



ANNUAL REPORT 2019



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Foreword

With the creation of the non-profit organisation SYNERJOB in July 2007, ACTIRIS, ADG, Bruxelles Formation, the Forem and the VDAB wanted to create synergies with one another, in order to address the challenges of regional labour markets more effectively.

In 2018, the members of SYNERJOB prepared to 'go further, in order to become key partners for citizens who need support with managing their careers in an ever-changing world.' Since the end of 2019, a virus – which is still somewhat of a mystery at the time of writing this – began to affect the world and throw what we thought we knew into doubt. This situation has inevitably led to a lot of global and personal reflection. There is bound to be doubts, a restructuring of priorities, a different perspective on things. Perhaps the world will one day be very similar to how it was before, but it will never be exactly the same.

Public employment services are used to dealing with the anxiety of those who have lost their job or seen their source of income drastically reduced, but this time is different. In addition to fear and grief, some people will also want to move away from their pre-pandemic lifestyle, since, for example, lockdown has made them realise they want to change career. Others will want to make the most of increased demand in their sector, but need to innovate to be able to do so. Everything will also need to move faster.

We need to ramp up efforts to make up for the time lost by those who have been unable to work at all, or those whose profession has changed and who will inevitably have a singular career path once lockdown has ended.

In a world with a growing number of challenges, public employment and vocational training services are increasingly called to anticipate needs, be flexible, agile, innovative and to work closely with each other and with other partners. The members of SYNERJOB are coming together. They are also working more than ever with stakeholders in their field, including those at the international level.

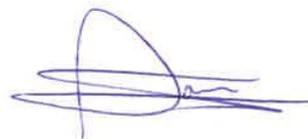
We are convinced that the existing synergies, and those that will be created, will make our public employment and vocational training services even more capable of weathering the effects of a crisis and supporting recovery.

Marie-Kristine Vanboeckstal



President of SYNERJOB

Wim Adriaens



Vice President of SYNERJOB

Wim Adriaens has succeeded Fons Leroy as Head of VDAB and Vice President of SYNERJOB. The members of SYNERJOB were delighted to welcome him in 2019 and appreciate his openness and professionalism. We thank him.

Context

24 February 2005: signing of an inter-regional cooperation agreement

The Brussels-Capital Region, Wallonia, Flanders, the Flemish Community, the German-speaking Community and the French Community Commission sign an inter-regional cooperation agreement. Its aim is to promote greater inter-regional mobility in terms of jobs and training.

Since then, ACTIRIS, Arbeitsamt der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft (ADG), Bruxelles Formation, the Forem and the VDAB work in close collaboration, with the aim of integrating as many jobseekers as possible into the labour market and encouraging their mobility.

Various measures are considered and encourage the services to:

- Exchange job offers more intensively;
- Make jobseekers and employers aware of inter-regional mobility;
- Promote and organise language courses and training activities in terms of inter-regional mobility;
- Ensure that the names of professions and occupations are consistent, with a view to improving the exchange of information and guaranteeing more transparency in the labour market;
- Cooperate in the reintegration of workers who are affected by collective redundancies;
- Start specific initiatives between Brussels and the surrounding area;
- Encourage the inter-regional mobility of jobseekers and workers;
- Step up collaboration between the Forem and the ADG and strengthen the cooperation agreement between the two organisations, which was signed on 27 May 2004;
- Strengthen collaboration in terms of language learning and access to skills centres.

3 July 2007: creation of the non-profit organisation SYNERJOB

ACTIRIS, ADG, Bruxelles Formation, the Forem and the VDAB create the non-profit organisation SYNERJOB, which expands on the themes addressed, in order to adapt to changes in the labour market.

The Board of Directors, which includes the directors of SYNERJOB members, meets several times a year to discuss new projects, support current initiatives and monitor the progress of working groups, to which it entrusts specific themes, such as the Youth Guarantee or the digitalisation of the labour market. The members of this Board of Directors are listed in the annexes.

On 1 July 2016, the Forem takes over from the VDAB as Chair of the non-profit organisation SYNERJOB. A permanent secretariat, which is linked to this presidency, has since managed interactions between the members of SYNERJOB.

On 27 June 2019, SYNERJOB's general meeting decides to modify its articles of association.

The latter now mention:

'The general meeting can award the title of honorary member to any person who has made a significant contribution to the management and development of the non-profit organisation. Honorary members shall only have the rights indicated in this article.

Honorary members are invited to attend general meetings in an advisory capacity. They shall have no right to vote during the general meeting and shall have no right to the non-profit organisation's assets. Honorary members are not subject to the payment of dues.

The title of honorary member is lost upon death or resignation. The non-profit organisation may revoke the title of honorary member if the latter breaches the rules of the non-profit organisation.'

This title of honorary member has been awarded to Fons Leroy, Managing Director of VDAB and Vice President of SYNERJOB, who retired on 30 June 2019.

Missions

SYNERJOB aims to combine the efforts of Belgian public employment and vocational training services, in order to face the challenges of the labour market, in keeping with the missions, tasks and remits of each member and the decisions of the Board of Directors.

