



YouthPartnership

COUNTRY SHEET ON YOUTH POLICY IN BELGIUM (Flemish community)



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YouthPartnership
Council of Europe
European Commission



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1. Statistics on young people

Mention the number of all young people from the ages of 13 and 30 who live in the country

By age and gender in the Flemish Region (01/01/2007)

age	men	women
13 YEARS	36,357	35,231
14 YEARS	37,633	36,077
15 YEARS	38,161	36,203
16 YEARS	37,750	35,983
17 YEARS	36,541	34,824
18 YEARS	36,210	34,796
19 YEARS	35,806	34,290
20 YEARS	35,887	34,525
21 YEARS	34,878	34,439
22 YEARS	35,767	35,146
23 YEARS	36,688	36,484
24 YEARS	37,987	36,915
25 YEARS	39,178	37,785
26 YEARS	38,681	38,365
27 YEARS	39,202	37,926
28 YEARS	38,367	37,898
29 YEARS	37,722	37,410
30 YEARS	37,261	36,460

out of the total population in the Flemish Region

TOTAL Flemish Region	3,017,063	3,100,377
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Source:

www.statbel.fgov.be

http://aps.vlaanderen.be/statistiek/cijfers/stat_cijfers_demografie_nieuw_excel.htm

2. Actors and Structures

2.1 Public authorities

2.1.1 National public authorities:

Ministry in charge of youth

- Minister

Bert Anciaux

Flemish Minister for Culture, Youth, Sports and Brussels Affairs

- Duration of mandate

5 years: 2005-2009

Youth Division of the Ministry: Department of Culture, Youth, Sport and Media, Socio-Cultural Work for Youth and Adults Agency, Youth Division

- Main tasks of the Youth Division

The general tasks of the Agency with regard to the **Youth Division** are further described as follows:

- o accreditation, funding, counselling, inspection and assessment of nationally organised youth work, experiential youth work and other actors;
- o support of commissions on policy implementation which give non-binding advice on the conceptual assessment of individual files;
- o monitoring of local authorities and provincial authorities on local and provincial youth (work) policy:
- o monitoring and assessment of Steunpunt Jeugd (Youth Support Centre);
- o monitoring of private bodies performing public tasks, such as JINT, ADJ, VIP Jeugd; organisation of initiatives in the area of culture dissemination, while focussing on youth;
- o developing and maintaining international contacts in the youth sector; providing a policy-oriented input to youth policy.

www.jeugdbeleid.be

- Number of people working for the Youth Division of this Ministry

40 staff members on 01/01/2008.

- Director responsible for Youth in the Ministry

Johan Van Gaens, head of division

Johan.vangaens@cjsm.vlaanderen.be

- Contact person in the Youth Division competent for European youth policy

Jan Vanhee

Jan.vanhee@cjsm.vlaanderen.be

Other national public bodies who are directly involved in youth policies

- Other Ministries

Flemish Ministry for Work, Education, and Formation.

- Minister: Frank Vandebroecke (SP.A)

Flemish Ministry for Welfare, Public Health and Family.

- Minister: Steven Vanackere (CD&V)

Flemish Ministry for Mobility, Social Economy and Equal Chances.

- Minister: Kathleen Van Brempt (SP.A)

Parliament commission in charge of youth issues

Commission for Culture, Youth, Sport and Media

- name of president / chair : Dany VANDENBOSSCHE (sp-a-spirit)

In the area of **Culture**, the Commission is responsible for:

- the protection and splendour of the language, the fine arts, cultural heritage, museums and other scientific and cultural institutions with the exception of monuments and sites as well as of archaeological heritage and marine heritage;
- libraries, CD, Video and DVD Libraries and similar services;
- arts education;
- intellectual, moral and social education;
- film policy.

In the area of **Youth**, the Commission is responsible for:

- youth policy and film classification;
- continuous education and cultural development;
- leisure activities, with the exception of tourism;
- coordination of children's rights policy.

Furthermore, the Commission's powers in the field of **Sport** encompass all initiatives focusing on physical education, sports and outdoor activities, as well as medically justified sports practice.

Finally, its powers in the field of **Media** include radio and television broadcasting, press releases of the federal government excepted, as well as aid to the written press, media innovation and the Digital Action Plan for Flanders.

An overview of past activities can be found in the annual reports and the report on the Flemish Parliament's term of office.

www.vlaamsparlement.be

2.1.2 Regional public authorities with competencies in the youth field

Belgium is a federal state, comprising Communities and Regions.

