



ANNUAL REPORT 2020



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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 job 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, it has been necessary to manage a pandemic, which will have lasting repercussions on our lifestyles and our working conditions. While we were hoping for a recovery from Covid, the entirety of 2020 was marked by various waves of this virus. An unprecedented international effort saw the arrival of several vaccines to the market. The public employment/training services have also come together to mitigate the effects of the crisis on employment at all levels: in Belgium (regionally and between regions), Europe and on a global level.

Based on the characteristics of their labour market, each Belgian public employment and/or training service provided adequate support to those who were made redundant, long-term jobseekers, young people, workers and employers. All members of SYNERJOB had to quickly and effectively innovate, in order to overcome a challenge for which nobody was prepared. At European level, no public employment and/or training service could have anticipated this health crisis, and the members of SYNERJOB were able to actively contribute to considerations intended to mitigate the impact of the crisis, while also preparing for the relaunch within the European Union. They also had the opportunity to share certain practices with their counterparts outside the European Union.

Everything will continue to move at a faster pace, but SYNERJOB needs to redouble its efforts on key points that will allow our citizens to get to grips with a constantly evolving employment market as easily as possible. More digitisation, more respect for the environment, more life-long learning: these are the key trends that should encourage every citizen to acquire the skills required to be successful in the society of the future. During 2020, SYNERJOB strengthened its strategic working group, in particular to overcome this challenge.

Furthermore, 2020 was the opportunity to pay tribute to one of the founding members of SYNERJOB, Mr Robert Nelles, the General Manager of ADG, who has retired, and to welcome Mrs Sabine Herzet, who has taken over from him.

We are convinced that SYNERJOB remains an essential tool, which allows us to forge collaborations over time in order to better deal with new challenges.



Marie-Kristine Vanboeckstal
President of SYNERJOB



Wim Adriaens
Vice President of SYNERJOB

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 digitisation of the job 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.

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 Professional 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. Its composition was revised in 2020, in order to add participants who, as top managers, have decision-making authority.

“Rolling Agenda”

A “Rolling Agenda” was implemented in 2018, with a view to substantial knowledge sharing on themes relating to the job 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 2020:

- Board of Directors meeting of 22.01.2020: “Guarantee solutions ‘for all’” presented by ACTIRIS;
- Board of Directors meeting of 30.04.2020: due to the health crisis, the agenda for this Board of Directors meeting was shortened and the rolling agenda did not take place;
- Board of Directors meeting on 30.06.2020: “Cooperation with the CPAS (Public Social Welfare Centres)” presented by the ADG;
- Board of Directors meeting on 24.09.2020: “New policy for approaching employers” presented by the VDAB;

- Board of Directors meeting of 23.11.2020: “Post Covid-19 relaunch plan in support of Walloon companies” presented by the Forem.

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.

The themes covered by the working groups are presented below.

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 job 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

There is a common action plan between the VDAB and the Forem, which aims to meet the needs of Flemish companies in terms of labour and increase the integration rate of Walloon jobseekers.

The working axes of the action plan are:

- satisfying the labour needs of Flemish companies, through the active management of their job offers;
- increasing the integration of Walloon jobseekers by encouraging their inter-regional mobility;
- improving language knowledge (professional Dutch).

The Forem and VDAB in the areas affected, as well as throughout Belgium, were faced with the unprecedented Covid-19 health crisis in 2020.

This crisis left a significant number of people being temporary laid off or having lost their jobs. For the Forem, the unemployment rate increased by 0,3 % compared to 2019 (13,2% - 12,9%). The VDAB saw an increase in unemployment of 0.2% compared to 2019, with a mean of 6,2% for 2020. At the same time, the number of job offers received and managed by the Forem decreased by 21,4% compared to 2019. The VDAB saw a decrease of 12,7%.

Our two institutions had to implement a series of new measures to ensure their activities could continue, most of which were remote.

Despite the difficulties, the Forem and VDAB continued to collaborate and enjoyed great success, particularly in the context of fruit picking in Limbourg, where 445 jobseekers were employed under seasonal contracts and 828 under Local Employment Agency contracts. For 2020, the Forem achieved 32.380 placements, which represents almost 99,63% of its target for 2020.

Flanders remains full of opportunities for Walloon jobseekers. Therefore, it is important to maintain good collaboration between the Forem and the VDAB.

