



# 2016 Annual Report



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# Foreword

By creating the non-profit association Synerjob in July 2017, ACTIRIS, ADG, BRUXELLES FORMATION, FOREM and VDAB wanted to create a synergy between them that would enable them to tackle the challenges of the regional employment markets more effectively. This mission has proven to be more relevant than ever. Digitalisation, an ageing population, youth unemployment and migration are just some of the issues that require anticipation, flexibility and creativity from our Public Employment and Vocational Training Services and ever-increasing cooperation between us and other partners.

While the commitment to promote greater mobility of job seekers between the regions led to the initial partnerships, together, Synerjob's members are constantly analysing the challenges together, sharing considerations and developing tools which provide practical solutions that comply with the missions and skills of each one. The priority in 2016 was to prepare for a shared job directory and make it operational.

We can confirm that 2016 was a year in which there were many changes for Synerjob's members.

Under the Sixth State Reform which transfers the powers for employment and training from federal level to the federated entities, discussions intensified between Synerjob's members with a view to the coexistence and even standardisation of the practices specific to each and with the aim of proposing common positions to the federal institutions.

Internationally, 2016 was punctuated with events showcasing the added value of Synerjob and its members.

In June 2016, Mr Fons LEROY, Vice-President of Synerjob was elected as President of the European Network of Public Employment Services (ENPES). As part of this network, the first European "Employer's Day", designed to develop a closer working relationship between the Public Employment Services (PES) and employers, saw close cooperation between the Belgian PES.

Within the framework of international mobility and, more specifically, the EURES (EUROpean Employment Services) platform, a new regulation came into effect in May 2016, while throughout the year, the Belgian PES have kept their European commitments to provide a single communication with the European Commission and prepare joint responses.

Synerjob has also continued to maintain its role as the point of contact for the European Commission in terms of the Youth Guarantee in Belgium and has continued its actions across all Belgian PES designed to promote youth employment. This includes, in particular, the signing of the Cooperation Agreement between Synerjob members and the Alliance for Youth in Belgium.

As part of the World Association for Public Employment Services (WAPES), Synerjob is strongly committed to defining the long-term strategy for WAPES which will guide the Association's activities over the coming months and years. For several years, Synerjob has also organised the Executive Secretariat of WAPES and through this function intends to play a decisive role in strengthening the PES, the WAPES network and the relationships between PES.

Finally, it should also be noted that on 1st July 2016 and after 6 years as President of the Synerjob non-profit association, the VDAB has handed over to Forem. Since then, a permanent secretariat has managed interactions between Synerjob members. The handover was smooth and efficient, like the cooperation between our members and the actions that we wish to carry out in response to the new challenges that characterise our changing times.



Marie-Kristine Vanbockestael  
President of Synerjob



Fons Leroy  
Vice-President of Synerjob

# Synerjob non-profit association

## History of interregional cooperation and Synerjob

### Cooperation agreements on interregional mobility

Under the interregional cooperation agreement of 24 February 2005, the Brussels-Capital Region, the Walloon Region, the Flemish Region, the Flemish Community, the German-speaking Community and the French Community Commission agreed to promote greater mobility between regions. Since then, VDAB, FOREM, ACTIRIS, BRUXELLES FORMATION and ADG have worked closely together with the aim of integrating as many job seekers as possible into the job market but also to encourage mobility among them.

The agreement encourages the services to:

- Exchange job offers more extensively;
- Educate job seekers and employers about interregional mobility;
- Work together to promote and organise language lessons 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 job 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 temporary social employment agency in Brussels.

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

- Promote the interregional mobility of job seekers and workers;

- Intensify joint efforts between FOREM and the ADG and reinforce the cooperation agreement signed on 27 May 2004 between both organisations;
- Strengthen cooperation in terms of learning languages 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 applications giving access to the "employer" and "individual" databases of the Walloon Office for Vocational Training and Employment and sharing the financial expenses related to this cooperation.

