

The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy

Key priorities for youth policies answers on
Country information on youth policies



Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth policy, youth research and youth work.

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BELGIUM (Flemish Community), 2006

1 Statistics on young people

1.1 Total number of young people in global population

1309822 *young persons*

1.2 Percentage of young people in global population

21.5 %

1.3 Percentage of young people by age brackets

| 13-15 | 16-18 | 19-21 | 22-24 | 25-27 | 28-30 |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 3.6 % | 3.5 % | 3.4 % | 3.7 % | 3.8 % | 3.6 % |

1.4 Percentage of young people by gender

| Male | Female |
|--------|--------|
| 10.9 % | 10.6 % |

1.4.1 Percentage of young people by gender and by age brackets

| | 13-15 | 16-18 | 19-21 | 22-24 | 25-27 | 28-30 |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Female | 1.8 % | 1.7 % | 1.7 % | 1.8 % | 1.9 % | 1.8 % |
| Male | 1.9 % | 1.8 % | 1.7 % | 1.9 % | 1.9 % | 1.8 % |

1.5 Percentage of rural young people in global population

N/I %

1.5.1 Percentage of rural young people in rural population

N/I %

1.6 Percentage of urban young people in global population

N/I %

1.6.1 Percentage of urban young people in urban population

N/I %

1.7 Percentage of young people with a different nationality in global population

N/I %

1.8 Number of people working in the youth field (employees and volunteers) N/I persons

2 Actors and structures

2.1 National public authorities

2.1.1 Ministry in charge of youth

Name of ministry

Flemish Authority; Agency for Socio-Cultural Work for Youth and Adults - Youth Division

Name of minister

Bert Anciaux, Flemish Minister for Culture, Youth, Sports and Brussels

Duration of mandate

60 **months**

Number of people working in the ministry working on youth

37 **persons**

Contact person in the youth department

Johan Van Gaens; johan.vangaens@cjasm.vlaanderen.be (Head of the division) Jan Vanhee; jan.vanhee@cjasm.vlaanderen.be (international youth policy)

Function, role and competence of youth department

The Agency for Socio-Cultural Work for Youth and Adults, Youth Division, is allocated the following general tasks: # recognising, providing financial grants, advising, inspecting and assessing the nationally organised youth work activities, experimental youth work schemes and other actors # lending support to policy delivery commissions offering non-binding advice about the content-related assessment of individual case files # providing guidance to local authorities and provincial authorities about the municipal and provincial youth (work) policy # providing guidance and assessing the Youth Support Centre (vzw Steunpunt Jeugd) # offering guidance for private services carrying out public activities, such as Jint (the International Youth Work Coordination Agency), the General Youth Tourism Service (ADJ), the Flemish Youth Information Centre (VIP) # organising youth-related initiatives for disseminating culture # building up and maintaining international contacts in the youth sector, providing a policy-oriented input for youth policy

2.1.2 Other public or semi public bodies

- Flemish Youth Council # Marianne Schapmans / Bart Verhaeghe - Youth Support Centre # Tom Van Thienen - International Youth Work Coordination Agency # Koen Lambert - Association of Flemish Youth Services and Counsellors (VVJ) # Marc Ipermans

2.1.3 Parliament commission in charge of youth issues

The Flemish parliament has a Culture, youth, sports and media Commission. The president is



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Dany Vandebossche. They make preparations for policy making; control policy of the Flemish Government; discuss the budget.

2.1.4 Other national public authorities

- Ministry of the Flemish Community, Education Department - Child and Family - Children's Rights Commissioner's Office

2.2 Regional and/or local public authorities

2.2.1 Regional public structures with competencies in the youth field

The five provinces (West Flanders, East Flanders, Flemish Brabant, Antwerp and Limburg) are required every six years to draw up a provincial youth policy plan, covering two major areas: financial, material and infrastructure support to provincial youth work facilities; and the broader policy measures with implications for children and young people. Of central importance in this case is the connection with other provincial policy sectors and with local authorities. The Flemish government provides the five provinces with financial grants for preparing and implementing the youth policy plan. The provincial youth services play a key role in this respect.