What were the results in 2020?

Specialised advisors managed 3.802 jobs, which were located in Flanders and proposed to Walloon jobseekers. Over 15.000 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 24.589 Walloon jobseekers to find a job in Flanders in 2020 (source: DIMONA).

b) The Forem – ADG collaboration

Management of 148 job posts by the Forem, for companies located in the German-speaking Community (excluding temporary posts).

Management of 50 job posts by the ADG, for companies located in Wallonia outside the German-speaking Community (excluding temporary posts).

Fourteen people living in the German-speaking Community completed a PFI (Training and Integration Plan) in a Walloon company and 23 people living in the Walloon Region outside the German-speaking Community completed an IBU (PFI) in a German-speaking company.

33 jobseekers in the German-speaking Community underwent training in Forem training centres, while 29 Walloon jobseekers undertook training in an ADG training centre.

c) ACTIRIS – VDAB collaboration

In 2020, ACTIRIS received 2.998 job offers. ACTIRIS mobilised 27.599 jobseekers from Brussels, who were invited, tested, prepared and supported.

In 2019, following a decision within SYNERJOB, ACTIRIS and the VDAB decided to exchange all job offers. This became reality in 2020. The intention is also to carry out automatic matching between jobseekers from Brussels and these job offers.

Additional tools, such as a translation tool, as well as geolocation (visual indication of the location of the job on a digital map, and indication of the commute time between home and work) will help the jobseeker (and the advisor) to overcome two significant barriers that they encounter when searching for a job outside Brussels.

The complete exchange of job offers does not mean that the VDAB mediators may no longer request the active intervention of ACTIRIS. New agreements and client processes have also been agreed upon. IT developments are also necessary to further automate this process. The VDAB has also worked on a new vision for concentric mediation.

ACTIRIS and the VDAB want to base their collaboration on raising employers' awareness of the recruitment of jobseekers with few qualifications.

Pilot projects/training programmes which lead to a hire, as made by Aviato, have shown that people living in Brussels (subject to improving their linguistic and technical skills) can find work in Flanders.

In these cases, the jobseeker's motivation is higher because they have the prospect of a job. Other forms of learning in the workplace have also demonstrated potential, but we can see that employers are still not fully convinced.

In addition, the two partners continue to organise an annual communication campaign that focuses on a sub -aspect of inter-regional mobility. Communication with partners and internally is also adapted, in order to reach as broad an audience as possible. ACTIRIS agrees to inform and raise awareness among its personnel, so that inter-regional mobility is considered as an obvious solution for each supported jobseeker.

d) Automatic flow of job offers

The number of offers exchanged automatically between the different public employment services in 2020 is 214.439.

e) Vocational training

These are the 2020 figures relating to professional training and the number of jobseekers trained in the VDAB, ADG, Bruxelles Formation and Forem training centres:

	2020
From ADG to the Forem	33
From Bruxelles Formation/ACTIRIS to the Forem	321
From VDAB to the Forem	131
From the Forem to ADG	29
From the Forem to Bruxelles Formation	315
From Bruxelles Formation/ACTIRIS to VDAB	1528
From the Forem to VDAB	21

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, the materials are now operational within the regions, the sharing of information concerning 'Management of people that are far removed from the labour market, with medical, mental, psychological or psychiatric (MMPP) problems' is due to continue.

As a result, the work has achieved 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.

In this respect, the public employment services (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.

These conditions were applied by amending the Royal Decree of 25/11/1991, as it pertains to unemployment. They were applicable from 01/07/2019, with a transition period ending on 31/03/2020 for files that are still being analysed. The PES then implemented the necessary actions, with a view to the establishment of these new conditions, in order to allow recipients of insertion benefits to extend their rights to insertion allowance based on an appropriate plan and to be recognised as "not mobilisable", in accordance with the conditions established in the regulations.

However, following the lockdown measures related to the health crisis (Covid-19), a Special Royal Decree was approved by the Council of Ministers, which stated that jobseekers benefiting from an extension (see above) due to end on 31.03.2020 would retain their insertion allowance until 30.09.2020 inclusive. The right to safeguard allowances was then postponed to 01.10.2020.

The above notwithstanding, the PES met regularly to agree on standardised practices to identify the status of "not mobilisable", as well as the process for managing the beneficiaries concerned in the event of moving house and, thus, the registration from one PES to another, in line with data-protection regulations (GDPR).