## **Creation of the Synerjob non-profit association**

The Synerjob non-profit association was created on 3 July 2007 by the VDAB, FOREM, ACTIRIS, BRUXELLES FORMATION and the Arbeitsamt der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft / Employment Office of the German Community (ADG). This non-profit association is a federation of public employment and training services in Belgium. By working together and sharing ideas or successful practices, the partners create a synergy that enables them to address issues in the regional job markets more effectively and efficiently. The chief officers of these organisations represent their respective public services within Synerjob's Board of Directors. This meets several times a year to discuss new projects, support current actions and monitor the progress of working groups. The composition of this Board of Directors is given in the appendices.



## Missions of the Synerjob non-profit association

The purpose of Synerjob is to make a concerted effort to deal with the challenges of the job market and do so while respecting the missions, tasks and competences of its members and the Board of Directors. This means:

- Working together to analyse and manage the problems of the Belgian job market;
- Conducting joint analyses of the job market;
- Purchase or develop tools and methodologies together;
- Take joint positions during supranational forums according to the rules of international representation;
- Conclude joint partnerships within the framework of European or other projects;
- Pool knowledge and share good practices on the issues related to the job market.

All actions aim to co-construct or be undertaken around one (or more) joint 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 for the European projects related to the competences of public employment and vocational training services. Indeed, the European Commission requires that Member States have a single point of contact for programmes such as 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.

This is why the members of Synerjob decided to get themselves organised. Synerjob is officially 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 to which Synerjob members must respond are significant, which is why in 2013, they decided to create a strategic working group. Through a multi-year strategic plan (2014-2016), this group defines joint objectives and the areas in which action is needed.

## Partnerships

**The situation on the job 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 FOREM and between FOREM and the ADG.**

### Flanders (VDAB) – Wallonia (FOREM)

Between 2008 and 2016, VDAB and FOREM special advisors worked in areas located near the linguistic border. Their task was to encourage the appointment of job seekers and organise job dating and job hunting events for this purpose.

Since 2016, FOREM advisers have been integrated into the new structure of the 'employers' department. They continue to manage job vacancies from the VDAB but also manage job vacancies from Walloon employers.

#### Achievements in 2016:

4,806 'validated' Flemish job vacancies were sent to FOREM by VDAB. In addition, VDAB and FOREM organised several job dating events that gave Flemish employers and Walloon job seekers the chance to meet.

Due to the specific services of the advisers, at least 2,369 Walloons were able to find work in Flanders (figure based on the cross-referencing of DIMONA data on Walloon job seekers and companies with a job vacancy within the framework of interregional mobility).

Due to the automatic exchange of job vacancies, unsolicited applications, joint actions and support activities for Walloon job seekers provided by the FOREM's bilingual advisors (registration with the VDAB, help in drafting a CV in Dutch, interview preparation for the applicant, information on the job market in Flanders, etc.) at least 16,669 Walloon job seekers found a job in Flanders in 2016 (figure based on DIMONA data on Walloon job seekers who have found a job in one of the companies that only have head offices in Flanders).

### Flanders (VDAB) – Brussels (ACTIRIS)

In 2016, ACTIRIS received 1,314 'validated' job vacancies for an equivalent of 1,824 jobs from VDAB. ACTIRIS actively mobilised (i.e. invited, informed, tested, prepared and supported) 3,664 job seekers

Outgoing commuters (number of Brussels residents going to work in Flanders) in absolute value represented 49,211 people in 2016 (compared with 46,809 in 2015), which is a growth of 2,402 people. (Source: FPS Economy - DGSIE (EFT), Brussels Employment Observatory calculations)

We should add that the number of outgoing commuters saw a marked increase during the 2006-2016 period of 34.5% (or just over 18,000 units).

The outgoing commuter rate was 16.0% in 2016 (compared to 14.4% in 2006) which represented just over

71,000 people in absolute value, of which 49,000 have a job in Flanders. With just over 49,000 Brussels residents going to work in Flanders in 2016, this level set a new record.

## Walloon Region (FOREM) and the German-speaking Community (ADG)

There is a partnership between the ADG and FOREM that aims to promote interregional mobility, particularly in terms of vocational training and job search assistance.

In 2016, in total, 77 German-speaking job seekers attended training at FOREM, while 48 job seekers from Wallonia attended ADG training.

In addition to the automatic exchange of training schedules, the partnership between the FOREM and ADG centres is also realised through the following practical actions:

- Welcoming trainees from FOREM / ADG to activities organised by the ADG/FOREM educational training company;
- Providing places in FOREM's educational training companies to ADG trainees;
- The opportunity for job seekers from ADG to participate in "job" trials organised by FOREM.

