



# **Determining labour shortages and the need for labour migration from third countries in Belgium**

## **EMN FOCUSED STUDY 2015**

Study for the Belgian National Contact Point  
of the European Migration Network (EMN)

Authors: Ninke Mussche, Vincent Corluy, Ive Marx  
Herman Deleeck Centre for Social Policy  
University of Antwerp



**Co-funded by the European Union**

The European Migration Network was set up with the purpose of providing up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information in the areas of asylum and migration for the European institutions, national authorities and other stakeholders.

The Belgian National Contact Point is a mixed point composed of experts from the Federal Public Service Home Affairs (Immigration Office), the Federal Migration Centre , the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons and the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Fedasil).

Further information on the Belgian National Contact Point of the European Migration Network and its work can be obtained from:

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

The Belgian Contact Point can be contacted through the following channels:

[Benedikt.Vulsteke@ibz.fgov.be](mailto:Benedikt.Vulsteke@ibz.fgov.be)  
[Alexandra.Laine@ibz.fgov.be](mailto:Alexandra.Laine@ibz.fgov.be)  
[Peter.Vancostenoble@ibz.fgov.be](mailto:Peter.Vancostenoble@ibz.fgov.be)  
[Ina.Vandenberghe@ibz.fgov.be](mailto:Ina.Vandenberghe@ibz.fgov.be)  
[Martine.Hendrickx@fedasil.be](mailto:Martine.Hendrickx@fedasil.be)  
[Manon.Muyle@fedasil.be](mailto:Manon.Muyle@fedasil.be)  
[Elisa.Vandervalk@ibz.fgov.be](mailto:Elisa.Vandervalk@ibz.fgov.be)

Tel: +32 (0)2/ 500.23.91

Or by ordinary mail at the following address:  
EMN Belgium National Contact Point  
FPS Home Affairs  
Leuvenseweg 1  
1000 Brussels



*The European Migration Network (EMN) is coordinated by the European Commission with National Contact Points (EMN NCPs) established in each EU Member State plus Norway.*

## Contents

1. "Factsheet" Belgium .....	4
2. General overview of Belgian national labour migration policy and recent public and policy debates on labour migration .....	6
2.1. General Overview of Belgian national labour migration policy .....	6
2.2. Recent public and policy debates in the area of labour migration .....	7
3. Overview of instruments used for identifying current and future labour and skills shortages and for anticipating the need for labour migration .....	9
3.1. Labour shortages defined, identified and classified in Belgium .....	9
3.1.1. Regional shortage occupations lists .....	9
3.1.2. In depth studies on shortages and prospective studies in Brussels .....	9
3.1.3. 'Promising professions' (Métiers Porteurs) in Wallonia .....	10
3.1.4. Series on occupations in demand .....	10
3.1.5. Prospective studies in Wallonia .....	11
3.1.6. Prospective studies in Flanders .....	11
3.2. The level of analysis of labour shortages .....	12
3.3. No classifications of shortages defined in legislation or soft law .....	12
3.4. Distinctions between different types of labour shortages in Belgium .....	13
3.4.1. By cause: quantitative, qualitative & working conditions .....	13
3.4.2. By type of tension (only in Wallonia) .....	14
3.4.3. Other causes of shortage occupations .....	16
3.5. Overview of instruments/tools used in Belgium to identify labour shortages .....	18
3.6. The development of the shortage occupations lists in Belgium .....	20
3.7. The way instruments used for identifying labour market shortages are used for policy purposes	21
3.8. The limited use of labour shortage instruments to determine policy instruments for managing economic migration .....	22
3.9. Mechanisms to monitor intra-EU mobility of workers filling job vacancies in the national labour market or leaving to work in other Member States .....	23
3.10. The role of social partners and other stakeholders in identifying the need for migrant labour	24
3.11. The limited findings of policy instruments to identify labour shortages and the need for migrant workers .....	25

3.12. Challenges and risks associated with the use of instruments for identifying labour shortages and the need for migration labour.....	26
3.13. Shortage occupations which are not addressed through labour migration.....	26
4. Monitoring the outcomes of labour migration policy in relation to shortage occupations.....	27
4.1. Outcomes of labour migration policies in relation to shortage occupations monitored in Belgium	27
4.2. The level of labour migration policy monitoring, the organisations carrying them out, and the legal source of monitoring .....	31
4.3. The way instruments and tools used for monitoring the outcomes of labour migration policy in relation to shortage occupations are used and the challenges associated with monitoring	31
4.4. The role of social partners in monitoring the effects of labour migration on the labour market.	32
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	33
Annex 1: List of institutions contacted.....	35
Statistical Annex .....	36

## 1. "Factsheet" Belgium

This EMN-study focuses on the interconnection between labour shortages in the Belgian labour market and labour migration policy from third countries to Belgium. The study makes clear that even though Belgium has extensive experience in developing sophisticated labour shortages lists and other approaches to detect labour market tensions, the link with labour migration is not fully developed.