2.2.2 Local public structures with competencies in the youth field

The municipalities are required to draw up a municipal youth policy plan every three years, to be approved by the municipal council. The first part covers youth work policy, describing the way financial, material and infrastructure support is lent to diverse and accessible, local and intermunicipal youth work facilities. The second section deals with the broader youth policy, focusing on the choice of policy measures with the implications for children and young people. The emphasis is also on how youth work policy fits in with other policy areas and public authorities. The municipalities receive financial grants from the Flemish government for the work involved in preparing and implementing their youth policy plans. The municipal youth services play a key role in this respect.

2.3 Non public actors/structures - compulsory consultation

2.3.1 Names of bodies that must be consulted in the youth field

Each level of governance in Flanders (municipality, province and community) has a youth advisory body. In the case of the Flemish Community this is the Flemish Youth Council, a non-profit-making body accredited by and receiving financial support from the Flemish government. The Youth Council is tasked with acting on its own initiative, at the request of the Flemish Government or the Flemish Parliament, to issue advisory opinions about all kinds of youth-related issues. The members of the Flemish Government receive the Youth Council's advice about all youth policy issues addressed by the Flemish Government. To this end, the Youth Council has to keep track of social trends and interpret and make a contribution to the process of shaping a policy vision. The Flemish Youth Council may also deliver own-initiative opinions to the federal authorities and to



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other authorities. Each Flemish province has a provincial Youth Council accredited by the provincial council and each Flemish municipality has a municipal youth council, which is accredited by the municipal council. These youth councils are required to issue advisory opinions about all youth work policy issues and about the implementation of the youth policy plan of the province or municipality. The youth councils may also issue own-initiative advisory opinions about any matters relating to youth or youth work.

2.4 Non public actors/structures - non-compulsory consultation

2.4.1 Names of bodies that can be consulted in the youth field

N/A

2.4.2 National and regional youth councils

- Flemish Youth Council (at national level) - Provincial youth councils (each from the five provinces: West Flanders, East Flanders, Flemish Brabant, Antwerp, Limburg)

2.4.3 Large youth NGOs

A total of 73 youth work associations enjoy national accreditation. The full list may be consulted at the following address:

http://www.wvc.vlaanderen.be/jeugdbeleid/subsidiering/landelijk_jeugdwerk/erkende_verenigingen/index.htm

2.4.4 Expert groups, round tables, consulting groups in the youth field

There are various municipalities involved in inter-municipal cooperation, various consultation platforms at various levels (working groups, commission,#), various steering groups for creating municipal, provincial and Flemish youth policy plans, various seminars focused on youth-related themes,... Key players are the municipal youth consultants, youth services, youth (work) associations, youth councils, the steunpunt jeugd (youth assistance centre), VVJ (Flemish association of youth services and consultants), VVSG, Jint, the youth and sports department, CBGS, JOP,# for example: local and provincial youth policy platform (organisation: steunpunt jeugd)

2.4.5 Contacts of permanent networks in the youth field

Kinderrechten coalitie (netwerk of NGOs active in the field of children's rights), VVJ (Flemish association of youth services and consultants), VFJ (Flemish umbrella organisation for training, guidance and support for youth clubs and youth centres), fuifpunt (network of national youth work organisations, the Steunpunt Jeugd and the Flemish association of youth departments and party-related consultants), steunpunt jeugd (youth work), locomotief (Locomotief is a partnership between a few youth work organisations seeking to promote more and better youth-policy making), thuis in de stad (ThuisindeStad.be aspires to be an interface for all those in Flanders involved with urban policy), OSBJ (OSBJ is creating a focal point for the intrinsic and methodical development of the special child and adolescent welfare sector. It focuses, in particular, on youth delinquency,



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children's rights and participation),#

2.4.6 Other non public actors/structures

N/A

3 Legislation

3.1 Constitution (articles that concern youth)

Part 2 of the constitution: Belgians and their rights. Equality, equal rights and freedoms (including freedom of expression (19)) without discrimination (12). Right to the respect of privacy and family life- (22) All children are entitled to respect for their moral, physical, mental and sexual integrity (22bis). All are entitled to a dignified existence: right to work, social security, accommodation, environmental protection, cultural and social development (23). Right to free & neutral education until the end of the compulsory school period (24), right of association (27) Unhindered use of languages(30)