Since 26 February 2013, ADG has had access to the FOREM's "employer" and "individual" databases. The agreement is part of the cooperation agreement of 24 February 2005 on the interregional mobility of job seekers.

Operationally, this is reflected as follows:

- For employers from the German-speaking community that post their job vacancies on the FOREM's website: handling of these "portal" offers for the German-speaking region: contact with the employer, validation, drafting of the advert, distribution of the job vacancies through the distribution channels, contact with job seekers through "matching" and monitoring;
- For temporary employment agencies from the German-speaking community that post their job vacancies on the FOREM's website: handling of these "portal" offers for the German-speaking region: contact with the employer, validation, drafting of the advert, distribution of the job vacancies through FOREM's distribution channels and monitoring. Active management depending on requirements;
- The daily exchange by email of job vacancies between FOREM and the ADG;
- The daily sending of job vacancy adverts where FOREM believes that distribution to the ADG would be relevant and would satisfy the employer's requirement;
- Contact with an ADG advisor so that the FOREM job vacancy is actively processed by the ADG. In this case, the ADG copies the FOREM vacancy and submits it to job seekers in the German-speaking community, depending on the employer's requirement;
- Regular contact between the PFI service and the ADG advisors on the good practices for training plans;
- Regular contact between the Business Advisors and the ADG Advisors in terms of help for federal jobs (monitoring, exchange of files).

In 2016, 32 Walloon job seekers began individual vocational training in a company in the German-speaking community and 16 German-speaking job seekers performed a training/placement plan (PFI) in the French-language region (15 PFI and 1 Youth PFI).

# Information on job offers and the labour market

The exchange of information on employment supply and demand is promoted through:

## Automatic "flows"

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

In 2016, 109,851 Flemish job vacancies were received by FOREM and 85,538 Flemish job vacancies were received by ACTIRIS while VDAB received 11,183 job vacancies from FOREM and 6,072 job vacancies from ACTIRIS. FOREM received 7,535 vacancies from ACTIRIS and ACTIRIS received 24,927 vacancies from FOREM.

## Standardisation of skills reference systems and the list of fields of study

### Agreement on the use of a common skills reference system to facilitate matching between employment supply and demand

Synerjob's partners now use a common list of skills for the automatic matching of job vacancies with job seekers. They will use the Rome V3/Competent skills reference system developed by SERV (Sociaal-Economische Raad van Vlaanderen / The Flanders Social and Economic Council) and VDAB based on the ROME v3 template of the French service for the placement of job centre workers and contextualised on the Belgian job market. The objective is to use this skills reference system across the entire Belgian job market.

A cooperation agreement between Synerjob partners and SERV was signed on 19 March 2015 in order to validate this process officially. The stated objective is to combine the ROME v3/Competent with the skills management system currently used by public employment and vocational training services in Belgium.

In 2016, the ROME v3/Competent working group gave absolute priority to the preparations designed to make the common skills reference system operational in the profiling systems for job seekers and job vacancies offered by Synerjob partners. The culmination of these developments is to support interregional mobility and the implementation, in the near future, of an automatic matching service.

The different works conducted have helped to identify certain technical solutions appropriate to each partner and have highlighted elements that should be/should have been covered within the ROME v3/Competent working group.

# Bridging the gap between employment supply and demand

**Employment exchanges, job dating and Employer's Day events have been important tools in promoting interregional mobility.**

An exemplary initiative bringing job seekers closer to work is the "Brussels Airport House". This is a unique 'one stop' service, at the very centre of the airport terminal, where any useful information regarding work opportunities at Brussels airport can be found in a central location. Brussels Airport House is a joint initiative between the various partners and authorities involved in the issues of employment, training, education, communication and mobility in an airport context.

It was initiated by Brussels Airport Company (BAC), VDAB, the Provincial Development Agency (POM) of Flemish Brabant, VOKA (Flanders' Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and the Chamber of Commerce and Union of Companies of Brussels which, with Actiris form the Board of Directors.