Information exchanges via electronic means that pertain to the status of "not mobilisable" have also been implemented between NEO and the PES.

While each PES ensures the monitoring of its activities in the context of this project, the working groups now focus on the establishment of a common dashboard. In fact, the PES are committed to keeping a monitoring file, which is developed jointly, up-to-date, in order to be able to produce an activity report for the month of September 2021. This reporting will include figures, data on the profiles of jobseekers, a report on the problems encountered upon entry and, if necessary, still present at the time of renewing the "not mobilisable" status, etc.

If a jobseeker ("MMPP" or "not mobilisable") moves from one region to another, ACTIRIS opens a shared file, so that each PES can file the necessary documents to monitor the case (request for transfer of the file by the jobseeker, ICF reports, etc). The forms will be sent in the language of the region of origin.

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.

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

At the start of 2020, the Forem and ACTIRIS collaborated to pilot a working group relating to partnerships, in the context of the 2020 programme of the European network of Public Employment Services. The European Commission provided a consultant to support work which had to be carried out remotely. A document of recommendations was prepared concerning the strengthening of relations between the PES and their partners.

The SYNERJOB working group also complied with the legislative process, which led to the extension of the Decision regarding the establishment of the European network of Public Employment Services.

It also proceeded with the joint validation of the opinion of the European network of Public Employment Services concerning the strengthening of the “Youth guarantee” by the Belgian PES.

Finally, members of SYNERJOB provided regular reporting to their European counterparts (via the European Commission) concerning the measures implemented within their PES in the context of the Covid pandemic.

At the same time as these joint activities, Belgian PES responded separately – sometimes with prior consultation – to various questionnaires from the European network of Public Employment Services (on disabled people on 22/07, on services based on evidence on 24/07, on artificial intelligence on 31/07). They also participated in a series of network webinars (08/09, 24/09) and proceeded to collect quantitative data in the context of benchmarking.

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, that is, 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, hereafter mentioned 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 it 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.

In a second phase, the Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Belgium and Luxembourg and Unizo were admitted to the network as partners.

Due to uncertainties surrounding possible consequences for members and partners of the EURES network regarding EU directive 2018/1724 “Single Digital Gateway”, the SYNERJOB working group decided that launching a new call was not advisable.

- Establishment of the European Labour Authority (ELA)

The European authority officially started its work in October 2019.

The transfer of the EURES European Coordination Office of the European Commission to the ELA is taking place gradually and will be complete in 2021. In the meantime, the SYNERJOB working group is following this process and looking out for any relevant changes.

- 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.

The SYNERJOB working group has actively and intensively participated in the creation of the Belgian portal for support and problem-solving services, in particular, in the development of the central-registration form.

- Covid-19 and EURES activities

Covid-19 has obviously also had an impact on EURES’ activities. In particular, the service offering had to adapt quickly. More requests for information had to be processed, while mediation activities were less frequent.

The SYNERJOB working group and the activities of the European Coordination Office were less affected. Meetings were held virtually and more often, which increased the pressure on the SYNERJOB working group.

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.

From 30 October 2020, a new recommendation from the Council of the European Union, "A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee", replaces and updates the 2013 recommendation.

In 2020, SYNERJOB and its Youth Guarantee working group participated in, and contributed to, various requests, activities and events, in particular:

At the European level:

- Coordination of Belgian responses to the consultation questionnaire targeted at national coordinators of the Youth Guarantee, which was launched by the European Commission in early March 2020, in order to help with its proposal for future recommendations aiming to reinforce the Youth Guarantee.
- Participation in virtual meetings of the national coordinators of the Youth Guarantee, which were organised by the European Commission on 12 and 13 March 2020, in conjunction with the Afepas, the Advisors for European PES affairs (PES Network), and on 26 November 2020. These meetings aimed to provide a regular update on the latest national and European developments regarding the Youth Guarantee. Particular focus was placed on the preparation and subsequent adoption of the new recommendation from the Council of the European Union "A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee", as well as the measures implemented by European countries in response to the socio-economic impact of the Covid-19 crisis on young people.
- Following the meeting of the national coordinators on 26 November 2020, coordination of the Belgian responses to the questionnaire from the DG EMPL on measures taken to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the employment of young people.
- Participation in the "Open Doors" week from the DG EMPL, which was held virtually between 30/11 and 04/12/2020 and contribution from ACTIRIS in the form of participation in a live chat about coaching in the context of the Youth Guarantee.

