



2017 ANNUAL REPORT



Table of Contents

Foreword	4
History	6
24 February 2005 : signing of an interregional cooperation agreement	6
3 July 2007: creation of SYNERJOB NPO	7
Missions.....	8
Main themes.....	9
I. Interregional mobility.....	9
a) Le Forem-VDAB Collaboration.....	9
b) Le Forem – ADG Collaboration	10
c) ACTIRIS – VDAB Collaboration.....	10
d) Automatic flow of job vacancies	11
e) Vocational training	11
II. Transfer of duties	12
a) Sixth State Reform.....	12
b) Control of the public far away from the labour market, with medical, mental, psychological or psychiatric problems (MMPP).....	14
c) Local Employment Agency (LEA)	14
d) Internships and vocational training.....	15
III. SYNERJOB and Europe.....	15
a) European Network of Public Employment Services (ENPES)	15
b) EURES (European Employment Service)	16
c) YOUTH GUARANTEE (YG)	17
d) ReferNet	18
IV. SYNERJOB and WAPES (World Association of Public Employment Services).....	19
a) SYNERJOB’s support	19
b) SYNERJOB as an active member of WAPES	19
c) Added value for SYNERJOB.....	19
V. Cross-cutting themes.....	20
a) ROME v3/Competent	20
b) Mass redundancies.....	20
c) Communication on Belgian labour market statistics	21
d) Google and employment.....	21
Annexes	23
Addresses	23
Synerjob Board of Directors Members as of 31/12/2018.....	24

Mandates.....	24
2017 Meeting Dates	24

Foreword

With the creation of SYNERJOB NPO in July 2007, ACTIRIS, ADG, Bruxelles Formation, le Forem and VDAB wanted to organise synergies between them in order to meet the challenges of the regional labour markets more effectively.

It was "common" learning, or benchlearning, that was favoured by these partners in order to achieve the mission they had set for themselves.

Benchlearning allows real mutual enrichment and offers several advantages.

First of all, the faster identification of approaches that can be shared. In this respect, the common work of adapting the reference systems resulting from the job and profession classification tool, ROMEv3, has enabled le Forem and ACTIRIS to draw on the expertise developed by the VDAB in this area to structure information on skills in an optimal manner and make it understandable by users.

Secondly, negotiation capacities, both institutional and commercial, with partners or suppliers increased. The development of the partnership between the VDAB, ACTIRIS and le Forem has made it possible to negotiate advantageous technology licensing formulas (for example: Elise). The capacity to negotiate with certain partners such as Pôle Emploi is also increased.

Also worth mentioning is the increase in knowledge data and support for decision-making. The diversity of the Flemish, Brussels and Walloon labour markets is such that it makes it possible to study orientations or options from different angles and to validate them in a more robust way.

Another important aspect is improving the quality of services provided locally and affecting more global markets. Le Forem and ACTIRIS support the integration of jobseekers from Wallonia and Brussels respectively, notably in companies located in Flanders. Benchlearning enables to take ownership of the integration conditions specific to Flemish companies.

Finally, the distribution of the cost of experimentation, the increase in the gain of experience feedback in the implementation of projects is an important benefit of SYNERJOB.

Today, challenges are multiplying and the need for synergies between SYNERJOB members is greater than ever.

Digitisation, ageing, youth unemployment, migrations, to mention just a few examples, are all phenomena which imply that public employment and vocational training services must be able to anticipate, be flexible, agile, innovative and must work together more closely, as well as collaborate with other partners.

SYNERJOB members also want to work together flexibly but effectively over the next few years to define and implement actions to meet new challenges. These are not the least : professional transitions, digitisation of the economy and work, evolution of expected skills and aptitudes, active labour market management measures, articulation between employment and education, promotion of interregional mobility of jobseekers, setting up of a monitoring system and the organisation of strategic seminars. These are the seven projects on which SYNERJOB intends to intensify its efforts in the coming years.

Since 2017 corresponds to the tenth anniversary of SYNERJOB's existence, this activity report presents

with a retrospective aspect the themes that were the subject of an active collaboration in 2017 within SYNERJOB.

We can be sure that the synergies built up over the years will form the basis for continued fruitful joint collaboration to meet current and future labour market challenges.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'M' and 'K' followed by a horizontal line and a vertical line.

Marie-Kristine Vanboeckstal
SYNERJOB's President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, featuring a large, stylized 'F' and 'L' followed by a horizontal line and a vertical line.

Fons Leroy
SYNERJOB's Vice-Président

History

24 February 2005 : signing of an interregional cooperation agreement

The Brussels-Capital Region, the Walloon Region, the Flemish Region, the Flemish Community, the German-speaking Community and the French Community Commission signed an interregional cooperation agreement. The aim of this programme is to promote greater mobility between regions as relates to employment and training.

Since then, ACTIRIS, the Arbeitsamt der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft (ADG), Bruxelles Formation, le Forem and VDAB have worked closely together with the aim of integrating as many job seekers as possible into the job market and encouraging their mobility.