In particular, this involves:

- Analysing and taking charge of problems within the Belgian labour market;
- Considering the challenges together;
- Pooling knowledge and exchanging best practices;
- Buying and/or developing tools and methodologies;
- Taking collaborative action;
- Signing partnerships, within the framework of European or other projects;
- Organising a rotation between the members, in order to offer a single point of contact for the Public Employment and Vocational training Services, within the framework of European projects: EURES (EUROpean Employment Services), Youth Guarantee and the European Network of Public Employment Services (ENPES);
- Taking common positions, in accordance with the rules for international representation.

The aim of all the initiatives is to collaboratively construct or undertake initiatives on common project(s) (with at least two SYNERJOB partners per project). Each partner deploys its own resources to achieve the targeted results.

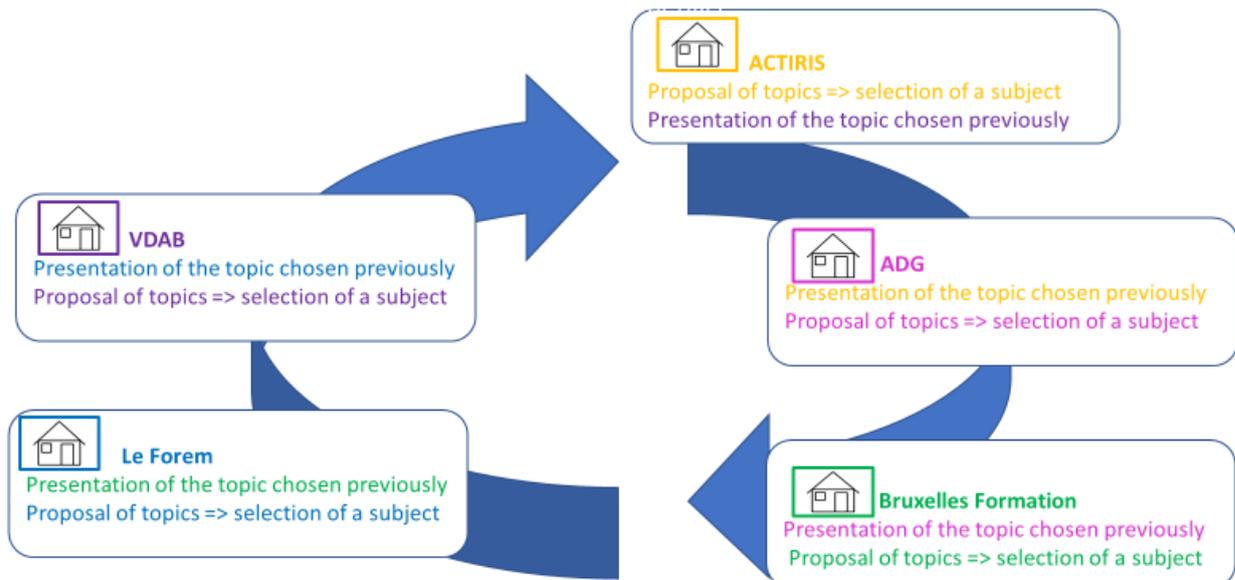
As SYNERJOB members must overcome sizeable challenges, a strategic working group was created in 2013. This defines the common goals and scope of action, through a multi-year strategic plan (2014–2016 and 2017–2019).

'Rolling Agenda'

A 'Rolling Agenda' was implemented in 2018, with a view to substantial knowledge sharing on themes relating to the labour market in the broadest sense, or on matters that are likely to be of interest to SYNERJOB members.

At each meeting of the Board of Directors, a member gives a brief presentation on the current projects that are ongoing in his/her organisation, which are likely to be of interest to the other SYNERJOB members.

At the end of the presentation, the members choose the theme they would like more information about at the next meeting. At this meeting, a more in-depth presentation is given on the selected theme and another member briefly presents the projects that are likely to be of interest to the other members. This continues in this manner.



Here are the themes presented during the meetings in 2019:

- Board of Directors meeting on 31/01/2019: 'New Support' presented by ACTIRIS;
- Board of Directors meeting on 02/04/2019: 'Professional orientation of young people' presented by the ADG;
- Board of directors meeting on 27/06/2019: 'How our public employment services contribute to the theme of sustainable development' presented by the VDAB;
- Board of Directors meeting on 03/10/2019: 'Information about the Forem's new digital transformation department' presented by the Forem;
- Board of Directors meeting on 04/12/2019: 'Presentation of the management's mission' presented by Bruxelles Formation.

The main themes covered

Based on current events and problems that are encountered, the SYNERJOB Board of Directors has created specific working groups for certain themes. These working groups are made up of experts from each member of the non-profit organisation. They may be permanent or temporary, depending on the themes covered and the continuity of these themes over time.

For the working groups listed in this report that are still active, the following information is generally given: the framework/context in which the group works and a few achievements in 2019.

For certain themes that are covered by several working groups, or for more specific matters, more general information is given.

The contact details of SYNERJOB's permanent secretariat are provided at the end of the report, from whom you can obtain more information about the topics that are presented.

