <https://socialsecurity.belgium.be/fr/publications>

³⁰ <https://kce.fgov.be/en/about-us/what-is-the-kce>

³¹ <https://www.healthybelgium.be/en/health-system-performance-assessment>

Belgium Health System Review”, describing the functioning and outcomes of the Belgian healthcare system.³²

2.1.4 Monitoring by or for the Flemish government

Until recently, the Flemish government in its policy-making procedures used a Regulation Impact Assessment (RIA) to assess the possible impact of legislative proposals on its citizens and companies.³³ This *ex ante* impact assessment included a child effect assessment and also (from 2014) a poverty impact assessment, to check whether its regulations have unintended effects for people living in poverty. Public agencies, in consultation with other relevant actors (such as anti-poverty organisations or experts in the field of the fight against poverty and social exclusion) screen intended policy measures for the potential impact they could have on poverty. The poverty impact assessment is not limited to social protection schemes but covers all potential areas of legislation. Following the abandonment of the RIA as part of the initial stage of legislative procedures, poverty impact assessments have fallen into abeyance.

In 2019, the Flemish government started a new procedure (*Vlaamse brede heroverweging*)³⁴ to assess budgetary expenses, including social protection expenditure on the Flemish Social Protection (*Vlaamse Sociale Bescherming*) scheme, social expenditure for people with disabilities, and on the child benefit scheme (or Growth Package – *Groeipakket*).³⁵ Scientific evaluations are part of the critical assessments of budget use. Broad assessments of entire departments can be followed by spending reviews that focus on particular areas of expenditure. A pilot project has been carried out to evaluate expenditure related to the provision of service cheques. Integration of the care budgets of the Flemish Social Protection scheme has been identified as an area of social expenditure that should be assessed through spending reviews. The procedure explicitly refers to the objective of increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of spending, but these concepts are defined differently in the assessments by each department. In several cases increased efficiency is associated with cost savings, whereas in other assessments (e.g. on child benefits or care benefits) the objective is to increase the distributional impact and poverty-reduction capacity of measures.

The Flemish government funded the FLEMOSI project (FLEmish MOdels of SIMulation), in which five academic partners collaborated to build advanced microsimulation models, starting from EUROMOD and extending this with specific Flemish competences. These models can be used to analyse the effects of policy changes before they are put into practice.³⁶ Since the end of the project in 2013 the FLEMOSI models have been updated and further developed by the academic institutions that were involved, partly within the FPS-SS BELMOD project. However, they do not seem to have been much used by the Flemish government itself for monitoring social protection policies.

The Policy Research Centre Housing (*Steunpunt Wonen*) is an interdisciplinary group of researchers from three universities, tasked by the Flemish Minister of Housing Policy with pooling scientific knowledge that is relevant to preparing housing policy in Flanders. The centre conducts *ex ante* and *ex post* evaluations of housing policy instruments. A wide range of policy instruments is covered, including the typical housing policy instruments, such as social housing and housing benefits.³⁷

³² <https://annualreport.kce.be/2020/en/health-systems-in-transition-hit-belgium-health-system-review/>

³³ https://armoede.vlaanderen.be/sites/default/files/media/documenten/VR2014-13-ria_5-2.pdf; Vlaamse regering (2019, “Omzendbrief Beleids- en regelgevingsprocessen”, VR 2019 1705 DOC.0216/2, https://assets.vlaanderen.be/image/upload/v1626194227/omzendbrief-2019-11-bijlage_dibqxs.pdf.

³⁴ [De Vlaamse Brede Heroverweging | Vlaams Parlement](https://www.vlaanderen.be/nieuws/2019/11/14/de-vlaamse-brede-heroverweging)

³⁵ [Eindrapport WVG Geredigeerd.pdf \(vlaanderen.be\)](https://www.vlaanderen.be/nieuws/2019/11/14/eindrapport-wvg-gereedigde-2019)

³⁶ <https://researchportal.be/en/project/flemosi-tool-ex-ante-evaluation-socio-economic-policies-flanders>

³⁷ <https://steunpuntwonen.be/english/>

2.1.5 Monitoring for the Walloon region

IWEPS supports authorities in their decision-making. It is officially designated as the statistical authority for the Walloon region. It publishes (in French) a number of indicators on the social conditions in Wallonia. Some of these are based on EU-SILC, and others on fiscal and administrative data.³⁸

2.1.6 Monitoring for the Brussels region

The Brussels-Capital Health and Social Observatory (*Observatoire de la Santé et du Social de Bruxelles-Capitale, Observatorium voor Gezondheid en Welzijn van Brussel-Hoofdstad*) of the Joint Community Commission (*Commission communautaire commune, Gemeenschappelijke gemeenschapscommissie*) maintains a website with a list of indicators relating to poverty in the Brussels region.³⁹ Some of these are based on EU-SILC, though most rely on fiscal and administrative data. Indicators on the number of beneficiaries in Brussels in the unemployment, disability and social integration schemes are available up to 2020 or 2021.