Various means are envisaged and encourage services to :

- Exchange job vacancies more extensively ;
- Raise awareness of job seekers and employers about interregional mobility ;
- Work together to promote and organise language courses and training initiatives related to interregional mobility ;
- Ensure consistency across job names and functions in order to improve the exchange of information and guarantee greater transparency in the labour market ;
- Cooperate to reintegrate workers who have been victims of mass redundancy ;
- Initiate specific actions between Brussels and the suburbs.

The Brussels Region, the Flemish Region and the Flemish Community signed a cooperation agreement in May 2006 which includes the following joint actions :

- The creation of three Dutch-speaking "Local Employment Stores" in Brussels;
- A programme for promoting language courses in Brussels;
- The creation of a social temporary work agency in Brussels.

In 2011, these provisions were brought together in a new cooperation agreement comprising :

- Interregional interaction between Brussels and the periphery with new quantified objectives for the VDAB and ACTIRIS, with the airport area as one of the priorities ;
- Recognition of the three local employment stores as partners on the Brussels labour market ;
- An additional language training programme in Brussels ;
- Greater synergy between Bncto (Brussels Dutch-speaking Committee for Employment and Training) and ACTIRIS in terms of diversity management ;
- Coordination of support to young graduates and work-linked training.

Moreover, through the cooperation agreement of 3 July 2008 between the governments of the Walloon Region and the German-speaking Community, the cooperation agreement of 26 November 1998 was amended. This agreement aims to strengthen the partnerships between le Forem and the ADG at various levels :

- Promote the interregional mobility of job seekers and workers;

- Intensify collaborations between le Forem and the ADG and reinforce the cooperation agreement signed on 27 May 2004 between both organisations;
- Strengthen cooperation in terms of language training and access to competence centres.

These objectives were achieved by implementing various partnership projects between Forem and the ADG and by signing a partnership agreement on 26 February 2013 between these two institutions and as part of the use of IT applications giving access to the "employer" and "individual" databases of Forem (the Walloon Office for Vocational Training and Employment) and sharing the financial expenses related to this cooperation.

3 July 2007: creation of SYNERJOB NPO

ACTIRIS, ADG, Bruxelles Formation, le Forem and VDAB created SYNERJOB NPO which broadens the themes already addressed, in order to adapt to the evolution of the job market.

The Board of Directors, which brings together the senior officials of SYNERJOB members, meets several times a year to discuss new projects, support ongoing actions and monitor the progress of the working groups to which it entrusts to address specific themes such as the Youth Guarantee or the sixth reform of the State. The composition of the Board of Directors is set out in the annexes.

On the 1st July 2016, Forem succeeds the VDAB as President of SYNERJOB NPO. Since then, a permanent secretariat manages the interactions between SYNERJOB members.

Missions

SYNERJOB aims to combine the efforts of the Belgian public employment and vocational training services in order to face the challenges of the labour market, while respecting the missions, tasks and competences of each individual organisation and the Board of Directors.

This implies in particular:

- Analysing and dealing with the problems of the Belgian labour market ;
- Reflecting together on the challenges to be met ;
- Sharing knowledge and exchanging good practices ;
- Buying and/or developing tools and methodologies ;
- Carrying out joint actions ;
- Concluding partnerships within the framework of European or other projects ;
- Organising a rotation between the members in order to propose a single contact point for the Public Employment and Vocational Training Services in the framework of European dossiers ;
- Take common positions according to the rules of international representation.

All actions aim to co-construct or undertake one (or more) common project(s) (with at least two Synerjob partners per project). Each partner uses its own resources to achieve the desired results.

Since 2013, Synerjob has had an additional mission to act as a 'single point of contact' for Belgium in the framework of the European matters related to the responsibilities of public employment and vocational training services. Indeed, the European Commission requires that Member States have a single point of contact notably for EURES, Youth Guarantee and the European Network of Public Employment Services (ENPES). The primary aim is to facilitate the transmission of information to and from the European Commission.

Synerjob is the single point of contact, but in practical terms, one of the members plays the role of coordinator within the framework of a previously agreed rotation.

The challenges that Synerjob members have to meet are significant, which is why in 2013, they decided to create a strategic working group. Through a pluriannual strategic plan (2014-2016), this group defines common objectives and the areas in which action is needed.

Main themes

As news and issues arise, SYNERJOB's Board of Directors creates working groups specific to certain themes. These working groups are composed of experts from each member of the association and can be permanent or temporary, depending on the themes dealt with and their continuity over time.

For the working groups still active included in this 2017 report, the following information is generally proposed: the group's objective, some achievements since the last 10 (2007-2017) and proposed actions for the future.

For certain topics covered by several working groups or for more specific subjects, more general information is provided.

The contact details of SYNERJOB's Permanent Secretariat are given at the end of the report for further information on the contents presented.

I. Interregional mobility

The situation in the labour market differs between regions and, as a result, greater interregional mobility can alleviate any mismatch between supply and demand. In this regard, partnerships have been created between the VDAB and ACTIRIS, between the VDAB and le Forem and between le Forem and the ADG.

Their objectives are to strengthen the interregional mobility of job seekers/seekers and/or trainees from Wallonia and Brussels.