I. Inter-regional mobility

The labour market differs from one region to another. Greater inter-regional mobility alleviates the imbalance between job supply and demand. The partnerships created between VDAB and ACTIRIS, between VDAB and the Forem, and between the Forem and ADG, aim to strengthen inter-regional mobility for trainees and jobseekers from Wallonia, Brussels and the German-speaking Community.

a) The Forem–VDAB collaboration

Given the favourable economic situation, particularly in Flanders, which has posted a decrease in unemployment and an increase in job vacancies, Employment Ministers Muyters and Jeholet signed a new cooperation agreement on 5 February 2018. This agreement, which has been concluded between the VDAB and the Forem, aims to meet the needs of Flemish companies and increase the integration rate of Walloon jobseekers. This action plan was continued in 2019.

What were the results in 2019?

Specialised advisers managed 3,922 jobs, which were located in Flanders and proposed to Walloon jobseekers. Almost 20,000 Walloon jobseekers were directed to these job offers.

The exchange of job offers, common activities, activities to prepare jobseekers by the Forem and open applications enabled at least 27,605 Walloon jobseekers to find a job in Flanders in 2019 (source: DIMONA).

b) The Forem–ADG collaboration

In 2019:

- Management of 682 job posts by the Forem, for companies located in the German-speaking Community;
- Management of 133 posts by the ADG, for companies located in Wallonia outside the German-speaking Community;
- 47 jobseekers in the German-speaking Community underwent training in Forem training centres, while 35 Walloon jobseekers undertook training in an ADG training centre;

c) ACTIRIS – VDAB collaboration

In 2019, nearly 4,046 job opportunities were transferred to ACTIRIS, including more than 1,960 temporary job posts. ACTIRIS mobilised a total of 29,009 Brussels-based jobseekers. They were invited, tested, prepared and supported.

The exchange of job offers, common activities, activities to prepare jobseekers by ACTIRIS and open applications enabled at least 10,140 Brussels-based jobseekers to find a job in Flanders in 2019 (source: DIMONA).

d) Automatic flow of job offers

Since June 2006, the VDAB, the Forem and ACTIRIS have automatically exchanged job offers and published them on their website. These job offers are those that have remained open for a very long time and those which are hard to fill, such as professions with labour shortages. This means that tens of thousands of job offers are exchanged each year.

The number of offers exchanged automatically between the different public employment services in 2019 is 258,246.

e) Vocational training

This training enables the learner to acquire additional skills required by the labour market (languages, adapting to new environments, cultural openness, independence and initiative, etc.) and to be directed to specific professions that may be more available in certain regions.

Inter-regional mobility for training is achieved through company training internships with the FPI/Formation Professionnelle Individuelle (Brussels), IBO/Individuele BeroepsOpleiding (Flanders), PFI/Plan Formation-Insertion (Wallonia) or IBU/Individuele Berufsausbildung im Unternehmen (German-speaking Community) convention tool, or by taking a vocational training in a training body located in another region.

These are the 2019 figures relating to vocational training and the number of jobseekers trained in the VDAB, ADG, Bruxelles Formation and Forem training centres:

	2019
From ADG to the Forem	47
From Bruxelles Formation/ACTIRIS to the Forem	327
From VDAB to the Forem	171
From the Forem to ADG	35
From the Forem to Bruxelles Formation	354
From the Forem to VDAB	32

II. Transfer of powers

Through the transfer of powers pertaining to employment and training that it provides for, the sixth State reform has made the federal entities more responsible, but, more importantly, it has offered them new engines for progress.

Since 2012, working groups have been established within SYNERJOB to work together on these many areas. Although, in methodological terms, matters have all now been made operational within the regions, work to share information within the working groups was carried out, mainly to share the more regulatory or operational aspects.

a) Management of people that are far removed from the labour market, with medical, mental, psychological or psychiatric (MMPP) problems

As part of their mission to support and control active job searches, the Public Employment Services (PES) are faced with people that are very far removed from employment, with medical, mental, psychological or psychiatric (MMPP) problems, often in conjunction with social problems. Among these people, we must distinguish between those who are still employable and those that are not. That is why, at the end of 2017, SYNERJOB took the initiative to launch a working group to develop proposals on how to help these people. The aim was to get the four PES and the relevant federal bodies to agree on criteria for determining this distance from the labour market, and on a structural solution regarding the status and type of income to be allocated to those who are not employable, with the aim of temporarily putting an end to their job search.

Following this initiative, the Regional Minister for Employment in Wallonia proposed the organisation of an inter-ministerial Employment Conference on 28/02/2018. It was then in charge of setting up a working group, in order to examine the possibility of allocating a specific status to the most vulnerable jobseekers. This working group reached a proposal for beneficiaries of integration and unemployment benefits, with a support model comprising two stages:

- Stage one: determining distance from the labour market and starting on a specific path.
- Stage two: allocating an 'unemployable' status to the beneficiaries concerned.

These conditions were subject to a consultation with the Federal Minister for Employment and were applied by amending the Royal Decree of 25/11/1991, as it pertains to unemployment. They are applicable from 01/07/2019, with a transition period ending on 31/03/2020 for files that were still being analysed. The PES then implemented the required actions, with a view to implementing these new support measures and meeting regularly to agree on standardised practices, in order to identify the future 'unemployable' status and support the relevant beneficiaries, in case they move and need to change from one PES to another.