The same organisation also publishes annually a “Welfare barometer” (*Baromètre social, Welzijnsbarometer*).⁴⁰ The latest edition (in Dutch and French) refers to 2019 and was published on 9 March 2020. This report presents and discusses a range of indicators on poverty and inequality in Brussels.

³⁸ [Indicateurs statistiques Archive - Iweps](#)

³⁹ <https://www.ccc-ggc.brussels/fr/observatbru/indicateurs/indicateurs-de-pauvrete>

⁴⁰ <https://www.ccc-ggc.brussels/fr/observatbru/publications/2019-barometre-social>

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Annex 1

Belgian National Bank (BNB)

Table A1: Benefits included in the BNB table "Breakdown of social benefits"

Structure [1]	Benefit description	Federal	Regional	Local	Social security funds
A.	Social benefits in kind provided by market producers	X	X	X	X
A.1	Medical care [2]	x	x	-	X
A.2	Health and social care insurance				
A.3	Social benefits in kind, other	X	X	X	x
B	Social benefits in cash	X	X	X	X
B.1	Payments for sickness and invalidity				X
B.1.1	Employees				X
B.1.2	Self-employed				X
B.2	Unemployment				X
B.3	Unemployment benefits with employer top-up (New name for early retirements since 2012)				X
B.4	Career break and time-credit		X		X
B.5	Retirement pension and survival pension (private sector)				X
B.5.1	Employees				X
B.5.2	Self-employed				X
B.5.3	Service for Overseas Social Security				X
B.6	Retirement pension and survival pension (public sector) [3]	X	X	X	X
B.7	Child allowance (private sector)		X		
B.8	Child allowance (public sector)				
B.9	Industrial accidents				X
B10	Occupational diseases				X
B.11	Subsistence allowance. From 2002 onwards, integration income			X	
B.12	Old persons' guaranteed income. From 2001 onwards, guaranteed income for the elderly	X			
B.13	Compensation for disabled people	X	X		
B.14	War pensions				x
B.15	Fund for the closing of enterprises				X
B.16	Social transfers (tax credits recoverable)				
B.17	Health and social care insurance				
B.19	Social benefits in cash, other				X

Notes:

[1] This column was added by the authors of this note to clarify the structure of the items.

[2] Subdivisions by system (employees, self-employed, veterans and war, overseas social security) suppressed.

[3] Subdivisions into various special schemes suppressed.

Annex 2 Vademecum

List of systems and branches distinguished in the Vademecum of the FPS-SS

Employees, covering:

- Sickness and invalidity benefits
- Pensions
- Work accidents
- Professional diseases
- Unemployment (including various benefits for temporary interruption of work)
- Some small schemes: invalidity for miners, sickness and invalidity for seamen, waiting allowance (*wachuitkering*, *allocation d'attente*, see below) for seamen
- Global management (*globaal beheer*, *gestion globale*), including social security contributions

Self-employed, covering:

- Sickness and invalidity benefits
- Pensions
- Bridging right (*Overbruggingsrecht*, *Droit passerelle*, see below)
- Allowance for care of close relatives
- Global management (*globaal beheer*, *gestion globale*), including social security contributions

Civil servants' pensions, including some special schemes for particular professions or risks

Healthcare

- A number of nine *small specific schemes*, of which by far the most important are:
- Social security for people living abroad (*Overzeese sociale zekerheid*, *Sécurité sociale d'outre-mer*)
- Labour market tasks of the National Organisation for Employment (RVA/ONEM)
- Fund for the closing of enterprises

Social assistance, covering:

- Guaranteed minimum income for older people
- Integration allowance (*Leefloon*, *Revenu d'Intégration*)
- Social aid
- Allowances for disabled persons

Table A2 Statistics on cash benefits by branch, reported in the Vademecum of the FPS-SS