Here is a summary of what has happened over the last 10 years between the different partners:

a) Le Forem-VDAB Collaboration

- 2005 – 2007 : Regional collaboration (mainly between Mouscron and Kortrijk) in the management of vacancies from Flemish companies ;
- 2008 : Reinforcement of collaboration on interregional mobility between le Forem and VDAB by setting up joint teams in Mouscron, Halle and Liège for the active management of job vacancies from Flemish companies ;
- Le Forem has simultaneously set up a network of bilingual advisers in each Regional Directorate to mobilise and support job seekers to get a job in Flanders ;
- 2014 Integration of the activities of the VDAB-le Forem joint teams into the respective regular services while maintaining close collaboration between the VDAB and Forem advisers.

Achievements since 2008

- Active management of 54,005 job positions (4,122 in 2017) ;
- Organisation of 341 jobdatings for 722 companies in which 10,893 people participated and of which 2,317 were hired at the end of the meeting ;
- Participation in jobdatings organised jointly by VDAB-le Forem and ACTIRIS for example to the benefit of Audi (154 Walloon employees) and Colruyt ;
- On average more than 14,000 job seekers are integrated into Flemish companies per year (22,415 in 2017) ;

- 2,521 Walloon jobseekers attended an IBO/Individual BeroepsOpleiding in Flanders ;
- 27,779 Walloon jobseekers used at least one service relating to interregional mobility (information on the labour market in Flanders, CV in Dutch, registration with the VDAB, etc.) ;
- Participation in numerous job fairs and training activities (Banenmarkt, Doedag, Werkweek, Employer's day, Tour de Wallonie, ...) ;
- Collaboration with Brussels Airport House: since 2014 to end 2017 management of 500 jobs + participation in the Jobday organised in March 2012 and in information sessions for jobseekers at the airport ;
- Organisation of joint seminars to exchange experiences and good practices both in terms of employment and training (e.g. visits to le Forem competence centres by VDAB).

b) Le Forem – ADG Collaboration

- 2008: Cooperation agreement on areas of development in the field of training ;
- 2012: Partnership Agreement to foster cooperation on labour market policy and promote the mobility of job seekers ;
- 2013: Collaboration agreement between le Forem and ADG.

Achievements since 2008

- Management by le Forem of 5,391 job positions for companies located in the German-speaking Community;
- 572 jobseekers from the German-speaking Community attended Forem training centres, while 405 Walloon jobseekers attended ADG training centre ;
- ADG participation in the "Employment Weeks " organised in Verviers and in the "Technikids Days" organised by the Technifutur competence centre ;
- Collaboration within the framework of large-scale recruitments (e.g.: in 2011 recruitment of 110 people for MATCH in Eupen).

c) ACTIRIS – VDAB Collaboration

- Start of the management of VDAB vacancies by the Rand service linked to ACTIRIS in 2008, followed by the creation of an "interregional mobility" pole within the Select service in 2012; start of Brussels Airport House and a mixed team within Brussels Airport House in 2013; creation of the "ACTIRIS Interregional" service in 2016 ;
- Cooperation agreement 'Le mandatement pour l'accompagnement des chercheurs d'emploi bruxellois vers l'emploi' 01/07/2015 (the mandate to support into employment jobseekers from Brussels) ;
- Communication campaigns aimed at increasing the number of job seekers learning Dutch and the number of job seekers being supported by VDAB.

Achievements since 2008

- Participation in joint VDAB-ACTIRIS jobdatings, at least 12 per year ;
- Participation in joint job fairs VDAB-ACTIRIS;
- Close collaboration via the joint team within the Brussels Airport House since 2013 : management of offers, organisation of temporary job fairs, participation in Employers' day, Luchthavendag ;
- Annual Action Plan based on 2013 prescription :

- 1500 job vacancies sent by the VDAB
- 6 job seekers mobilised per vacancy (ACTIRIS).

d) Automatic flow of job vacancies

Since June 2006, VDAB, le Forem and ACTIRIS have automatically and reciprocally shared job vacancies and publish them on their respective websites. These job vacancies relate to critical functions, positions open for a long time, those from another Region or those that are generally difficult to fill. In this way, tens of thousands of job vacancies are shared every year.

The number of offers exchanged automatically between the various public employment services for the year 2017 is 246,475.

e) Vocational training

Cooperation on interregional mobility is not only related to employment.

It is increasingly important in the learner's training process to enable him to acquire complementary skills that are increasingly required on the labour market (language skills, adaptation to new environments, cultural openness, autonomy and initiative, etc.). In certain cases, it may also be a matter of referring to training for specific professions, more common in certain regions.

Today, interregional mobility in the field of training takes place through in-company training courses based on schemes like FPI/Individual Vocational Training (Brussels), IBO/Individual BeroepsOpleiding (Flanders), PFI/ Plan Formation-Insertion (Wallonia) or IBU/Individual Berufsausbildung im Unternehmen (German-speaking Community), or through the attendance of a training center located in another region.