Decision making power no longer lies exclusively with the federal government and the federal Parliament. The country is now governed by different partners, which independently exercise their powers in their policy domains.

The redistribution of powers was carried out along two lines. The first is linked to language, and, in a broader context, to all cultural affairs. That is how the Communities were created. The concept of "Community" refers to the individuals of such a Community and to the mutual relationship between those individuals, namely their language and culture. Belgium is situated at the crossroads of Germanic and Latin cultures. This explains why the country has three official languages: Dutch, French and German. Therefore present-day Belgium has three Communities: the Flemish Community, the French Community and the German-speaking Community. These Communities thus coincide with population groups.

The second line of the state reform was historically driven by economic interests. The Regions, which strived for more economic autonomy, express those interests. As a result, three Regions were created: the Flemish Region, the Brussels Capital Region and the Walloon Region.

Youth matters fall for the greater part within the exclusive competence of the Communities. Thus, the federal level has no say in these matters.

2.1.3 Local public authorities with competencies in the youth field

5 provinces and 308 local authorities fall within the administrative supervision of the Flemish Region.

Since the coming into force of the Flemish Parliament Act on local and provincial youth (work) policy in 1993, steps were taken towards a decentralised and complementary youth policy.

Despite the many amendments to the Flemish Parliament Act since its adoption, its starting points have been unchanged:

- Youth work policy as part of a broader youth policy
- Co-operation between the different levels of authority
- Planned approach with the youth policy plan as a tool
- Permanent consultation and co-operation between the actors involved
- Sufficient financial resources

Concretely, this means that the Flemish government awards funds to local authorities and provinces for conducting a youth policy if they meet a number of conditions. The presentation of a youth policy plan is one of them, the establishment of a local youth council a second.

Most local authorities have youth services or at least one officer who is responsible for youth matters.

www.jeugdbeleid.be

Country sheet on youth policy – Belgium (Flemish community)

2.2 Youth welfare services (comprising public and/or non public actors)

Structure and major organisations of (voluntary) social welfare and social services for young people

Within the Ministry of Welfare, Public Health and Family, the Youth Welfare Agency is responsible for this.

The Agency's mission is defined as follows: "Together with our partners we organise quality prevention and assistance to children and young people in problematic living conditions in order to maximize their chances of personal development."

Youth Welfare ensures the coordination of partnerships and networks focusing on education support and, in this way, enhances the development of a provision that prevents problematic living conditions."

The above-mentioned mission contains the following seven key tasks of the Youth Welfare Agency:

- Conducting a prevention policy to avoid that minors end up in problematic living conditions;
- Developing and promoting private provision of services;
- Implementing a policy on Integrated Youth Assistance;
- Organising and coordinating route counselling;
- Organising and managing Community institutions;
- Managing the Youth Welfare Fund;
- Organising the Youth Welfare Agency

<http://www.wvg.vlaanderen.be/welzijngezondheid/index.htm>

<http://www.wvg.vlaanderen.be/jongerenwelzijn/index.htm>

2.3 Non-public actors/structures & youth services with competencies in the youth field

2.3.1 Youth councils

De Vlaamse Jeugdraad. (The Flemish Youth Council)

The Flemish Parliament Act of 29 March 2002 on Flemish Youth Policy sets out a legislative framework for the Vlaamse Jeugdraad.

The youth council may **give advice** on all youth related issues. The members of the Flemish Government seek the advice of the youth council on all youth policy matters that are dealt with by the Flemish Government. In addition, the Vlaamse Jeugdraad may counsel federal authorities and other bodies **at its own initiative**.

The **General Assembly** of the youth council is the official body that brings the expectations of young people to the attention of the authorities. The General Assembly consists of at least 16 and at most 24 members, of whom at least one third are younger than 25 at the start of their mandate and at most two

thirds are of the same gender. At least half and at most 60 per cent of the members are selected from candidates proposed by accredited nationally organised youth associations. Moreover, the youth council may co-opt members. In this way, experts or actors from various other sectors (education, welfare, health care,...) can be involved.

The General Assembly consists of:

- 10 young people
- 12 individuals actively involved in youth work organisations accredited under the Flemish Parliament Act on Flemish Youth Policy
- 1 young person representing the Vlaamse ScholierenKoepel (VSK - Organisation of Flemish Pupils)
- 1 young person representing the Vereniging van Vlaamse Studenten (VVS - the Association of Flemish Students)

The members of **Board of Directors** are chosen from the 24 voting members of the General Assembly. Among the members of the Board of Directors a **president** of the Vlaamse Jeugdraad is appointed. The present Board of Directors consists of 5 members.