This association aims to:

- Connect all stakeholders who are directly or indirectly linked or active on or around Brussels Airport;
- Act as a single point of contact (SPOC) in order to publicise Brussels airport, its activities, its economy and its social interest;
- Pool and adapt the employment and training supply and demand related to Brussels airport;
- Raise awareness, promote and mobilise to strengthen, as an employer, the social support at Brussels airport and with companies and organisations;
- Improve flows in terms of training and employment related to Brussels airport;
- Support job seekers to gain a job within Brussels airport and related companies and organisations;
- Communicate about work opportunities within Brussels airport and its activities (employer branding);
- Mobilise and raise awareness among young people;
- Inform workers and job seekers on the subject of mobility and towards Brussels airport.

With regards employment, there is a close working relationship between the VDAB and Actiris. The options

for working with FOREM are yet to be realised.

There is a VDAB/Voka consultation relating to training. Closer cooperation with Bruxelles Formation is being considered and is planned for the future.

Brussels Airport House therefore acts as a real "in house" meeting point for companies operating at the airport: due to its physical location at the airport, these companies remain informed about the job market (for more information please see [www.brusselsairportthouse.be](http://www.brusselsairportthouse.be)).

## Job dating events

'Job dating' is one of the most important tools for helping job seekers from Brussels and Wallonia to find a job in Flanders. During a 'Job dating' event, the employer presents their own company and their job vacancies. Interested job seekers have a first interview with the employer.

Such initiatives give employers the opportunity to meet a large number of job seekers in a single place for a set time period. As for the job seekers, it enables them to discuss their application directly. FOREM's bilingual advisors offer support to job seekers in preparing their application (CV in Dutch or business card, simulation of a mini job interview).

In 2016, 15 job dating events were held and 98 Walloons were hired at participating companies.

## Registering as a job seeker with other Synerjob partners

Every job seeker is free to register on the websites belonging to Synerjob's partners.

The partners actively promote this opportunity with job seekers looking for employment in another region. FOREM's bilingual advisors offer support to Walloon job seekers when registering on the VDAB website.

# Skills building

All Synerjob members are aware of the importance of training - and not just language training. Partnerships set up under Synerjob aim to promote the launch and development of training projects. This cooperation is in line with Synerjob's strategy and prepares the strategic choices of those who favourably influence interregional employment.

## Different types of training projects in progress

### Operational projects

With a standard approach and shared and matching services.

For example, short-term targeted training courses in the different regions of the country and a vast Plan of 44 measures for vocational training in Brussels, the 2020 Plan adopted on 6 December 2016.

### Strategic projects

In particular, these are projects related to **professional qualifications** that aim to develop a uniform procedure for professional qualifications in Belgium instead of approaches which differ between regions.

The link with the job market is obvious in the "Competent" project and for the "automatic matching": starting with 'job' groups or clusters of ROME v3, detailed 'job' profiles are drafted and related to their requirements in terms of general and specific skills. This tool will be useful both at an interregional level and outside Belgium and will provide better matching between supply and demand on the job market.

Projects also cover the field of **qualifications and the career development of vocational training personnel**: (older) trainers who want to take their career in a new direction need additional skills in order to coach or train their peers.

For several years, Synerjob's partners have shared expertise, knowledge and know-how regarding the methodology of web-learning and **e-coaching**.

Satisfying job vacancies through evaluation and training is the daily challenge of vocational training operators who ensure that the employer has the right personnel and any lack of skills is quickly rectified.



A partnership is also sought at sectoral level: everyone wins when we succeed in agreeing standard procedures or cooperation agreements, in line with Synerjob's priorities and in strategically important sectors.

## Monitoring European networks and VETs (Vocational Education and Training)

Monitoring and active participation in the networks (Refernet, AEFP) are important for benchmarking, standardisation and reciprocal agreements, the exchange of good practices and collective decisions. Synerjob takes part in the networks as a member and asserts its influence during the meetings that are organised.

## Attending training in another region

Job seekers can attend training courses or complete internships in companies in another region. All the Synerjob partners in questions signed an agreement in June 2009 to give structure to the organisation of such actions. An interregional steering committee with representatives from all the relevant services (VDAB, FOREM, BRUXELLES FORMATION and ADG) monitors the proper implementation of the actions.