The PES now uses the ICF tool (international classification of functioning, disability and health) and also has a procedure for validating cases that are affected by the 'unemployable' status.

b) Vocational training and internships

In 2019, the working group met to:

- Review changes to in-house training within each of the organisation members of SYNERJOB and assess the consequences thereof;
- Establish procedures for situations that involve several regions when necessary and possible.

In addition, members of the working group contact each other about specific cases, in which intervention is required in the interests of the trainees. At the same time, previous common devices are evolving differently. The working group has been working on this since the rejection of the protocol regarding collaborative internships.

III. SYNERJOB and Europe

For a few years, the European Commission has required each Member state to appoint a single point of contact for a series of projects. That is why, at the end of 2013, SYNERJOB put itself forward as the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for ENPES (European Network of Public Employment Services), EURES (EUROpean Employment Services) and Youth Guarantee projects. In concrete terms, ACTIRIS, the Forem and the VDAB each coordinate one of these projects.

In 2019, Bruxelles Formation dedicated an expert for the Refernet network (European network of reference and expertise) of the CEDEFOP (European centre for the development of vocational training), with financial support from other members of SYNERJOB.

a) ENPES, the European Network of Public Employment Services

The European Network of Public Employment Services is a network that groups PES from the 27 Member States of the European Union, as well as Iceland and Norway. It was established by European Parliament and Council Decision No. 573/2014/EU of 15 May 2014, as it pertains to the improvement of cooperation between public employment services (PES).

Each country has one seat on the 'PES Board', the network's decision-making body. Although four PES have been appointed as members of the network by Belgium's permanent representation to the European Union, only one PES represents Belgium, based on a rotation decided by the SYNERJOB Board of Directors.

In addition to the preparation and debriefing of various European meetings of the network, the relevant members of SYNERJOB conducted collaborative work together on a series of projects in 2019, the most important of which are:

- Performance of the second cycle of benchlearning by all the relevant PES, including the performance of the pilot for the 'Thematic Learning Dialogs' (TLD) by the VDAB. The TLD comprises an educational meeting on the theme related to the benchlearning recommendations.
- Participation in thinking about the future of benchlearning, notably a meeting in Madrid on 13 May 2019.
- Approval of documents concerning the PES strategy for 2020 and beyond, refugees and HR management by the PES.
- Management of a working group on labour shortages (Forem) and on 'EU innovation lab' (VDAB), with results presented at the Board of Directors meeting.
- Interviews concerning the evaluation of the ENPES network.
- Webinars: participation in some webinars organised by the European Commission and participation by the Forem in a webinar on 'Knowledge Management' on 15 May 2019 in Brussels. A European 'toolkit' regarding 'Knowledge Management' is being prepared.
- Extension of the decision implementing the 'PES Network': the proposed extension put forward by the European Commission was discussed by the European Council. As part of these discussions, SYNERJOB has regularly supported Belgium's permanent representation within the EU.
- The PES in the PES Network were invited to express their interest in participating in the activities that form part of the 2020 work programme. SYNERJOB members had to respond to the European Commission by 15/11/2019.

In terms of participation in official network meetings, the following can be mentioned:

- Meeting of the Board of Directors of the ENPES ('PES Board') on 6 and 7 June 2019 in Bucharest, including the election of the network's new president (Austrian Johannes Kopf).
- Meeting of the Board of Directors of the ENPES ('PES Board') on 12 and 13 December 2019 in Helsinki.
- Two meetings of AFEPA (Advisers for European PES Affairs) in October and March 2019.

b) EURES (European Employment Service)

EURES is the European network of employment services. Its aim is to encourage the free circulation of workers in the European Economic Area (EEA - the 27 Member States of the European Union, plus the United Kingdom, Norway, Lichtenstein and Iceland) and Switzerland. This network is governed by EU Regulation 2016/589, which is mentioned below as the EURES regulation.

The Role of the SYNERJOB EURES Working Group

The EURES regulation provides for the identification of one EURES National Coordination Office (NCO) per Member State. As a result, a solution that is in line with national legislation was needed for Belgium. SYNERJOB has been presented as the single point of contact, without prejudice to the responsibilities of the NCO (National Coordinator Office) for the regions and the German-speaking Community. The SYNERJOB Board of Directors mandates one of the Belgian PES to manage the coordination of the project with its counterparts and to oversee communication with the European Commission.

Since then, the SYNERJOB EURES working group has worked hard to implement the EURES regulation and prepare network coordination meetings. The working group also follows the legislative processes very closely and the implementation of other regulations involving the network, and agrees on the Belgian positions to be transmitted to the European Commission.

- Implementation of the EURES regulation

The regulation provides for the opening of the EURES network to other organisations, with this requiring an admissions procedure. A procedure that is applicable to all regions was implemented in 2018, at the start of the work in the context of SYNERJOB. During an initial phase of the admissions procedure, the FGTB (General Labour Federation of Belgium) and the CSC (Confederation of Christian Trade Unions) were recognised as EURES partners. The procedure was evaluated, with any necessary corrections and improvements subsequently being made.

A second cycle was launched at the start of 2019. In accordance with this new procedure, the Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Belgium and Luxembourg and Unizo were admitted to the network as partners.

In November 2019, an initial meeting between all the members (PES) and partners of EURES Belgium was organised, with a view to preparing the joint action plan for 2020.