Every inhabitant of Flanders as well as youth work organisations, which are recognised under the Flemish Parliament Act on Flemish Youth Policy and feel positive about how the Vlaamse Jeugdraad operates, can join free of charge, without any restriction. Nevertheless, they must be prepared to sign the **Charter** of the Vlaamse Jeugdraad.

The youth council organises at least every two years a **conference** that is made widely known among young people and at which the activities of the past years are explained and the guidelines for the coming period of operation are discussed. The youth council establishes its working programme after consultation with the Flemish Government.

The **operation** of the youth council is backed by 3 commissions: the Commission on Youth Work Policy, the Commission on Youth Policy and the Commission on International Issues. In order to further develop the themes that are considered as priority issues by the commissions, working groups may be established within each commission.

Website: www.vlaamsejeugdraad.be

Provincial and local youth councils

In the Flemish Parliament Act on supporting and stimulating the municipal, intermunicipal and provincial youth policy and youth work policy, which provides for the funding of local youth work policy, it is stated that local authorities and provinces must have a youth council, at least, if they want their youth policy to be funded by the Flemish Government. Having a local/provincial youth council is thus a precondition for being able to be funded under the Flemish Parliament Act.

2.3.2 Youth NGOs

Steunpunt Jeugd (Youth Support Centre)

Steunpunt Jeugd intends to contribute to the smooth operation of youth work at all levels and in all its aspects. Therefore, it will stimulate knowledge and opinions on youth policy and youth work, both at national and international level, and enhance cultural diversity, among other things through the distribution of information and documentation, promotion and dissemination, study and research.

Steunpunt Jeugd performs the following **functions**:

- it collects and multiplies
- it develops methods, gives training and support in the field of participation
- it has a communicative function
- it provides services
- it undertakes research
- it provides and organises a platform
- it has a comprehensive provision of training programmes focussing on various youth (work) policy items

www.steunpuntjeugd.be

JINT

The Flemish Government commissioned JINT to promote and foster international mobility and co-operation of young people and youth organisations. JINT is a not-for-profit organisation which is co-managed by the Flemish authorities and Flemish youth work.

The General Assembly consists of at least 9 youth workers, appointed by the Vlaamse Jeugdraad, and 3 civil servants of the Ministry of the Flemish Community. In addition, the General Assembly itself may recruit 6 additional members. The Board of Directors is responsible for the daily management and is composed of 4 youth workers and 3 civil servants.

Definition of mission:

- confirmation of the role, which the authorities and youth work have to play in monitoring JINT;
- a stronger emphasis on working globally, apart from the European work that is already being accomplished;
- improving access to international exchanges for young people from all backgrounds;
- an explicit demand to systematically build the necessary knowledge and know how with regard to international relations;
- priority partnership with youth work, but solid co-operation with other relevant sectors;
- emphasises on sustainable management and strategic relationships with external collaborators.

www.jint.be

In addition, the Flemish authorities accredit and fund some 70 nationally organised youth organisations.

www.jeugdbeleid.be

VIP

The non-profit VIP aims at playing a coordinating role in the field of youth information in Flanders. To this end, it develops the necessary partnerships with the different relevant public services and the different private actors who have gained the appropriate expertise.

In order to properly achieve this objective, VIP shall:

1. Collect data on ICT needs of children and young people, the quality and nature of data carriers and the use of data carriers by children and young people;
2. Develop, systemize and maintain a youth information network both at Flemish and local level;
3. Develop and promote a reference framework and quality label for informing and projecting a uniform image to children and young people;
4. Formulate guidelines and prepare calls for tender with regard to data carriers, which can be offered by a youth information network;
5. Provide the necessary training and coaching of youth information workers in co-operation with experts.

www.vipjeugd.be

VVJ

The "Vereniging Vlaamse Jeugddiensten en –consulenten" (VVJ – Association of Flemish Youth Services and Counsellors) is accredited by the Youth Division as an "**umbrella organisation which has been given a general mandate**". V.V.J. developed into an important **services and study centre**, especially for local youth (work) policy, but also, more generally, for youth policy conducted by other authorities. V.V.J. is a membership organisation to which are affiliated nearly all Flemish local authorities, provinces and the Flemish Community Commission through their youth service or youth official.