Here are the figures for vocational training:

- Number of jobseekers trained in VDAB, ADG, Bruxelles Formation and le Forem training centres

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
ADG to le Forem	7	48	94	98	89	77	83	76	71	77	53
Bruxelles Formation/ACTIRIS to le Forem	700	744	669	487	432	481	453	453	377	395	375
VDAB to Le Forem			45	196	159	177	163	149	160	170	185
Le Forem to ADG	13	36	36	38	30	42	52	51	43	48	46
Le Forem to Bruxelles Formation			46	170	204	247	240	268	254	205	274
Le Forem to VDAB			6	46	37	39	39	29	33	40	28

- Number of Walloon jobseekers who have attended a language immersion course in a company in Flanders

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
47	65	31	50	48	48	40	39	14	31	413

Skills and training are key issues shared between training and employment services to meet labour market needs and develop employment supply.

More and more companies are demanding more qualifications in relation to their needs. This situation is not new, as evidenced by bottlenecks which have been the same for many years and which are made public each year.

For the future, it will therefore be very important to strengthen these collaborations and this dynamic, not only between regions but also internationally.

II. Transfer of duties

a) Sixth State Reform

The sixth State reform resulting from the October 2011 political agreement transferred various duties from the federal state to the communities and regions. This transfer results in a long list of matters, including those relating to the labour market.

By transferring duties in the field of employment and training, the sixth State reform gives greater responsibility to the federated entities but above all offers them new tools.

This reform is having an impact on the regions and communities in several areas.

The amendments to the Constitution, the special laws and the laws implementing the sixth state reform were published on the 31th January 2014 in the Belgian Official Journal (Moniteur belge). These texts regulate the transfer of duties to the communities and regions as well as an important reform of the financing law. The Special Institutional Reform Law thus entered into force on the 1st July 2014 and the regions are financially responsible for the matters transferred since the 1st January 2015.

The duties transferred in terms of employment are as follows :

- Checking the availability of jobseekers entitled to receive unemployment benefits ;
- Exemption from the obligation to be available for the labour market. It enables jobseekers receiving unemployment benefits to attend vocational training, studies or a traineeship ;
- The so-called « target group measures » that cover :
 - Employer tax reductions for target groups
 - Measures to activate unemployment or social benefits
 - Various bonuses including training allowances and internship allowances, additional benefits for returning to work, young non-market workers, mobility, etc.
 - First employment agreements
 - The internship and start-up bonus;
- Articles 60§7 and 61 ;
- Local employment agencies (LEA) ;
- Some outplacement/redeployment duties ;
- Service vouchers ;
- Paid educational leave.

Within this framework, a "Sixth State Reform" working group was set up at the end of 2012 within SYNERJOB.

At the same time, in order to prepare for the transfer of duties from the federal state, SYNERJOB organised strategic information exchange seminars at the end of 2013 which enabled PES leaders to gain a better understanding of the various mechanisms transferred and the guidelines adopted for their integration in each of the regions and in the German-speaking Community.

Subsequently, and depending on specific issues to be solved, several working groups bringing together experts from each Public Service were set up. Several examples are given below.

Achievements

At the level of the "Sixth Reform of the State" working group, one of the main issues relating to the transfer of duties in employment is that of interregional mobility, both of job seekers and workers and of employers. The idea was to prevent job seekers from being harmed in their careers or to see the performance of services to employers diminish. Since 2014, this concern has been omnipresent within the working group whose discussions and work have led to the drafting of protocols between the federated entities and, where appropriate, the federal government. Indeed, five collaboration protocols were adopted in 2016 on the occasion of the takeover of various subjects, like Local Employment Agencies (LEA) Target Groups, Exemption from availability on the labour market, Outplacement and Art.60.

In terms of target group policy in particular, very distinct guidelines can now be adopted by the regions. The comments on the Special Institutional Reform Act expressly invite the regions to inform each other, upstream, of the options taken, in order to avoid creating competition between regions, employers and workers. This is addressed both to the PES and to policy makers. Within this framework, information on the state of work and the reforms of the various competences were regularly exchanged between regions. Similarly, since federal operators must remain the technical operators for tax reductions and activation, they are also, through the Crossroads Bank for Social Security, a place for exchanges of information and practices, as well as coordination between regional operators.

In addition, with regard to the control of the availability of jobseekers on the labour market, an agreement on a uniform monitoring model for the regions, to be provided to the federal government as provided for in the unemployment regulations, was reached within the College of Senior Officials in 2014. In addition, the federal normative framework has been adapted in consultation with the regions. Finally, in 2015, an agreement was reached on the establishment of an electronic flow of information between the National Employment Office ("ONEM") and the regions on exemptions for studies and training in a sector with a labour shortage.

Challenges for the future

Generally speaking, for all regionalised duties, collaboration on interregional mobility issues following the reforms will continue in 2018.

In this regard, the implementation of computerized data flows between federal and federated agencies, via the BCSS, will continue in 2018. It should be noted that this data exchange project is an essential challenge for the regions in terms of evaluating the effectiveness and impact of their measures.

On a methodological level, as the matters related to new duties are now all implemented within the regions, work will continue to intensify mainly in the ad hoc sub-groups (LEA, Internships, Jobseekers Availability, etc.).