A few figures for 2016:

- Number of job seekers from the ACTIRIS territory who have attended training at VDAB: 544;
- Number of job seekers from the ACTIRIS territory who have attended training at BRUXELLES FORMATION: 10,782;
- Number of job seekers from the ACTIRIS territory who have attended training at FOREM: 395;
- Number of job seekers from the ADG territory who have attended training at FOREM: 77;
- Number of job seekers from the FOREM territory who have attended training at VDAB: 51;
- Number of job seekers from the FOREM territory who have attended training at BRUXELLES FORMATION: 292;
- Number of job seekers from the FOREM territory who have attended training at ADG: 48;
- Number of job seekers from the VDAB territory who have attended training at BRUXELLES FORMATION: 526;
- Number of job seekers from the VDAB territory who have attended training at FOREM: 106.

# Language training

**Language courses have become a major focus of interregional cooperation in Belgium.**

**Walloon job seekers are encouraged to apply for job vacancies in Flanders. At the same time, preparatory language support is provided for job seekers willing to work in Flanders.**

## Preparatory support

FOREM's objective is to boost language knowledge and interregional and international mobility.

Partly due to the Language Plan (Dutch, English, German) in Wallonia's Marshall Plan, FOREM offers its job seekers the opportunity to learn and perfect their knowledge of one or several languages through targeted training modules, in Wallonia, immersion courses at a language school or in a company in Flanders, the German-speaking Community, in Europe and in the emerging BRIC countries. It also enables young, higher secondary education graduates to complete one or two semesters at a language school, to retake their final year or undertake higher learning in Flanders, Europe, Canada and the USA.

Immersion courses for job seekers in a language school last 3 weeks and offer a short period of observation in a company. Immersion courses in a company last 9 to 12 weeks and enable job seekers to experience a different corporate culture, prove their adaptability and mobility and implement their professional and language skills.

In 2016, 186 Walloon job seekers benefited from language immersion courses in a professional environment including 14 in Flanders, some of whom went on to secure a job. 25 trainees from Bruxelles Formation benefited from a language exchange with VDAB and 5 trainees from VDAB were welcomed by Bruxelles Formation.

Languages can also be learned using the Wallangues platform in the Walloon Region or Brulingua in Brussels which offers content in English, Dutch, German and French.

## Coaching

When recruiting, Flemish employers can call upon language support through the 'Nederlands op de werkvloer' (Dutch in the workplace) (NODW) product or IBO-T (PFI with languages).

Generally, Synerjob's partners work together to exchange and support good practices (methodologies, products, experiences) in the field of language training.

The VDAB Brussels (the Brussels regional VDAB service) and BRUXELLES FORMATION organise general and specialist, sector-related language courses for Brussels job seekers.

The VDAB actively prospects employers in the suburbs to encourage them to employ Brussels job seekers, work on the language level required and use the 'job dating' method. For example, at Zaventem airport, employers were contacted and asked to be open to Brussels job seekers. With this in mind, the VDAB set up the "luchthavenplan" (airport plan) with an appropriate language review (both for the requirements related to open job vacancies but also for job seekers wanting to apply) and a 'taalactieplan' (short language modules preparing for recruitment and the provision of language instructors at the place of work after hiring, PFI and job coaching with language support).

Since 2015, Bruxelles Formation and the VDAB Brussels have developed a joint project with the main aim of training young Brussels residents so that they can become bilingual salespeople in the retail sector. This is conducted in close partnership between Bruxelles Formation and the VDAB Brussels, each partner alternately managing a group of trainees. The specific feature of this training is that it takes place in a professional and Dutch-speaking environment. This "immersion" principle has been extended to training in the administrative and reception/receptionists functions.

# Sixth State Reform

Through the transfer of powers in terms of employment and training that it provides, the Sixth State Reform gives greater responsibility to the federated entities but also offers them new levers.

Since then, within Synerjob and the working group dedicated to regionalisation, the Regions have organised discussions with a view to good coexistence - and even sometimes standardisation - of their respective practices in these new areas.

2016 saw this cooperation continue and intensify.

In substance, 2016 was marked by each of the entities taking over the operation of all powers and the adoption of the first important reforms in regionalised matters by the governments to be integrated in 2017.