- Establishment of the European Labour Authority (ELA)

The European authority officially started its work in October 2019. The EURES working group was involved in defining Belgium's position in the legislative process to create the ELA. This aspect was relevant, insofar as the EURES European Coordination Office is part of the ELA. Once the regulation was adopted, the SYNERJOB working group continued to promote Belgium's position, by attending meeting-preparation sessions for the bodies responsible for establishing the European Labour Authority (Advisory Group and Management Board).

- Establishment of the ‘Your Europe’ Single Digital Gateway (SDG)

In 2018, Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 of the European Parliament and Council was adopted, establishing a single digital gateway to give European citizens access to information, procedures, assistance and problem-solving services. EURES is included in the list of support and problem-solving services. This is why the SYNERJOB EURES working group is actively involved in its implementation within the working group, which was created by the Agency for administrative simplification responsible for coordinating the implementation of the regulation in Belgium. Several implementation actions pertaining to this regulation still need to be adopted; they will be monitored very closely.

c) Youth Guarantee (YG)

Following the recommendation of the Council of the European Union in April 2013, regarding the establishment of a Youth Guarantee (YG), SYNERJOB was appointed as Belgium’s ‘YG’ single point of contact for European Institutions, as it pertains to the implementation of the recommendation.

In 2019, SYNERJOB and its YG working group participated in, and contributed to, various European YG activities and events, notably:

Seminars and conferences:

- Participation in the seminar: ‘*Creating conditions for quality traineeships*’ in Lisbon (Portugal) on 4 April 2019, which covered the quality of traineeships and working conditions for trainees.
- Contribution to, and participation in, the ‘*Supporting Youth Transitions to Work*’ conference on 28 November 2019 in Kiev (Ukraine), which was organised by the European Commission, DG EMPL, to present Belgium’s experience to ‘Eastern partnership’ countries.

Expert meetings:

- Participation in expert meetings: ‘*Reflections and lessons learned on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in the EU*’ in Brussels (Belgium) on 9 July 2019, as part of the Mutual Learning Programme, with national YG coordinators from Finland, Spain, Ireland and Portugal. The meeting covered lessons learned by European countries when implementing the YG and presented them to a delegation from South Africa.
- Participation in the meeting of national YG coordinators, organised by the European Commission, on 3 April 2019 in Lisbon (Portugal), concerning an annual update on the latest national and European YG developments.

Technical assistance or delegation-hosting projects:

- Participation in the ‘Cyprus Peer-to-Peer Project’ technical assistance project in Nicosia on 5 April 2019, as part of the Mutual Learning Programme.
- Hosting of a delegation from South Africa in Brussels, on the theme of implementing the YG in Brussels – specifically in the Brussels-Capital Region – with a particular focus on the issue of NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training), on 8 July 2019.

YG monitoring:

- Coordination of contributions and presentation of the consolidated questionnaire for Belgium, in the context of the qualitative examination of the YG for the Employment Committee (EMCO), (July – October 2019).
- Contribution to EMCO’s annual data collection (2019) from the various Belgian PES.
- Contribution to various questionnaires (PES Capacity questionnaire, etc.)
- Meeting of the working group for updates on the current themes on 10 April 2019.

d) ReferNet

ReferNet is the European information network for monitoring vocational and education or training policies (VET), on behalf of the European agency CEDEFOP. One of its missions is to develop and promote initial and continuing vocational training.

Comprising all the public actors in vocational education and training in Belgium, the national network is coordinated and run by Bruxelles Formation, on the basis of a decision by SYNERJOB, with national representation given by the Flemish Community, within the framework of a four-year mandate (2015–2019). Each year, the missions entrusted to the network are subject to an action plan, which provides for a series of productions in connection with the priorities of the 2020 Education – Training strategy and the five medium-term objectives (Riga 2015: learning in the workplace; access to qualification and certification; training quality; key competences; training teachers and trainers).

In 2018, ReferNet Belgium produced:

- A political report monitoring the different vocational education and training measures taken by Belgium between March 2018 and February 2019.
- The VET (Vocational Education and Training) in Belgium report (2018/2019): dedicated to the presentation of our VET systems (this year included a chapter comprising three sections, in order to distinguish the systems relevant to each Community).
- Two articles:
 - ✓ International mobility in apprenticeships: focus on long-term mobility – Belgium.
 - ✓ Vocational education and training for the future of work: Belgium.
- The preparation of a non-paper report on VET themes considered to be strategic in Belgium: “Three key strategic areas for the evolution of VET in Belgium”.
- The VET online tool: an interactive, online VET platform for each European country, including Belgium (<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/vet-in-europe/systems/belgium>).
- 5 news:
 - ✓ Brussels Region: skills validation on the rise
 - ✓ Helping young NEETs in Wallonia: over 60% success rate in 2018
 - ✓ Promising results for Erasmus Dual
 - ✓ ViewStat, the new interactive tool for tracking the training-employment pathway
 - ✓ S.Kool, the Brussels ‘shop school’ for apprentice salespeople.

The documents mentioned above can be downloaded from <https://www.refernet.be/publications/540-news-synthese-des-publications-refernet-belgique-en-2020>.

The management also maintains a website, which disseminates CEDEFOP analyses, the results of the Belgian network, events and information from the sector in Belgium. (www.refernet.be).