At the level of SYNERJOB:

- Meeting of the SYNERJOB working group about the Youth Guarantee on 20 February 2020, in order to provide an update and coordinate pending matters.
- Information note and presentation to SYNERJOB's Board of Directors on 30 June 2020 about the proposal of a European recommendation to reinforce the Youth Guarantee and the revised work schedule of SYNERJOB's Youth Guarantee working group.

d) ReferNet

The ReferNet dossier was not active in 2020; no Belgian operator responded to the call launched by Cedefop for the 2020–2023 programme. However, with the support of the members of SYNERJOB and the administrations of the three Communities for education, Bruxelles Formation decided to resume the national coordination mandate for the 2021–2023 period. In this respect, a new application file, which was submitted in November 2020, was validated for the start of activities in 2021.

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

SYNERJOB represents Belgium within the World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES). In this respect, the President of SYNERJOB has participated in various meetings of the Association's Board of Directors and Executive Committee.

In addition, SYNERJOB has helped to improve the management of WAPES' executive secretariat by responding to various questions raised by the executive secretariat relating to HR, IT and public contracts.

The project to support the self-assessment of PES that are part of WAPES' long-term strategy has also progressed, in large part thanks to the support of members of SYNERJOB, who have dedicated human resources to this. The "SamPES" (Self Assessment Methodology for PES) pilot project held its start-up meeting on 13 October and training modules were carried out remotely from 9 October to 10 November 2020.

During the widespread lockdown periods, WAPES was among the first organisations to carry out a survey on the responses of PES to the effects on the pandemic. The association also continued its activities virtually, by organising webinars and participating in online events organised by other international stakeholders, specifically the OECD, Cedefop and the BIT. Among the events organised by WAPES, we can mention the following webinars;

- WAPES web conference – "Remote working: opportunities and risks for our organisations and the employment market of tomorrow", 28.09.2020
- OECD-WAPES web conference – "The future of local employment agencies", 22.10.2020
- WAPES web conference – BA (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, Germany) – "Immigration of qualified labour: a new challenge for the Public Employment Services", 20.11.2020
- WAPES web conference – PES "Reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, results of the WAPES survey", 29.06.2020.

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

The ROME/Competent working group aims to be able to employ automatic matching, using skills based on the same taxonomy for the entire Belgian job 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.

Thanks to investment in recent years in the migration of existing IT services and systems belonging to SYNERJOB partners to this new operational reality, significant progress has been made.

This has been reinforced by the collaboration with another SYNERJOB working group to improve transparency and harmonisation concerning the codification of job offers.

Here is a brief overview of 2020:

ACTIRIS

In early 2020, ACTIRIS created a new platform for employers and employees for the coding of job offers, which incorporated the idea of skills (according to the skills-based frame of reference).

At the same time, matching between the skills (skills-based frame of reference) of jobseekers and job offers was implemented, allowing employers to view the jobseekers matching the skills coded in the job offers directly and jobseekers to view the job offers that correspond to their skills.

The Forem

Work to develop a service that allows employers to submit job offers using ROME V3/COMPETENT has continued and should be completed in December 2021.

At the same time, works were carried out to acquire and implement the ELISE automatic-matching solution. These should be completed in December 2021.

ADG

Since 2009, ADG has a portal on which employers can enter job offers. These offers can be consulted on the ADG website.

A portal for jobseekers should launch in October 2021 where they can register as jobseekers and publish their profile. Registered employers can then search for candidates via their portal.

This summer, a new coding for jobs will be introduced, which will be compatible with Competent v2 (in terms of job profiles). The next step will be the use of all the skills.

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 re-assign 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 2020, the following themes were the subject of inter-regional cooperation and were covered by the SYNERJOB working group: Brussels Airlines, Lagardère Retail Travel Belgium, Ryanair, Autogrill and the bankruptcy of Swissport.

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.