Finally, the federal and regional majority agreements in 2019 may lead to new projects.

b) Control of the public far away from the labour market, with medical, mental, psychological or psychiatric problems (MMPP)

The regions are confronted with public far away from the labour market, presenting problems of a medical, mental, psychic or psychiatric nature (MMPP), often combined with social problems. Among these jobseekers, a distinction should be made between those who remain available for action and those who are not.

Among the most vulnerable are those with multiple psycho-medical-social problems that seriously hamper professional integration, which, despite specific support, remain unavailable for action, either because the problems encountered are such that it has not been possible to bring the person closer to the labour market, or because the skills are strongly limited and do not allow integration into the labour market even with an adapted job profile. Specialized staff takes care of this public.

Faced with this observation, SYNERJOB NPO has taken the initiative to launch a working group to be a force for proposals in the way these people should be taken care of. The aim is to get the four PES and the federal authorities concerned to agree on criteria to determine this distance from the labour market and on a structural solution for the status and type of income to be attributed to this public so that they are no longer included in the pool of active jobseekers.

More specifically, this proposal concerns recipients of integration and unemployment benefits and takes up a two-step support model:

- Step 1 : Determining the distance to the labour market and entering in a specific pathway
- Step 2 : Status of "Temporarily Unavailable »

These arrangements are currently being discussed with the Federal Minister for Employment.

c) Local Employment Agency (LEA)

A working group specifically dedicated to Local Employment Agencies was created in 2014.

One of the objectives of this group is a better understanding of the system and its complexity and to agree on the positions to adopt vis-à-vis different stakeholders (NEO/ONEM, Edenred),

Several meetings were held. These enabled the following topics to be addressed: the state of play in the regions, the status of seconded staff, monitoring of the NEO/ONEM budget, preparation of a collaboration protocol which regulates in particular the secondment criteria and situations linked to interregional mobility (in force from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016).

In 2017, a focus was placed on the call for tenders related to the company issuing vouchers (4 separate contracts were concluded with Edenred, starting on the 1st January 2018) and the developments recorded in the various regions and in the German-speaking Community.

Interregional mobility is still one of the challenges for the future. Indeed, the collaboration protocol concluded in 2016 only covered the year 2016. The conclusion of a new protocol would therefore be appropriate, particularly in view of the reform of the system in Flanders. On the 1st January 2018, a major change will

take place in Flanders. LEA becomes "wijk-werken". There will be no more Local Employment Agency as such. These changes will hinder interregional mobility of Local Employment Agency workers from other regions with Flanders. Many Walloon Local Employment Agency workers (600) provided services for Flemish horticultural companies every year.

d) Internships and vocational training

This working group was created in order to:

- To develop a proposal to define the role of each PES with regard to jobseekers who do a traineeship/training in a company in a region where they do not reside ;
- To conclude agreements to simplify as far as possible the exemptions for these jobseekers ;
- To collect statistics on the different forms of traineeship/training in companies and in particular on the number of "cross-border" actions.

In 2018, this working group will continue the actions initiated previously.

It will seek consensus on the protocol of cooperation for IBO/PFI/FPI.

The reform of the IBO in Flanders will be explained to the other SYNERJOB's members in order to inspire them in their own respective reforms of internship/training in companies.

III. SYNERJOB and Europe

For some years now, the European Commission requires a single point of contact per Member State for a series of initiatives. This is why at the end of 2013 SYNERJOB was considered as a "single point of contact" or SPOC for the ENPES (European Network of Public Employment Services), EURES (EUROpean Employment Services) and Youth Guarantee programmes. In concrete terms, ACTIRIS, Forem and VDAB each coordinate one of these subject matters.

For Refernet, Bruxelles Formation dedicates an expert with the financial support of the other SYNERJOB's members.

a) European Network of Public Employment Services (ENPES)

The European Network of Public Employment Services is a network which brings together the PES from the 28 Member States of the European Union, as well as Iceland and Norway. It was established by Decision No 573/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on enhanced cooperation between public employment services (PES).

At the PES Board, the decision-making body of the network, each country has only one seat. For Belgium, although the four PES have been appointed as members of the network by the Belgian Permanent Representation to the European Union, only one PES represents Belgium on the PES Board according to a rotation decided by the SYNERJOB's Board of Directors.

Before 2014, PES formed an informal network at European level called Heads of Public Employment Services (« HOPES »), considered by the European Commission as an expert group. This network was set up in 1997 as part of the first European Employment Strategy. The meetings were already biannual and mainly concerned the exchange of information and the formulation of informal opinions.

With the creation of SYNERJOB in 2007, a collaboration between Belgian SPEs took shape to better prepare together the « HOPES » meetings. Nevertheless, each Belgian PES disseminated relevant information within its own organisation, and the presentation of European matters to SYNERJOB's Board was not systematic at the time. This did not prevent the Belgian PES from pooling their efforts under the umbrella of SYNERJOB to organise the "PES Vision 2020" seminar in 2011 within the framework of the Belgian Presidency of the Council. It should be noted in this respect that the concept of PES as a « conductor» of the labour market has been very well received at European level.

In 2017, the strategic document 'PES 2020' on the role of PES by 2020 was updated.