It delivers a comprehensive package of services including training, information library, guidance, counselling and publications. A **key task** of V.V.J. is research into policy preparation and policy support. Furthermore, V.V.J. also lends support to local animation programmes, among other things as national coordinator of Grabbelpas and SWAP.

www.vvj.be

2.4 Other structures

Jeugdonderzoeksplatform (JOP – Youth Research Platform)

Little systematic and coordinated efforts have been made in youth research in Flanders, thus showing overlaps and gaps in this broad area. Policy makers as well as practitioners and researchers experience this as an obstacle. In order to overcome these obstacles, the Youth Research Platform (JOP) was created in Spring 2003 at the initiative of the Flemish Minister for Home Affairs, Culture, Youth and the Civil Service.

JOP is an interdisciplinary and interuniversity **partnership of three research groups**:

- [Onderzoeksgroep Tempus Omnia Revelat](#) (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) (Tempus Omnia Revelat research group)
- [Vakgroep Sociale Agogiek](#) (UGent) (Department of Welfare Work)
- [Onderzoeksgroep Jeugdcriminologie](#) (K.U.Leuven) (Leuven Institute for Criminology)

The mission of JOP consists of:

- **making an inventory of existing Flemish research into youth as well as opening it up, analysing and synthesizing it**; at a later date new research will be launched and conducted.
- through exchanges with the work field, policy makers and scientific partners try and **collect information on children and young people and make it accessible** to all parties interested.

Concretely, the following tasks are carried out:

- making an inventory of youth research
- analysing and synthesizing youth research
- launching new research initiatives (monitor)
- developing a platform function

www.jeugdonderzoeksplatform.be

3. Legislation

Articles of the constitution concerning youth explicitly

National legislation on youth

1. ***Flemish Parliament Act of 14 February 2003 on supporting and stimulating the municipal, intermunicipal and provincial youth policy and youth work policy as modified by the 23 December 2005 and 15 December 2006 Flemish Parliament Acts.***

Funds can be awarded to local authorities, the Flemish Community Commission and provincial authorities to draw up and implement a youth work policy plan. Funding conditions are specified in this Act.

2. *Flemish Parliament Act of 29 March 2002 on Flemish Youth Policy, as modified by the Act of 8 July 2005.*

This Act sets out the provisions relating to the funding of :

- nationally organised youth associations
- experimental youth work
- participation and communication
- international projects
- youth culture (including art education associations for youth)
- Jint
- the Youth Council for the Flemish Community
- Steunpunt Jeugd

3. *Flemish Parliament Act of 3 March 2004 on the accreditation and funding of youth hostels, youth residences, support structures and the non-profit "Algemene Dienst voor Jeugdtoerisme" (General Service for Youth Tourism)*

The Flemish Government intends to promote an adequate and varied accommodation capacity for several-day stays for young people in general and youth work in special. The authorities may support associations or individuals making efforts to achieve this objective.

Concretely, the following initiatives are eligible for accreditation and funding:

- youth hostels and youth residences
- support structures

www.jeugdbeleid.be

4. National Programmes on youth

Conversing, joining in, playing along. The Youth Policy Plan of the Flemish Government for 2006-2009

Under the Flemish Parliament Act on Flemish Youth Policy, a Flemish Youth Policy Plan had to be submitted to the Flemish Parliament by late 2005. This plan sets out the integrated youth policy of the Flemish government until 2009 and gives particular attention to youth work policy. It states the objectives of the Flemish government in all areas of competence and determines the outcome indicators within an overall vision of youth and youth policy.

On 16 December 2005, the Flemish government adopted the second Flemish Youth Policy Plan. Afterwards, it submitted the plan to the Flemish Parliament.

www.jeugdbeleid.be

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http://www.cjism.vlaanderen.be/jeugdbeleid/beleid/vlaams_jeugdbeleidsplan/index.html

5. Budget / Public expenditure allocated to youth

Total budget 2008: 62.691.000 EUR

6. European Dimension of youth policy

6.1 Council of Europe programmes or activities implemented in an important way for youth purposes (including funding schemes of the European Youth Foundation)

Council of Europe youth campaign.all different- all equal

Coordinating organisation:

Steunpunt Jeugd - www.steunpuntjeugd.be

E-mails:

ncc-belgium-fl@alldifferent-allegal.info

allemaalanders@steunpuntjeugd.be

Campaign Website:

www.allemaalanders.be

Contact person:

Tinne De Maeyer - tinne.demaeyer@steunpuntjeugd.be

6.2 European Union programmes

Jint vzw is responsible for coordinating the YOUTH programme in Flanders and is also partner for Eurodesk in Flanders. It is in charge of information and promotion, training, funding and assessment. Jint vzw also runs SALTO Inclusion, one of the centres of expertise enjoying support from the European YOUTH Programme.

www.jint.be