Thus, the policy of the target groups (activation and reduction) of each region is marked by new political guidelines, adopted according to the profiles of job seekers and the regional job market.

The area of company internships, already reformed in Brussels and shortly to be so in Flanders, presents a strong corporate aspect, given the equal importance of the employer and its place of establishment, and the job seeker and their employment service. In this area more than elsewhere, the challenge of clear and consistent communication to stakeholders and employers is fundamental.

Finally, whenever necessary, a consultation is held with a view to proposing a common position for Synerjob members with federal institutions. For example, in the context of the Regions taking over the LEAs and the extension of the public contract for issuing LEA cheques, the continuation of a monitoring committee as a meeting place for regional representatives, the NEO and the issuing company. Similarly, in terms of controlling availability, the regions have agreed to develop identical monitoring to be communicated to the NEO. Finally, the regions meet regularly at the BCSS to ensure a smooth flow of data, which is essential for exercising and modernising the new powers.

After a 2016 which has been marked by the integration of new levers, 2017 will see the challenge of the reforms become a reality.

# Synerjob internationally

For some years now, the European Commission has given just one vote to each member state. This is why in late 2013, Synerjob was proposed as the "single point of contact" for the ENPES (European Network of Public Employment Services), EURES (EUROpean Employment Services) and Youth Guarantee programmes. Synerjob has also provided the executive secretariat for WAPES for a number of years.

## Synerjob and Europe

### European network of Public Employment Services

The Chief Executives of the Public Employment Services (PES) of the EU Member States meet with the European Commission twice a year to discuss the progress of the network's work programme. This European programme is designed to meet to the challenges faced in the job market.

At an extraordinary meeting in September 2104 the new ENPES (European Network of Public Employment Services) was launched. The President (Mr Frank-Jürgen WEISE (DE)) and the Permanent Vice-President (Mrs Ankica PAUN JARALLAH (HR)) were also appointed at this meeting.

At the network's Board of Directors meeting (PES Board) of 27-28 June, Mr Fons LEROY and Mrs Tuija OIVO (FI) were appointed as President and Vice-President respectively for a period from 23 September 2016 to 22 September 2018.

The network's priorities are as follows:

- Contribute to the fight against unemployment and fulfil the EU 2020 objectives by achieving, among other things, a transparent job market and professional matching;
- Implement the Youth Guarantee plan;
- Define a quality standard for the PES;
- Support appropriate mobility;
- Formulate operational recommendations for the attention of national and European decision-makers;
- Benchlearning.

### Employer's Day 2016:

All European Union countries together with Iceland and Norway organised an Employers' Day from 4 to 15 April 2016.

The press conference was held in Belgium and attended by the commissioner Marianne THYSEN and the President of Synerjob, Fons LEROY.

The network's 2017 work programme was approved during the meeting of December 2016 in Bratislava. Belgium was also appointed as 'liaison officer' between the European Network of Public Employment Services and the EURES network (EUROpean Employment Services).

FOREM and ACTIRIS will be involved in the next qualitative assessment cycle for Benchlearning.

Working groups:

- **European Pillar of Social Rights**  
VDAB represented Synerjob at this working group. This determined the network's contribution to the public consultation on this issue organised by the European Commission. This working group is also responsible for updating the PES' contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy;
- **PES-PRES cooperation**  
The working group issued a common position on how to work with private employment services. Discussions will continue in 2017 based on this position. VDAB manages this working group.

## EURES

The EURES (EUROpean Employment Services) network was created in 1993 by the European Commission. It was intended to provide information, advice and recruitment/placement services to workers and employers and any citizen wanting to take advantage of the principle of free movement of people. It is designed to facilitate intra-European mobility.

Decision 2012/733/EU was the first legal instrument instituting the reform of the EURES network, where one of the major changes was the opening up of the network to other bodies. This reform required that a certain number of decisions were taken for Belgium:

- The employment services are the network's only partners for Belgium;
- Every PES appoints a national coordinator and acts as a National Coordination Office (NCO) in its region. The NCO ensures that the regulations and EURES activities are implemented in its region;
- Synerjob is the single point of contact (SPOC) for the European Commission and is represented by each PES in turn (Forem in 2016);
- The possibility for social partners to become associate partners of EURES by signing an agreement.