The preparatory work for the 'ENPES' meetings has evolved towards a real coordination of positions to be adopted on a series of European dossiers. The texts are analysed jointly and the contributions are validated by all the Belgian PES. The formal opinions published by the network and the European Commission's growing desire to count on a single interlocutor per country have contributed to intensify this dynamic of close collaboration. It should be stressed that the Belgian PES also had to be creative in formulating a proposal to the European Commission allowing each Belgian PES to take part in "benchlearning", the main activity of the European PES network. It was not conceivable that only one Belgian PES could participate in this "benchlearning", i.e. mutual learning based on the detection of areas for improvement in the context of the modernisation of European PES. It was therefore decided that each year a different Belgian PES should benefit from the funding granted to Belgium for benchlearning, the others financing the activity from their own funds.

The 'Benchlearning' evaluation visit took place at le Forem in August 2017.

b) EURES (European Employment Service)

EURES is a European Commission regulation launched to support and facilitate the free movement of workers.

In 2010, the European Commission wanted to reform EURES. One of the important innovations proposed was the possibility of extending the network and giving more attention to intermediation and matching in the provision of services. EURES management structures and the European Commission discussed and decided on the implementation of this reform. The decision was published in November 2012.

The new regulation followed in April 2016. Member States have had two years to comply.

The role of the EURES SYNERJOB working group :

1. Within the legislative framework

2010 has seen little or no cooperation between regions at Eures strategic level.

During the negotiation of the EURES reform however, and even more so during the new regulation, it was necessary to define a common strategic position on the texts.

As regards the appointment of the National Coordination Office, a solution had to be found for Belgium that respected the division into regions. SYNERJOB was presented as the single point of contact, without prejudice to the responsibilities of the NCO (National Coordinator Office) of the regions (Wallonia, Flanders and Brussels) and of the German-speaking community.

Since then, the SYNERJOB EURES working group has been working intensively together. The legislative process of the Regulation was closely followed by the working group and the Belgian positions were transmitted to the Belgian Permanent Representation to the European Union.

The same working method was used for the EURES Managers meeting and later for the EURES Coordination Group. The Belgian NCOs are represented in the EURES Coordination Group, but only one representative takes the floor and Belgium has only one vote in case of a vote.

2. In the context of the implementation of the Regulation

The same working method was used in subsequent discussions on the implementation of the Regulation. The opening of the EURES network to other organisations requires an admission procedure, which the working group wanted to be as harmonised and similar as possible in the different regions/community. At the end of 2017, the possibility of a single procedure was examined.

As far as reporting is concerned, the objective is to use the same model. This will be finalised early 2018.

Since 2016, the working group has agreed on a single EURES activity plan presenting the activities in each region/community.

Added value and future of the SYNERJOB EURES working group

Intensive collaboration is not only useful for SYNERJOB's strategic positioning in the European context, but also allows mutual learning in understanding the EURES Regulation and its implementation.

During the meetings of the EURES Coordination Group, Belgium often expresses or defends its point of view with solid arguments, which can be appreciated both by the ECA (European Coordinator Office) and by the other NCOs.

c) YOUTH GUARANTEE (YG)

Following the recommendation of the Council of the European Union in April 2013 for the establishment of a Youth Guarantee, SYNERJOB has been designated as the single point of contact 'YG' for Belgium to ensure the implementation of the recommendation.

Since 2014, SYNERJOB and its Youth Guarantee working group have coordinated the following actions:

- Introduction by SYNERJOB (le Forem) of the Belgian YG implementation plan and coordination of the response to the European Commission's technical subsequent comments (2014) ;
- Planning and participation in the EMCO Data Collection (Employment Committee) in the framework of the YG monitoring (2014, 2015 and 2016) ;
- Follow-up of the implementation of the YG in the Member States carried out within the framework of the multilateral surveillance of the EMCO in connection with the European semester. The collection of YG monitoring data was coordinated by the Federal Employment Ministry and the regions (via SYNERJOB) ;
- Participation in the meetings of the National Youth Guarantee Coordinators (28 Member States) ;
- Participation in various conferences; Mutual Learning Programme Expert workshop (Slovenia (2015) ;
- Implementation of the Youth Guarantee -'Sustainable activation of NEET's/Not in Employment,

Education or Training' (Belgium 2015) ;

- Organisation of the Learning Exchange on the theme "Outreach of NEETs" in Belgium in September 2016. It was an event aiming at exchanging good practices by bringing together European partners (Luxembourg, Germany and Norway) and operators active with NEETs not registered with PES.

In 2017, SYNERJOB was involved in the follow-up of the extension of the second have funding through the Youth Employment Initiative for Belgium (2017-2020) and participated in the "Youth Guarantee Learning Forum" organised by the European Commission looking back at the first 4 years of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in Europe.

Then, at the level of the transversal actions carried out between SYNERJOB members, the following ones should be mentioned specifically :

- Organisation of the SYNERJOB seminar: "The NEET's need us" organised jointly with Representation of the European Commission in Belgium (2015);
- Preparation and signature of the Collaboration Agreement established between SYNERJOB members and the Alliance for Youth in Belgium on 27 January 2016. This agreement allows the setting up of a collaboration with employers members of the Alliance for Youth in Belgium ready to hire staff in connection with the specific objectives of this Alliance thereby reaffirming their societal responsibilities towards young people. With a view to complementarity, Belgian public employment and vocational training services undertake to offer employers who are members of the Alliance for Youth in Belgium an integrated range of services that both meet their human resources needs and facilitate access to employment and training for young job seekers.