3.2 Application and transposition of the United Nations Declaration of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms

Belgium subscribes to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Most of the UDHR articles are reflected in the Belgian constitution, such as the right to life (art2), prevention of torture (art3), prevention of slavery & hard labour (art4) in the UDHR and the right to a decent existence (art 23) in the constitution. The right to freedom & safety (art5), the right to respect for personal privacy (art8) and freedom of thought, conscience and religion (art9 & 10) of the UDHR are reproduced in articles about the freedom of expression, press freedom, protection of personal privacy and the anti-discrimination legislation. In the case of art 6, 7, 17 & 18 of the UDHR concerning criminal law, there is the separation of powers as laid down in the constitution and the procedures established in the civil penal code. Lastly, Art 11 (UDHR) on freedom of assembly is literally reproduced (art 27).

3.3 Application and transposition of the European Convention on Children's Rights

Belgium has not ratified the European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights.

3.4 National legislation on youth

Flanders ratified the International Convention on the Rights of the Child pursuant to the Flemish Parliament Act of 15 May 1991. The basis for the implementation of the CRC was created by two Flemish Parliament Acts: the Flemish Parliament Act of 15 July 1997 establishing a Children's Rights Commissioner's Office, and the Flemish Parliament Act of 15 July 1997 creating a child impact report and reviewing government policy on observing children's rights. The Flemish Parliament Act of 29 March 2002 on Flemish youth policy established the rules for subsidisation, covering all the support measures for youth organisations. The Flemish Government appointed a coordinating minister for children's rights on 18 February 1997. A separate minister for youth



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matters was appointed in 1999. Both responsibilities were brought together on 17 July 2004 so that children's rights now form a pillar of the broad-based youth policy. This is also highlighted in the second Flemish youth policy plan, which was approved by the Flemish Government on 16 December 2005. This youth policy plan forms the basis for the consistent youth policy undertaken by the Flemish government. The plan features targets and specific measures for children and young people in all the areas of competence of the Flemish government, paying special attention to participation, diversity and youth work policy.

3.5 Regional or local legislation on youth

The Flemish Parliament Act of 14 February 2003 # amended by the Flemish Parliament Act of 23 December 2005 - for providing support and incentives for the municipal, intermunicipal and provincial youth and youth work policy, covers the process for decentralising a number of responsibilities regarding youth. In the case of youth work policy, this applies to lending financial, material and infrastructure support to diverse and accessible, local and intermunicipal or provincial youth work facilities. The youth policy applies to all policy measures the local authority/provincial authorities take in the light of all the circumstances of children and young people. The municipalities and provinces are required to draw up a youth policy plan, outlining their policy measures. Every three years in the case of the municipalities and every six years for the provinces.

3.6 Guidelines

The Flemish Community's Policy Memorandum on Youth Policy (2004-2009) is based on the following principles, children's rights as a legal and ethical frame of reference; a category-specific, integrated youth policy; a complementary relationship between the various authorities; a positive, proactive, inclusive and emancipating policy; participation as an end and a means; a justified youth policy enjoying broad support; catering for diversity. This is reflected in eight key concerns: Youth work policy; children's rights; participation; youth information; international orientation; diversity (interculturalism); policy intersections for an integrated youth policy; positive & proactive review of young people.

4 Programmes

4.1 European programmes

Youth Programme, Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Erasmus

4.1.1 National Agency for YOUTH Programme (Contact person)

JINT vzw, Grétrystraat 26, B-1000 Brussel, Tel: +32 2 209 0720, Fax: +32 2 209 0749, E-mail: jint@jint.be, Web site: <http://www.jint.be>. Contact person: Koen Lamber (Director of JINT)

4.1.2 Eurodesk

JINT vzw, Grétrystraat 26, B-1000 Brussel, Tel: +32 2 209 0720, Fax: +32 2 209 0749, E-mail: jint@jint.be, Web site: <http://www.jint.be>. Contact person: Eva Germeys



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4.1.3 Implementation of the YOUTH Programme

Jint vzw is responsible for coordinating the YOUTH programme in Flanders. It is in charge of information and promotion, training, funding and assessment. In practical terms, the programme involves opportunities for financial grants for # international exchanges between youth groups (action 1) # European voluntary work (action 2) # local youth initiatives, in cooperation with a youth group in another country or otherwise (action 3) # measures to lend support to youth workers with international aspirations (action 5). Young people for whom this may be relevant can go the following addresses for further information <http://www.programmajeugd.be/> and <http://www.jint.be> Jint vzw also runs SALTO Inclusion, one of the centres of expertise enjoying support from the European YOUTH Programme.

