



European alliance for apprenticeships

Member States – Planned reforms/initiatives

Belgium - Flanders

EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS
MEMBER STATES – PLANNED REFORMS/INITIATIVES

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| COUNTRY | Dutch speaking Belgium (Flanders) |
| Year | 2019 |
| Ministry/Ministries | Ministry of Education Ministry of Work |
| Contact person(s), title(s) | Carl Lamote, Policy Officer Jessie Vandeweyer, Policy Officer |
| Email(s) | carl.lamote@ond.vlaanderen.be jessie.vandeweyer@vlaanderen.be |
| Website | onderwijs.vlaanderen.be www.vlaanderen.be/departement-werk-sociale-economie |

Implementation of the national commitment

Progress and main achievements

The **Flemish Parliament Act on 'learning and working'** ('decreet betreffende het stelsel van leren en werken'), which came into effect in 2008, reformed the Flemish apprenticeship system, with the following improvements:

- Ensured the full-time engagement of as many young people as possible.
- Improved compatibility between part-time vocational secondary education ('DBSO', offered by Centres for Part-time Education/'CDO's) and entrepreneurial apprenticeships ('Leertijd', offered by SYNTRA centres).
- Every young person offered a custom career track.
- Fully-fledged vocational qualifications issued (equal with the qualifications gained through traditional education), providing the potential for transition to higher education.

A thorough evaluation of the education and employment system indicated that there was a pressing need for adaptation, as not all objectives of the decree were being realised with the same degree of success. The Flemish Government undertook a number of different actions to improve the system:

1. A **2016 decree on alternating contracts** was issued ('Decreet tot regeling van bepaalde aspecten van alternerende opleidingen'). This decree reduced the number of contracts that can be used for pupils in alternating courses, from eleven types to three.
2. An **accreditation procedure for learning companies** was introduced. The 'Flemish Partnership Dual Learning' (with representatives from educational providers, social partners and from the Ministries of Education and Work) acts as a central accreditation body, delegating tasks to several sectoral partnerships.
3. The Flemish Government proposed the **implementation of a system of dual learning**, which introduced the idea of alternation between school-based and work-based learning in full-time secondary education. Next to that, this system of dual learning also acts as a reform of the education and employment system.

From 2015 onwards, a series of pilot projects, backed by ESF-funding, began to prepare for the implementation of dual learning. The decree came into effect on 1 September 2019. An study of these pilot projects was carried out, in order to evaluate the new dual learning system. The inspectorate of education and the inspectorate of SYNTRA Flanders, in turn, controlled the quality of dual learning trajectories, and made some recommendations to improve it.

Following these pilots and recommendations, two decrees for the implementation of the dual system were approved in 2018 - one for regular secondary education, and a second for the implementation of dual learning in special needs education.

The **main elements of the dual learning reform** are:

- The acquisition of competences, both at school and in the workplace.

EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

MEMBER STATES – PLANNED REFORMS/INITIATIVES

- Several possible providers of dual learning - centres for part-time education (CDO) and SYNTRA-centres (cfr - the existing education and employment system), schools for full-time education and schools for special needs education. Broadening the scope of dual learning to schools for full-time education has the advantage of making dual learning available for a broader audience, as pupils follow dual learning in their own school.
- Curricula created in cooperation between partners from employment and education.
- SYNTRA Vlaanderen, an agency of the Flemish Government, is responsible for the creation of a large network of high-quality learning companies. They cooperate with sectoral organisations to realise this.
- A pre-apprenticeship programme to prepare pupils for entry into dual learning. This pre-apprenticeship programme focuses on strengthening the competences of pupils who are highly motivated to enter dual learning, but who lack the necessary skills/characteristics to make dual learning a success.
- The inspectorate of education is responsible for quality control in the secondary education system as a whole. However, for dual learning, they will be accompanied by supervisors from SYNTRA Vlaanderen.

Both decrees came into force on 1 September 2019, beginning with close to 80 courses in more than 200 schools.

The Flemish Government provides financial support to learning companies, with a fee for each pupil in the company ('stagebonus') and compensation for the taxes on wages of mentors in the company ('mentorkorting'). Pupils receive a bonus when they succeed in their alternating education ('startbounus').

Update of the national commitment

Planned reforms and initiatives

1. Pilot projects have shown that dual learning entails new competences for teachers, as well as trajectory guides. The Flemish Government thus created a project with a focus on the professionalisation of teachers and creation of trajectory guides in dual learning. The Flemish Government receives support on the project (which started in March 2019, and will run until August 2020) from the Structural Reform Support Programme.
2. An evaluation of the decree on alternating contracts will be carried out, evaluating - among other things - the conditions of the contract and the accreditation procedure.
3. SYNTRA Flanders has launched a study on the costs and benefits of the dual system in Flanders.
4. Dual learning was previously established for secondary education. In 2019, a series of ESF-funded pilot projects started to inform on and support the potential implementation of dual learning in higher and adult education.

Targets and/or indicators

n/a

Budget of the reform/initiative

n/a

Key stakeholders involved

The key stakeholders involved in the implementation of new initiatives are the Flemish government, receiving support from the Structural Reform Support Programme, ESF funding and SYNTRA Flanders. SYNTRA Flanders is responsible for carrying out the study on the costs and benefits of the dual system in Flanders.

Further measures planned as a follow up to the European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships

n/a