As part of the renewal of the framework agreement, and of national representation and coordination mandates for the next 4 years (2020–2023), a call for candidates was published at the end of July 2019.

No member of SYNERJOB applied for this mandate. A new call for candidates is planned for 2020 and the SYNERJOB members will again be asked to take a position on this.

IV. SYNERJOB and WAPES (World Association of Public Employment Services)

This international association under Belgian law (AISBL) provides a platform that facilitates contact between the managing directors and experts of public employment services worldwide.

It enables best practices, knowledge and training to be exchanged, and close collaboration between public

employment services.

a) SYNERJOB's support

The executive secretariat of this global association is based in Brussels, on VDAB premises, and is supported by SYNERJOB. All of the public employment services in Belgium are members of WAPES through SYNERJOB. SYNERJOB also makes its legal and other experts available to support WAPES in general and the secretariat in particular. The secretariat is managed by Mrs Eve-Marie Mosseray, who has been seconded by the Forem since August 2018.

Whether via its members' attendance at governance meetings (board of directors, executive board, general assembly), by organising seminars or through active participation in working groups, SYNERJOB regularly supports WAPES actions.

b) SYNERJOB, an active member of WAPES

SYNERJOB members stay perfectly up to date with the organisation's activities through frequent feedback from the executive secretary on development within WAPES, and can assess the relevance of one of SYNERJOB's members being involved in them.

In 2019, SYNERJOB's President attended meetings related to the following management bodies:

- Executive Committee – Geneva, 21/03/2019. Study visit proposed by Switzerland – Geneva 22/03/2019 – Theme: Swiss vocational training system.
- Electronic general meeting, voting period between 20 May and 15 June, with closure and counting on June 17 and publication of the results on 24 June 2019.
- Board of Directors, 7–8/11/2019, Washington DC.

c) Added value for SYNERJOB

The association's various activities have allowed the public employment services members of SYNERJOB to learn about international practices. The following events were organised in 2019:

- Seminar in N'Djamena, Chad, 11–13/12/2018, The involvement of PES in the development of green jobs.
- Seminar in Nouakchott, Mauritania, 16–17/04/2019, The role of Public Employment Services in the deployment of the migration policies of their countries.
- Nouakchott, Mauritania, 18/04/2019, Forum on migration and professional mobility, Migr'actions.
- Collaborative 'Let's build effective communication to promote WAPES together' work session, with the collaboration of the Employment Hub's Lab, Paris, 15–16 May.
- Paris, 17 May, study visit to Pôle emploi Centre.
- Seminar in Yaoundé, Cameroon, 17–19/10. Celebration of 20 years of the AAPES (African Association of Public Employment Services) and conference on 'Youth employment and migration; challenges and opportunities for PES'.
- As part of the 'international week' run by NASWA (PES representing the USA in WAPES and member of the Board of Directors): Conferences on 5–6/11/2019: Local responses to the future of the world of work – Use of technology to transform public employment services. Partnership: OECD/IDB (Inter-American Development Bank), NASWA-NAWB (National Association of Workforce Boards, WAPES, Washington DC).
- Conference on 'Approaches to overcome new challenges in the labour market – The role of research in the labour market', ISKUR, Ankara, Turkey, 20–21/11/2019.
- Conference on 'Digitalisation in PES', NEA, National Employment Agency, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 2–

3/12/2019.

- Europe region: Workshop organised by Arbetsförmedlingen (Sweden) and NAV (Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration) on the theme: 'Organisational learning – a means for improving performance' in Stockholm on 5 and 6 December 2019.

V. Cross-functional themes

Some working groups handle topics that cover several themes or more general topics. These are a few examples of these groups:

a) ROME v3/Competent

In March 2014, all of the Belgian PES agreed to use the same professional classification in their services, specifically ROME/Competent.

The aim of this is to be able to employ automatic matching, using skills based on the same taxonomy for the entire Belgian labour market.

This decision is strategically very important, because it allows for the exchange of data on the basis of the same 'standards'. This in turn facilitates and strengthens inter-regional mobility.

The ROME/Competent working group has worked arduously and effectively in recent years to support and accelerate the migration of SYNERJOB partners' existing IT systems and services to this new operational reality.

Here is a brief overview of 2019:

ACTIRIS decided to use the ELISE matching engine. Their aim is to maximise reuse of the VDAB matching algorithm and adapt it to the specific context of the labour market in the Brussels region. Tests are ongoing.

The Forem already uses Competent to create profiles based on the skills of jobseekers. It is a good idea to have a large number of skills-based profiles, in order to perform quality matching with job offers.

The Forem continued to evaluate and choose the matching engine it will use. At the same time, development of the service for employers using Competent is already under way.

ADG is developing a service that allows employers to create their own offers online.

In addition, the first dashboard of the 'Labour market explorer' application, which is aimed at jobseekers with a skills-based profile, has been finalised. At the request of SYNERJOB's Board of Directors, the ROME/Competent working group is preparing a proposal to make this tool operational for the entire Belgian labour market.

b) Collective redundancies

Inter-regional collaborations are established when workers residing in other regions are affected by a collective redundancy or the restructuring or closure of a company. The cooperation agreement signed on 24 February 2005 provides for a social emergency plan to reassign workers who are affected by a collective redundancy. It automatically applies if:

- More than 250 workers are made redundant in one region;
- At least 50 of these workers live in another region.