Dit protocol definieert het gewest van de vestigingseenheid van de werkgever als vertrekpunt van de bevoegdheid. This protocol defines the remits of the region in which the employer establishment is located as 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 technology in training

1) The results expected for the Digital Synergy event in March 2020 were broadly achieved, in a specific context due to the health crisis. The figures attained by the various organisations prove the increasing passion of educational and administrative stakeholders for digital methods, which has been at the heart of their professional and personal concerns.

The webinar on digital in professional and private life (Fr-French and NI-Dutch) was a real success:

	Live (19 March 2020)	Deferred (25 May 2020)	Total
Webinar NL	452	91	543
Webinar FR	201	47	248

For the first quarter of 2020, a space on the SYNERJOB.be website was inaugurated on 19 March 2020; it contains a range of webinars, 11 educational files (in Fr and NI) and 22 educational video capsules with subtitles (in Fr or NI).

Period	Page views	Visits
18/03/20 – 27/05/20	5312	3601
18/03/20 – 25/03/20 (first week)	3244	2093
18/05/20 - 27/05/20 (reminder after 2 months)	791	514

After the webinar, Bruxelles Formation offered a participatory workshop that brought together 52 people from the Forem and Bruxelles Formation. The theme covered concerned digital literacy (digital literacy is assessed as an individual's capacity to participate in a society that uses digital-communication technologies in all its areas of activity). Within the VDAB, the various digital resources from the event can be consulted and used individually and within institutional working groups.

In order to sustain this initial success, and with a view to continuing with these actions to pool best practices and share resources, the working group wanted to encourage interactions between the VDAB, the Forem and Bruxelles Formation, with the support of ACTIRIS and the ADG.

2) To this end, an event called Digital Synergy 2 took place on 10 December 2020 and involved two bilingual webinars in French and Dutch, with the chance to benefit from the rich testimonies of many partners and institutional experts on their new practices due to the pandemic: Acta, Agoria, Cefora, Horeca Forma, Vormetal. 556 people registered for two webinars (208 in NI and 348 in Fr), with the live involvement of 398 people and 114 watching the replay of the two events, that is, 92% of people watching the Digital Synergy 2 webinars. During these webinars, a "call to action" was implemented towards the Digital Synergy page of the SYNERJOB website. This page presented: 11 PDF files on educational practices and digital methods and 31 videos and 1 podcast highlighting the trainers from three institutions discussing the added value of digital methods in training.

3) In addition, a survey among educational personnel was launched in the three organisations respectively in October 2020. This concerns the introduction or use of digital methods post-lockdown and the advantages and disadvantages reported by all the educational stakeholders and trainees.

A summary of all these surveys will be offered in 2021 on the Digital Synergy page, along with a presentation of all the digital and analogue resources that have been accumulated. A search engine will help visitors to find resources based on their needs.

d) 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.

In 2020, the Forem, along with "view.brussels" (ACTIRIS), reviewed how to achieve monitoring in a broad manner, but the effects of the health crisis on the labour market resulted in the members of the group postponing the continuation of this sharing of experiences and methods.

In late 2019, with the launch of "view.brussels", ACTIRIS launched a reflection process to redeploy the prospect of SYNERJOB – Annual report 2020

developing a new working axis dealing with the issue of professional transitions and careers. This reflection aims to implement a sustainable approach for monitoring and forecasting the next five years.

It aims to develop a solid methodology for determining training and employment needs over three to five years, as well as to build a monitoring tool that is capable of anticipating possible future scenarios over a ten-year period and longer, sometimes transversally, sometimes by targeting an activity, a sector or a profession. The diagnostics that will be established should make it possible to formulate recommendations (by consulting the relevant stakeholders, if necessary), in particular to adapt the training offer in light of emerging employment opportunities and the transformation of professions and skills.

For the Forem, the challenges are similar and the forecasting method is being adapted in late 2020/early 2021. The Walloon Government has recently entrusted the Forem with coordinating the "Future Walloon Skills" platform. Analysing needs will be based on an analysis of skills/competencies required to activate the levers required by companies to respond to various challenges, including the challenge of energy transition (not very visible in previous years). The method will therefore place more importance on value chains, while preserving the analysis by strategic activity areas, making it possible to better account for the transversality of a series of issues when anticipating needs.

Given the status of its own resources, the ADG shows an interest in keeping up-to-date with these approaches.

e) Analysing the impact of digitisation on tertiary training

With the impact of digitisation on tertiary training being one of the subjects of the rolling agenda established by the SYNERJOB partners, a working group led by the ADG, and formed by representatives of Bruxelles Formation and the Forem, was implemented to analyse the impact of digitisation on tertiary training.