The Youth Guarantee working group planned the following actions :

- Peer Support to Cyprus: at the request of the European Commission, SYNERJOB will be participating in a project to support public service employment in Cyprus. The objective is to support them in formulating a strategy for youth and NEETs in particular;
- Coordination of the Belgian participation in the seminar organised by the European Commission on NEETs in Zagreb (June 2018).

d) ReferNet

ReferNet is Cedefop's European information network. One of the main missions of Cedefop is to develop initial and continuing vocational training.

SYNERJOB supports this tool encompassing all public training actors in Belgium and ensures the coordination and animation of a national and European network for the development of vocational training.

Composed of all the public operators of employment, education and vocational training in Belgium, the Belgian network is part of the working groups supported by SYNERJOB.

There is one mandate for representation and another for national coordination. Currently, Bruxelles Formation assumes national coordination. National representation is entrusted to the Flemish Community.

In 2014, major changes in governance took place at European level with the establishment of a new Commission. From now on, vocational training and adult education, previously under the supervision of the

Education Commissioner, are the responsibility of the employment General Directorate. The ReferNet network, both at Belgian and European level, has grown and is increasingly involved in the follow-up of the implementation of the 2020 strategy and the Copenhagen process (Bruges Communiqué, until 2015 and Riga objectives, now). Each year, this monitoring gives rise to progress reports by country.

The national coordination brings together all the members of the network 3 to 4 times a year; it also organises a thematic/annual seminar which brings together experts, research offices, field actors and decision-makers in order to produce thematic articles.

Some achievements: annual reports, specific articles (e.g. early school leaving, apprenticeship and in-company training), surveys (e.g. on learner mobility in IVET (Initial vocational education and training in Europe)).

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

This International Association under Belgian Law (AISBL) offers a contact platform between the chief executives and experts of public employment services worldwide.

It allows events to be organised in order to exchange good practices and knowledge, training, close partnerships between public employment services, etc.

a) SYNERJOB's support

The executive secretariat of this world association is based in Brussels, in the premises of the VDAB, and is supported by SYNERJOB. All public employment services in Belgium are members of WAPES through SYNERJOB. SYNERJOB also makes its lawyers and experts available to support WAPES in general and the secretariat in particular. The secretariat is headed by Françoise Kuyl, who has been seconded by Forem since August 2017.

SYNERJOB regularly supports the actions of WAPES, whether through the participation of its members in governance meetings (Board of Directors, Executive Committee, General Assembly), through the organisation of seminars (e.g. "Breaking news from European PES: Challenges we face in 2015") or through active participation in working groups (e.g.: implementation of the long-term strategy and Values Charter).

b) SYNERJOB as an active member of WAPES

At each meeting of SYNERJOB's Board of Directors, the Executive Secretary of WAPES presents a report on developments within the association.

SYNERJOB members thus remain fully informed of WAPES's activities and can evaluate the relevance of SYNERJOB members' involvement in them. Indeed, beyond the themes addressed, the activities organised make it possible to create or strengthen links with other PES and contribute to the achievement of certain objectives.

c) Added value for SYNERJOB

The reflections on the long-term strategy initiated and led by Fons Leroy with his proposal to use benchlearning in an adapted version constitute as many elements making it possible to position SYNERJOB as an essential actor within the WAPES Network.

Moreover, WAPES collaboration with numerous organisations (ILO, OECD Leed, African Union, IDB, WEC, European Commission,...) makes it possible to highlight actions and good practices from SYNERJOB members, as well as the innovations implemented.

V. Cross-cutting themes

Some working groups deal with topics that cut across several themes or with more general topics. Here are some examples of these groups:

a) ROME v3/Competent

The ROME (Répertoire Opérationnel des Métiers et des Emplois) is a directory of professions. It is currently in its third update hence its name ROME v3, version 3.

In order to better match supply and demand on the labour market, the Competent tool has been created. Starting from the ROME v3 'business' groups, detailed 'business' profiles were drawn up and linked to their requirements in terms of general and specific skills required on the labour market. As a partner of the "Competent" project, the VDAB adapts the repositories from ROMEv3.

In March 2015, an agreement was signed to use Competent as the standard for Belgian PES.

Through this tool, priority is given to automatic matching between the job offer and the demand, and thus to interregional mobility or even with border regions (indeed, this tool is also used in France and Luxembourg).

In the future, other services such as training, evaluation, skills validation, etc. will also benefit from this tool. In addition, the use of new data (Big Data) from its operations may be used to optimize the services and policies of SYNERJOB members.

b) Mass redundancies

Interregional collaborations are set up when workers residing in other regions are affected by mass redundancies, restructuring or company closures. The cooperation agreement of the 24th February 2005 provides for a social emergency plan for the redeployment of workers who are victims of collective redundancies. It applies automatically if:

- More than 250 workers are laid off in a region ;
- At least 50 of these workers live in another region.