A crisis cell then supervises the implementation of the plan: it coordinates intervention from the relevant public services and defines the social emergency plan. It is chaired by the Minister of Employment for the region where

the site most affected by the redundancies is located.

In 2019, the following themes were the subject of inter-regional cooperation and were covered by the SYNERJOB working group: Sabena Technics, Carrefour, UCB, ING.

An agreement protocol signed between Flanders, Wallonia, the German-speaking Community, the Brussels-Capital region and the federal government came into effect on 1 January 2016, defining the terms of application for the following matters:

- Restructuring discount cards – employer benefits;
- Reimbursement of outplacement costs;
- Outplacement cheques.

This protocol defines the remit of the region in which the employer establishment is located as a starting point.

In 2018, this protocol was amended to incorporate amendments to the Royal Decree of 9 March 2006, pertaining to the active management of restructuring. In addition to the three matters mentioned above, the protocol incorporates the terms of application relating to approval of the outplacement offer for collective redundancies announced after 31 December 2017. This protocol was signed at the start of 2019.

c) The place of digital in training

The objective of this working group is to pool the practices of educational stakeholders from different organisations, mainly in the digital sector, for the benefit of education.

In 2019, a major project involved the collaborative construction of digital educational practices. The tools created have highlighted the needs of the learner and the added value of introducing digital technology into the practice of trainers. Other points, such as the educational progress of the activity or the context in which these training courses take place, were found to be essential. 11 themes were covered, such as online collaboration, webinars, computer graphics or voice assistants, etc.

In parallel to this collaborative creation, two inter-centre visits (the Forem and Bruxelles Formation) were scheduled to discover the infrastructures and practices specific to each centre, such as the Bruxelles Formation 'bf-TICE' educational laboratory, exchanges with innovative trainers from VDAB or virtual-reality equipment from the Forem.

After this workshop, the working group suggested the idea of sharing all of its results during an event open to the five institutions to the SYNERJOB Board of Directors. Intensive preparation was necessary for the establishment of a 'buffet', which comprised 11 educational sheets and 22 video capsules (with translation) and the organisation of two webinars (in FR and NL) on the role of digital resources in training for jobseekers.

d) Communication of Belgian labour market statistics

Since 2017, the SYNERJOB.be website has published statistical information about the labour market in Belgium. Two creations, which are updated monthly, resulting from the pooling of the data from the Arbeitsamt, ACTIRIS, the Forem and VDAB:

- Job applications from individuals registered with the regional Public Employment Services;
- Job offers received and communicated by the regional Public Employment Services.

A third creation concerning vocational training statistics should be added soon. Bruxelles Formation will be involved in this creation, as well as the aforementioned PES (with the exception of ACTIRIS, which does not manage training).

Reporting on vocational training between various PES in a standardised way is not easy. Besides the difficulty of agreeing on identical units of measurement between employment and training services, the nomenclatures used

are different and a common language is essential. These difficulties must be overcome so that the totals proposed are consistent and represent the same reality from one region to another. Vocational training also concerns a very wide range of activities (in terms of the type of training, method of delivery, operators, beneficiaries). Following exchanges between SYNERJOB members, the working group has been able to benefit from the experience of Bruxelles Formation. In fact, in parallel with the establishment of the OBEF (Brussels Observatory for Employment and Training), Bruxelles Formation has developed a methodology to ensure the consistency of statistics from training operators and their joint analysis with the VDAB.

The analysis of the methods for adapting this methodology to the Forem is planned for 2020, with the possibility of employing similar counting methods between regions (entrants only, those present during a period, removal of duplicates, etc.).

Definitive specifications could then be developed and proposed to the working group in September, in order to start producing statistics.

From the analysis of the elements present, it appears that this will be a quarterly statistic that partially reflects the consumption of vocational training organised by public operators in Belgium in terms of participants.

The statistic will be limited to the known services of SYNERJOB members after 2017, because we do not have data from some organisations (e.g. IFAPME). We hope to be able to report on various types of training across the country (face-to-face training, blended learning, cross-functional training [language, ICT]) that can be considered as vocational training, end-of-training internships, professional trials, PFI-FPI- IBO and dual training.

e) APIs – Application Programming Interfaces

APIs – application programming interfaces – are a way of connecting internal and external IT systems. The aim of the ‘API’ working group is to map the different aspects of the APIs and to bring the different visions together. Each SYNERJOB member contributes to the implementation of the APIs. In 2018, SYNERJOB’s Board of Directors received conclusions that contained a series of recommendations made by the working group. These recommendations cover technological and organisational aspects and aspects of inter-PES governance which each PES can use to start their work. The 2019–2020 period must include these aspects in the different strategic objectives of each PES.

Strategic workshops

In 2019, the members of SYNERJOB ramped up their discussions about the following actions:

- Anticipating skills needs
- Analysing the impact of digitisation on tertiary training
- Developing and/or sharing online skills tests
- Identifying cross-functional skills, including digital skills

a) Anticipating skills needs

The objective of this project is to ‘Share experiences between PES and identify good analytical practices, in order to anticipate changes in the services provided by PES’.