4.1.4 Other EU programmes implemented in an important way for youth

N/A

4.2 National Programmes on youth

N/A

Name of non youth specific programmes but which have a direct impact on young people

N/A

5 Action plans

Main characteristics and action plans in other horizontal policies directly related to youth
The youth policy plan (2006-2009) of the Flemish Government features an integrated youth policy directed towards various sectors and various levels of governance. Key examples are camping activities, organising parties, sports, culture, mobility, employment, education, space and welfare. In the field of employment, the focus is on new types of study path guidance for young people and work experience programmes. The policy area "education" deals with the Flemish "broad school" concept, where a review is made of the role the school plays in the neighbourhood and the municipality. The policy area "welfare" refers to the Flemish Poverty Reduction Action Plan, where the focus is on children and young people living in poverty.

6 Budget

6.1 Amounts allocated to youth policies/actions in the youth field

50259000 *Euros*

6.2 Main beneficiaries

The bulk of the youth budget is earmarked for financial grants for youth initiatives: nationally organised youth associations; experimental and innovative initiatives for young people; international youth exchange projects, youth cultural initiatives;



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participation/communication/information; Youth Support Centre; youth hostels and youth accommodation centres; Youth Council of the Flemish Community; Youth Research Platform; increasing employment opportunities for specific target groups in the cultural sector; Flemish Youth Hostels; Centre for Youth Tourism; Kwasimodo (youth work guidance); Flemish Youth Information Centre (VIP); European Music Festival for Young People; European Youth Orchestra; General Youth Tourism Service; Association of Flemish Youth Services and Counsellors; vzw Jint. The Flemish municipalities and provinces also receive financial grants from the Flemish Community for implementing local / provincial youth work policy plans.

6.3 Tendencies

The youth budget in 2005 was roughly Euro 49,000,000 and slightly higher in 2006.

7 Changes foreseen in the youth field and new developments especially linked to the four Open Method of Coordination priorities.

Set up in 2006, the Flemish Youth Information Centre plays a multisectoral and coordinating role in the field of youth information in Flanders. It operates in cooperation with various public services and private experts.

8 Forthcoming events/conferences in the youth field, especially linked to the Open Method of Coordination priorities

- 4 September 2006 # Youth sector consultation day on the new #Youth In Action#-programme 2007-2013 (organisation: Jint) - 13 September 2006 # open debate on the Youth Pact (organisation: Jint)

9 Useful links

www.jeugdbeleid.be www.jint.be www.vlaamsejeugdraad.be

10 Context of national youth policy (achievements, problems, obstacles, tendencies)

Belgium is a federal state with three Regions and three Communities. Matters relating to youth come under the responsibility of the Communities, in this case the Flemish Community. On the proposal of Minister Bert Anciaux, the Flemish Government adopted on 16 December 2005 the second Flemish youth policy plan which underpins the consistent youth policy pursued by the Flemish government. Based on a clear approach to youth and youth policy, the plan features targets and specific initiatives for children and young people in all areas of competence of the Flemish government, focussing in particular on participation, diversity and youth work policy. The



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youth policy plan is based on a number of theme-specific priorities, with participation and diversity forming a common theme. 'Policy intersections' are used to give tangible shape to the interfaces between youth policy and other policy areas. Well-organised policy intersections (effective, open cooperation between ministers, departments, sectors) are necessary to ensure the smooth performance of this type of youth policy. The Flemish Minister responsible for youth, Bert Anciaux, coordinated this second Flemish youth policy plan. Actors from the youth work, children's rights and broad-based youth policy sectors were extensively and constantly involved in this initiative. A whole host of specific targets and measures are described for children and young people in the light of a clear vision of the relationship between the government and young people.



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