A crisis unit then supervises the implementation of the plan : it coordinates the interventions of the public services concerned and defines the social emergency plan. It is chaired by the Minister of Employment of the Region where the headquarters most affected by the redundancies are located. Some examples : Sabena Technics, Carrefour, UCB, ING.

Since June 2008, a collaboration protocol between the VDAB, le Forem, Bruxelles Formation and the ADG has extended this agreement to all mass redundancies as soon as 10 workers from another region are concerned.

The PES in charge of the implementation of this legal mechanism shall associate the other PES concerned by these redundancies as regards both the information on how to manage the redundancy and on the concrete implementation of the worker support programmes. The measures implemented include collective information sessions, validation of skills or training sessions.

Each year, numerous cooperation projects between SPEs are set up (Blokker, Cora, Delhaize, Caterpillar, Healthcare, etc.).

A working group on mass redundancies was set up by the SYNERJOB Board of Directors. This permanent group is composed of representatives from VDAB, ACTIRIS, Bruxelles Formation, le Forem and ADG, active in the management of mass redundancies and employment units. Depending on the agenda and current events (e.g. transfer of duties), other persons may be invited to participate (ONEM, Flemish Administration, etc.).

Collaboration between the regions is strengthened by the regionalisation deriving from the sixth reform of the state in relation with professional reclassification.

A memorandum of understanding concluded between the Flemish region, the Walloon region, the German-speaking community, the Brussels-Capital Region and the Federal State entered into force on the 1st January 2016 in order to define the detailed rules for the implementation of the following matters :

- Restructuring reduction cards - employer benefits ;
- Reimbursement of outplacement costs ;
- Outplacement vouchers.

This protocol defines as the starting point of jurisdiction the region in which the employer's establishment unit is located.

In 2018, this protocol should be amended to incorporate the amendments to the Royal Decree of 9 March 2006 on the management of redundancies.

c) Communication on Belgian labour market statistics

Following various exchanges between statistical offices, the regional public employment services agreed on a common statistical content to be published in 2017 on the SYNERJOB website in terms of job demand and supply.

Despite differences in methods linked to regional developments leading to differences in counting between PES, it was possible to produce a relevant content to be disseminated.

This tool, which will be regularly updated, will provide reference information to observers and actors on the Belgian labour market, facilitating comparisons between regions and offering an alternative to the « ONEM » publication.

A third part devoted to statistics on vocational training should complete this tool by the end of 2018, once common definitions have been proposed to account for each region's efforts in skills development.

d) Google and employment

Google has launched new technology solutions for companies to support their recruitment management. Google's positioning on employment (Google for Jobs - Google API - Google Hire) strongly illustrates the need for a common reflection on the job search/intermediation tools offered by private actors.

A working group dedicated to this theme was created early 2017.

The objective of this group is to define a common position of the Belgian public employment services in order to define the necessary actions and to implement them. The main issue is related to intermediation, the positioning of the public service and the universality of services to the public.

For 2018, new meetings of this working group are planned in order to identify action scenarios in relation to Google.

Annexes

Addresses

Addresses of institutional members of SYNERJOB as of 31/12/2017

ARBEITSAMT DER DEUTSCHSPRACHIGEN GEMEINSCHAFT (ADG)

Category B Public law institution

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

Represented by Robert NELLES, Managing Director

BRUXELLES FORMATION

Category B Public law institution

Head office at 1180-BRUSSELS, Rue de Stalle, 67

Represented by Olivia P'TITO, Chief Executive.

BRUSSELS REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT OFFICE (ACTIRIS)

Category B Public law institution

Head office at 1210- BRUSSELS, boulevard de l'Astronomie 14

Represented by Grégor CHAPELLE, Chief Executive

And Caroline Mancel, Assistant Chief Executive

THE WALLOON OFFICE FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT (LE FOREM)

Category B Public law institution

Head office at 6000-CHARLEROI, boulevard Tirou 104

Represented by Marie-Kristine VANBOCKESTAL, Managing Director.

THE FLEMISH PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (VDAB)

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

Head office at 1000-BRUSSELS, boulevard de l'Empereur, 11

Represented by Fons LEROY, Managing Director

Address of the Synerjob Presidency and Permanent Secretariat

Synerjob non-profit association

Boulevard Tirou 104

6000 CHARLEROI

olivia.vanmoerrichard@forem.be

Website for the Synerjob non-profit association:

www.synerjob.be

Synerjob Board of Directors Members at 31/12/2018

Le Forem	Represented by Marie-Kristine VANBOCKESTAL
VDAB	Represented by Fons LEROY
ACTIRIS	Represented by Grégor CHAPELLE and Caroline Mancel
ADG	Represented by Robert NELLES
BRUXELLES FORMATION	Represented by Olivia P'TITO

Mandates

Marie-Kristine VANBOCKESTAL, President
Fons LEROY, Vice-President
Grégor CHAPELLE, Secretary
Robert NELLES, Treasurer
Olivia P'TITO, Auditor
Basilio NAPOLI, Auditor

2017 Meeting Dates

Board of Directors

19 January 2017
26 April 2017
28 June 2017
21 September 2017
28 November 2017

General Assembly

28 June 2017