In 2019, members exchanged views on good methodological practices and general observations drawn from this work.

There is still a shared interest in the prospective approaches for 2020. However, given the current health crisis, the members of the group have postponed the continuation of this work until the end of 2020, when a new meeting can be arranged for the exchange of good practices, on the basis of the implementation of the work carried out this year on both sides.

b) Analysing the impact of digitisation on tertiary training

The objective of the first meeting of the working group was to specify the scope of the work, based on the project's theme: 'Impact of digitisation on tertiary training'. Indeed, many approaches were identified: impact of digitisation on content or educational methods, on the training carried out by trainers, on investment, on the transmission of skills, on the development of the training space and on the trainer's profile.

A common interest was finally found in the study of the definition of the trainer profile, as well as their support during the process of digitisation.

The working group's aim has been redefined as follows: 'Recommendations for the implementation of the definition of the trainer profile and support for trainers in the context of digitisation'.

After gathering initial evidence on the matter, the research results were consolidated during a second meeting of the working group. Multiple dimensions and support instruments were collected (e.g. continuous in-house guidance, conferences, external continuing training, self-assessment and self-training). As for the profile of digital trainers, different visions of the role, its mission and the criteria that impact the definition of the profile sought were adopted. During a third meeting, best practices were discussed with experts from Bruxelles Formation.

These various discussions form the basis of the 2020 recommendations.

c) Developing and/or sharing skills tests online

As part of this project, SYNERJOB members wanted to assess the possibilities of developing or sharing skills tests online.

Specifically, this action aims to inventory the various online skills-testing tools used within the organisations participating in the WG, specifically with a view to identifying possibilities for pooling these on the basis of their opportunity and feasibility.

In 2019, the actions carried out mainly concerned:

- A finer reframing of the perimeter (namely, the exit from the scope of this action of free tests – which are accessible to everyone online).
- The construction of a non-exhaustive inventory of tests that can potentially be pooled (which therefore entail direct or indirect costs due to their operation), such as MySkills, Elao, Prim'test, etc.
- The search for pooling opportunities (whether it is in progress or in the project stage), with a view to being able to use them later for the launch of new projects of this type (on the basis of 'best practices'), such as Docimo, TOSA, etc.

A final report, which is planned for 2020, will discuss the results of the actions carried out and proposals for concrete decisions relating to the establishment of exhaustive mapping of online skills tests and a pooling procedure.

d) Identifying cross-functional skills, including digital skills

The aim of this project is to examine the generic skills relevant to the labour market and to develop a handbook containing a common list of generic and digital skills for the future.

The shared model is still not ready. However, the partners have already:

- Identified and shared the different models related to the theme of cross-disciplinary skills (soft skills, generic skills, etc.).
- Established a table comparing these different models.

Based on this comparison, the working group will carry out tests in 2020, in order to establish the link between professional skill profiles and the most relevant cross-functional skills.

Annexes

Addresses

Addresses of the institutional members of SYNERJOB as of 31/12/2019

ARBEITSAMT DER DEUTSCHSPRACHIGEN GEMEINSCHAFT (ADG)

Category B public institution

Registered office at 4780-SAINT-VITH, Vennbahnstrasse 4/2

Represented by Robert NELLES, Managing Director.

BRUXELLES FORMATION

Category B public institution

Registered office at 1180 BRUSSELS, rue de Stalle, 67

Represented by Olivia P'TITO, General Manager.

BRUSSELS REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT OFFICE (ACTIRIS)

Category B public institution

Registered office at 1210 BRUSSELS, boulevard de l'Astronomie 14

Represented by Grégor CHAPELLE, General Manager
and Caroline MANCEL, Assistant General Manager

WALLOON OFFICE FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT (Le Forem)

Category B public institution

Registered office at 6000-CHARLEROI, boulevard Tirou 104

Represented by Marie-Kristine VANBOCKESTAL, General Manager

VLAAMSE DIENST VOOR ARBEIDSBEMIDDELING EN BEROEPSOPLEIDING (VDAB)

Extern Verzelfstandigd Agentschap met rechtspersoonlijkheid (external autonomous agency with legal personality)

Registered office at 1000 BRUSSELS, boulevard de l'Empereur, 11

Represented by Wim ADRIAENS, Managing Director.

Address of the Chair and permanent secretariat of SYNERJOB:

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Members of the SYNERJOB Board of Directors as of 31/12/2019

The Forem	represented by Marie-Kristine VANBOCKESTAL
VDAB	represented by Wim ADRIAENS
ACTIRIS and Caroline MANCEL	represented by Grégor CHAPELLE
ADG	represented by Robert NELLES
BRUXELLES FORMATION	represented by Olivia P'TITO

Mandates

Marie-Kristine VANBOCKESTAL, President
Wim ADRIAENS, Vice President
Grégor CHAPELLE, Secretary
Robert NELLES, Treasurer
Olivia P'TITO, Auditor
Basilio NAPOLI, Auditor until 30 June 2019
Caroline MANCEL, Auditor from 1 July 2019

Sessions in 2019

Board of Directors

31 January 2019
2 April 2019
27 June 2019
3 October 2019
4 December 2019

General assembly

27 June 2019