Firstly, the working group's objective was to specify the extent of the work on this theme. 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.

After bringing together the initial elements concerning this issue, the research results were consolidated and multiple dimensions and support instruments were collected (e.g. continuous internal guidance, conferences, continuous external 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. In addition, best practices were exchanged with experts from Bruxelles Formation, which allowed for the establishment of recommendations concerning the profile of the trainer and the support of trainers in the context of digitisation (e.g. the importance of technology intelligence, support for trainers and the role of the digital mediator, the need for a digital culture for trainers, the positioning of trainers relative to their digital knowledge, or even the trainer's role as a facilitator of learning).

f) Developing and/or sharing skills tests online

In 2020, via the submission of a decision note, the members of this group carried out an initial (non-exhaustive) inventory of the online skills tests and established proposed actions in the context of projects to pool these tests. At the same time, they were able to highlight difficulties relating to the collection of useful information, due to the lack of centralisation of this data within participating organisations.

At this stage, seven online skills tests fall within the scope of this project (digital tests suitable for pooling). Among them, four are currently shared between at least two organisations, two of them through an agreement. For the remainder, these are experimental phases framed by a draft agreement or projects that are due to start but anticipated in advance by a letter of commitment.

Considering these different partnership experiences as “best practices” on this topic, it has been agreed that a simplified and shared pooling procedure would be produced, as well as the finalisation of the full map; therefore, the centralisation of all information on all existing tests would be achieved.

g) Identifying cross-functional skills, including digital skills

The aim of the project was to identify a common language for transversal skills, including digital skills.

The group studied and compared different models relating to the transversal skills used within and outside its organisations.

On the basis of this study, the group established that these models, despite their differences, can be reduced to the same concepts. However, based on the aim of the target group in question, the models are used for specific purposes.

Each organisation has its own working framework. The working group does not consider it desirable to develop a new, additional framework. The working group suggests as follows:

- given that there is already a collaboration relating to the Competent database
- and given that the VDAB has developed a framework for transversal skills based on the new version of Competent 2.0

regarding data exchange, they will use this framework, which forms part of the new Competent 2.0 database. In addition, organisations will make every effort to facilitate and support the migration from Competent 1.0 to Competent 2.0.

A similar methodology was used for digital skills. It appears that all the organisations consider Digcomp to be a solid database and that the VDAB, the Forem and Bruxelles Formation already use Digcomp for actions related to digital skills. Therefore, Digcomp is considered to be the benchmark for digital skills.

A decision note was submitted to the Board of Directors and approved on 23/11/2020.

Annexes

Addresses

Addresses of the institutional members of SYNERJOB as of 31/12/2020

ARBEITSAMT DER DEUTSCHSPRACHIGEN GEMEINSCHAFT (ADG)

Category B public institution

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

Represented by Robert NELLES, Managing Director, until 31 October 2020

Represented by Christiane LENTZ, Managing Director for the period between 1 November 2020 and 31 December 2020

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:

Asbl SYNERJOB c/o Le Forem

Boulevard Tirou, 104

6000 CHARLEROI

olivia.vanmoerrichard@forem.be

SYNERJOB website:

www.SYNERJOB.be

Members of the SYNERJOB Board of Directors as of 31/12/2020

The Forem	represented by Marie-Kristine VANBOCKESTAL
VDAB	represented by Wim ADRIAENS
ACTIRIS	represented by Grégor CHAPELLE and Caroline MANCEL
ADG	represented by Robert NELLES until 31 October 2020 and represented by Christiane LENTZ for the period between 1 November 2020 and 31 December 2020
BRUXELLES FORMATION	represented by Olivia P'TITO

Mandates

Marie-Kristine VANBOCKESTAL, President

Wim ADRIAENS, Vice President

Grégor CHAPELLE, Secretary

Robert NELLES, Treasurer until 31 October 2020 and Christiane LENTZ for the period between 1 November 2020 and 31 December 2020

Olivia P'TITO, Auditor

Caroline MANCEL, Auditor

Sessions in 2020

Board of Directors

22 January 2020

30 April 2020

30 June 2020

24 September 2020

23 November 2020

General assembly

30 June 2020