Branch	Systems	Unit reported on	Kinds of benefit distinguished	Breakdown by
Sickness and invalidity insurance	Employees, Self-employed	Reimbursed days	Sickness, invalidity, maternity	Gender, blue-collar (<i>ouvriers</i>) / white-collar (<i>employés</i>) workers
Pensions	Employees, Self-employed	Beneficiaries on 1 January	Retirement pensions, survival pensions	Gender, family situation (married/single)
Pensions	Civil servants	Beneficiaries	Retirement pensions, survival pensions	Government sector (federal, regional, education, local)
Work accidents	Employees	Beneficiaries on 31 December	Some specific categories	Victims, spouses, descendants, ascendants
Professional diseases	Employees	Beneficiaries in December	Permanent disability, temporary disability, death, care	Gender, kind of diseases (3 categories), retired / not retired
Unemployment	Employees	Reimbursed days	Full unemployment, partial unemployment	-
Unemployment	Employees	Average number of payments per month	Full unemployment, partial unemployment	Gender, whether unemployed person is required to look for a job, age category
Unemployment	Employees	Reimbursed days, average number of payments per month	Unemployment with company allowance	Gender, Full time / part time
Unemployment	Employees	Reimbursed days, average number of payments per month	Various work interruption benefits	Gender, Full-time/part-time
Unemployment	Employees	Reimbursed days, average number of payments per month	Various benefits (see below)	-
Seamen and -women	Employees	Cases, days	Healthcare, sickness and invalidity, unemployment (waiting allowance), sea acclimatisation	Gender
Bridging right (bankruptcy insurance)	Self-employed	New cases, reimbursed months	-	-
Family allowances		Children	Family allowances, birth allowance, guaranteed family allowance, guaranteed birth allowance	Age category, rank-order in family, social situation (general, one-parent family, orphan, disabled, retired or unemployed parent)
Social assistance provided by municipal centres for social welfare	Social assistance	Beneficiaries	Guaranteed minimum income (<i>revenu d'Intégration</i>), Social aid	Gender, family type (single, cohabitant, cohabitant with person at charge)
Guaranteed minimum income for the elderly	Social assistance		Guaranteed minimum income for the elderly	Gender, age category, family situation (married, not married)
Benefits for disabled people	Social assistance		Some small specific benefits	Gender

Annex 3

Table A3 Sources of statistics on social protection published by various organisations

Branch	System	Organisation name	Format of publication	Latest publication as at 3 November 2021	Link
Sickness and invalidity insurance	Employees, Self-employed	RIZIV/INAMI	pdf	2018	Statistieken van de uitkeringen - RIZIV (fgov.be)
Pensions	Employees, Self-employed	SFPD	pdf	Monthly: May 2021; Yearly: 2020	Statistiques salariés Service fédéral des Pensions (fgov.be)
Pensions	Civil servants	SFPD	web-application	2019	Pensioenstatistieken opvragen (fgov.be)
Work accidents	Employees	FEDRIS	pdf and Excel	2019	Statistieken Federaal agentschap voor beroepsrisico's (fedris.be)
Professional diseases	Employees	FEDRIS	pdf	2020	Statistische jaarverslagen Federaal agentschap voor beroepsrisico's (fedris.be)
Unemployment and related benefits	Employees	RVA/ONEM	pdf and Excel	2020	Publicaties Documentatie RVA
Social security contributions	Employees	RSZ/ONSS	pdf and Excel	2019	Statistiques de l'emploi ONSS
Bridging right (bankruptcy insurance)	Self-employed	RSVZ/INASTI	web-application, Excel, pdf	2020	Chiffres 2020 - Inasti Rapport Annual 2020
Social security contributions	Self-employed	RSVZ/INASTI	web-application, Excel, pdf	2020	Chiffres 2020 - Inasti Rapport Annual 2020
Healthcare	All	RIZIV/INAMI	pdf	2017 (1)	Statistieken geneeskundige verzorging - RIZIV (fgov.be)
Social assistance provided by municipal Public Centres for Social Welfare	Social assistance	POD_MI/SPP_I S	Excel	2020, beneficiaries by municipality until May 2021	Studies, publicaties en statistieken POD Maatschappelijke Integratie (mi-is.be)
Guaranteed minimum income for the elderly	Social assistance	SFPD	pdf	2020	Statistiques salariés Service fédéral des Pensions (fgov.be)
Benefits for disabled people	Social assistance	FOD-SZ/SPF-SS	Excel	2020	Personen met een handicap Federale Overheidsdienst - Sociale Zekerheid (belgium.be)

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