In May 2016, Regulation EU 2016/589 came into force to replace this decision and the EURES charter and re-establish the EURES network. This regulation sets out the principles and rules on the functioning, organisation and promotion of the EURES network and regarding the exchange of data and information on the job market. It aims to provide employers and workers with easy access to all job vacancies and applications and all CVs posted online, clear information for finding a job in other countries and the minimum support services when looking for work.

During 2016, Synerjob continued to implement the reform of the network by working on opening up the network and implementing the new regulation.

Based on the decisions made in 2014 and 2015, Synerjob has continued the work it started with a view to enabling social partners to be part of the network as associate partners of EURES. Since early 2016, the

following have become associate partners of EURES: ACV, ABVV, ACLVB, Unizo, Voka for VDAB, FGFB, CSC and CGSLB for Forem, CSC and FGFB for the ADG. In October, in accordance with Article 40 of the new regulation, the membership of these organisations was confirmed as partners of EURES.

The entry into force of the new legal framework involved designating:

- The National Coordination Office. The representation system introduced under the 2012 Decision was renewed, namely Synerjob is the SPOC and each PES acts as NCO in its region;
- The representatives of the EURES Coordination Group, the one and only governance body. AFEPA (Advisors for European PES Affairs) and the former coordinators/assistants for the EURES coordination of each PES were appointed to take part in this governance body;
- The PES as members of the network;
- An actual member and a deputy on the EURES Committee responsible for assisting the European Commission in adopting implementing acts for the regulation. Wouter Kerkhove from VDAB and Isabelle Dochy from Actiris were appointed respectively. The EURES committee will meet in 2017.

In addition, the new regulation provides for the establishment of an admission system for opening up the network. A specific working group has been created in order to find as many synergies as possible between the different regional admission systems and find common admission criteria.

Throughout 2016, the PES ensured that they kept their commitments to provide a single communication with the Commission and prepare joint responses.

Practical measures included:

- Unique encoding of a EURES national action plan for Belgium;
- Coordinated updating of information on the job market and on the living and working conditions in Belgium;
- The drafting of a single communication plan;
- A coordinated response for the written procedures on the internal regulations for coordination group meetings, the new training programme and the different implementation acts;
- Preparation for coordination group meetings.

## Youth employment and the Youth Guarantee (YG)

Throughout 2016, Synerjob continued its European commitments as a YG "SPOC" (Single Point of Contact) for Belgium with the European Commission, but also its actions across all Belgian PES with the aim of promoting youth employment.

A. Within the European framework, members of Synerjob, led by ACTIRIS have coordinated the following actions:

- The "Data collection for monitoring of Youth Guarantee schemes 2015" (2016 YG Report);
  - ✓ The Council has charged the European Commission with monitoring the implementation of the YG in the different European countries and its different related indicators. This monitoring is achieved through multilateral surveillance by EMCO (Employment Committee) in connection with the European semester.
  - ✓ The 2015 data collection exercise was conducted from June to September 2016 for all European countries. The data collection for the Belgian YG monitoring was coordinated by the

Regions (through SYNERJOB) in partnership with the FPS Employment.

- ✓ Belgium received feedback from the European Commission in the "Data collection for monitoring of Youth Guarantee schemes 2015" report in November 2016.
- Participation in the meeting of national YG coordinators (28 member states) organised by the DG Employment in Brussels (14/04);
- The organisation of the Learning Exchange – Neet's Outreach held in Belgium in September 2016. This was a smaller event (25 participants) intended to share good practices by bringing together European partners (Luxembourg, Norway, Germany) and field operators (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels) working on Neet's not registered with the PES;
- The preparation and introduction of the Belgian response to the "DG Employment Questionnaire on the Implementation of the YG and YEI in 2015" (2016 report). A single response was expected for all Belgian action plans by 28 February 2016. In view of the specific nature of the action plans and their variable-geometry governance, Synerjob proposed an (operational and political) way of working in order to coordinate a Belgian response with the cabinets and members of the Belgian permanent representation to the commission, to be submitted by 28 February 2016;
- The participation of Synerjob (VDAB) in the Paris Peer Review held on 7 and 8 April relating to the presentation of the French YG measures.

B. In terms of the cross-cutting actions conducted between Synerjob members, specifically in 2016:

- The signing of the Cooperation Agreement between Synerjob members and the Alliance for Youth in Belgium.

This agreement aims to establish a partnership as part of the appointment of personnel responding to the needs of employers who are members of the Alliance for Youth in Belgium in line with the specific objectives of this Alliance, in order to confirm their societal responsibilities towards young people.

Based on a process of complementarity, the Belgian public employment and training bodies agree to provide an integrated service offer to employers who are members of the Alliance for Youth in Belgium that satisfies their human resources needs and which helps to facilitate access to employment and internships for young job seekers.

The agreement was signed on 27 January 2016;





- Consolidation of the working methodology (interpretations, data collection) relating to the YG indicators between the different PES members of Synerjob. Identification of a technical SPOC (statistics and data analysis) responsible for acting as the interface with the European Commission for YG indicators.

# Synerjob and WAPES (World Association of Public Employment Services)

## WAPES

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 that are used to share good practices and knowledge, training, close partnerships between public employment services, etc.

## Synerjob's support

The general secretariat of this global association is based in the VDAB offices in Brussels and is supported by Synerjob. All the Public Employment Services in Belgium are WAPES members through Synerjob. The AISBL also makes its lawyers and experts available to support WAPES in general and the secretariat in particular.

The secretariat is managed by Mrs Lenka Kint, who is seconded from the VDAB.

Through its members, Synerjob takes part in governance meetings (board of directors, executive committee, general meetings).

## Synerjob as an active member of WAPES

At each meeting of the Synerjob Board of Directors, the Executive Secretary of WAPES presents a report on the developments within this organisation.

Thus, Synerjob members remain perfectly-well informed of WAPES' activities and can assess the relevance of involving one of Synerjob's members in these. Indeed, in addition to the subjects covered, the activities organised are used to create or strengthen links with other PES and support the achievement of certain objectives.

In 2016, the association's European members met in Malmo (Sweden) to consider the issue of "Facilitating the Entrance of Refugees into the Labour Market", relating to migrants arriving in the countries of this area. These works, rich in content were an opportunity to identify good practices in some European PES and raise the questions related to identifying the skills of migrants, the employers' approach to the issue, the training and tools to be implemented for success but also partnerships to be stimulated by this subject.

2016 also enabled WAPES to lead working groups in order to move forward in implementing its long-term strategy as officially decided during the WAPES Board of Directors meeting of November 2015. Fons Leroy managed these works which resulted in a proposal document and a Charter of Values that were presented by Marie-Kristine Vanboeckstal at the 2016 Board of Directors meeting in Rabat.

## Added value for Synerjob

This is a successful cooperation which is intensifying.

Long-term strategy considerations stimulated and led by Fons Leroy with his proposal of using benchlearning in an adapted version are just some of the elements that are used to position Synerjob as a key player within the WAPES network.

Furthermore, WAPES cooperation with many organisations (BIT, OECD Leed, African Union, IDB, WEC, European Commission, etc.) helps to pass on actions and good practices from Synerjob members and highlight the innovations implemented.

# Appendices

## Addresses

### **Addresses of institutional members of Synerjob at 31/12/2016**

#### 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 1000-BRUSSELS, boulevard Anspach, 65

Represented by Grégor CHAPELLE, Chief Executive

And Caroline Mancel, Assistant Chief Executive

#### THE WALLOON OFFICE FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT (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 non-profit association**

Synerjob non-profit association

Boulevard Tirou 104

6000 CHARLEROI

**Website for the Synerjob non-profit association:**

[www.synerjob.be](http://www.synerjob.be)

## **Synerjob Board of Directors Members at 31/12/1628**

### **FOREM**

Marie-Kristine VANBOCKESTAL, President

Basilio NAPOLI, Auditor

### **VDAB**

Fons LEROY, Vice-President

### **ACTIRIS**

Grégor CHAPELLE, Secretary

Caroline Mancel

### **ADG**

Robert NELLES, Treasurer

### **BRUXELLES FORMATION**

Olivia P'TITO, Auditor

## **2016 Meeting Dates**

### **Board of Directors**

3 February 2016

30 May 2016

6 October 2016

### **General Meeting**

30 June 2016