Belgium is a federal country. Its regions, Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels Capital Region have their own public employment service, each of which studies labour market shortages extensively through shortage occupations lists, employer surveys, surveys of temp agencies, prospective studies and an important policy focus on competence based policy making to address labour shortages. Labour migration is also devolved to Belgium's regions (as well as to the German speaking Community of Belgium), although this happened more recently in the framework of Belgium's sixth state reform (2014). Until now, most of labour migration policy still runs parallel between all three regions and the German speaking Community: it is entirely geared to case-by-case granting of work permits for recruits of individual employers. The basic – rather restrictive - rule is based on community preference and labour market testing. This basic rule is only exceptionally applied in practice.

In practice, Belgium does have a labour migration system that accommodates labour shortages directly and indirectly to a certain degree. First, Belgium (through its regions) developed a flexible labour migration system for certain categories of workers. Highly skilled labour migrants, managers, researchers – to name a few – are categories that enjoy one of the fastest and cheapest labour migration procedures in Europe. This means that for *all* highly skilled shortage occupations, there already is an attractive procedure in place in Belgium.

Second, the regions hold lists of shortage occupations that used to be applied exclusively in a fast and flexible procedure for EU-citizens from new EU Member States in the framework of transitional measures regarding free movement of labour. These lists are still applied for Croatian workers *and* for third country nationals who obtained long term residence (in the EU sense of the word) in another member state: third country long term residents who want to work in Belgium, have to obtain a work permit for an occupation on the regional shortage occupations lists for the first year of work in Belgium.

Third, Wallonia developed a flexible system to recruit nurses and seasonal workers in the horticultural sector (exempting them from the labour market test) in view of the persistent shortages on the Walloon labour market, especially for nurses. Brussels has a similar procedure for nurses (only).

Fourth, Flanders (which grants most work permits) plans to develop a dynamic shortage occupation list for middle schooled occupations (such as technical occupations, nursing, etc.) to enable a flexible influx, similar to the highly skilled. This plan is still in a policy preparation phase.

Overall, we conclude that Belgium's labour migration system is soundly based on individual labour market needs of employers, with indirect and direct facilitation for certain labour market shortages. One aspect that is lacking is a thorough monitoring of the occupations for which labour migrants are recruited, which could help to study to which degree labour migration actually helps to tackle shortage occupations. The development of an accurate competence based categorisation of occupations by the Flemish PES (for which cooperation with the other regions has been established), would ideally be linked to a labour migration practice that can operate on the basis of clear, coded and categorized occupations.

This report is largely based on input from representatives of various public services, such as the regional public employment offices, the regional economic migration services and the social partners. We thank them wholeheartedly for their patient and expert input. The list of contacted public services can be found in Annex 1. Other sources used for this study are legislation, policy briefs, academic studies & research of the respective public services.

## 2. General overview of Belgian national labour migration policy and recent public and policy debates on labour migration

### 2.1. General Overview of Belgian national labour migration policy

Even though the Belgian regions and the German Speaking Community had implementing powers concerning labour migration, regulatory powers regarding labour migration policy have recently (2014) been devolved to the Belgian regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels Capital Region) after the sixth Belgian State Reform. Until now (May 2015) the regions did not enact any fundamental changes to the classic work permit system. Hence, the comments below are a representation for the entire country.

The Belgian national labour migration regime (as regulated by the regions) is not specifically geared towards addressing labour shortages. The labour migration regime is entirely geared to the recruitment needs of individual employers in the country. The system grants individual work permits to individual third country nationals who have concluded an employment contract for work in Belgium with an employer based in Belgium. The basis of the regime is quite restrictive, but in practice the list of exceptions to the basic rule is so extensive that Belgium basically has a flexible, fast and cheap labour migration system – especially for the highly skilled. The basic (restrictive) rule is the community preference rule: when a specific vacancy for a specific employer cannot be filled within a reasonable term by a suitable candidate in Belgium or the EEA, an employer can be granted authorisation to employ a third country national. An additional condition is that there must be a bilateral agreement with the country of origin, and the foreign employee must still be abroad when the employer applies for the work permit. For such applications, a labour market test is done. Labour market tests are undertaken by the regional public employment agencies (of Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels Capital Region). Numerically, the number of work permits granted based on a labour market test, is very low and is deemed the exception in practice.

In practice, some categories of workers - most prominently the highly skilled and managers - are exempt from the labour market test and the other restrictive conditions. This list of exceptions has grown historically and was mainly introduced for reasons of easing international mobility for these jobs, as part of economic policy aiming to attract investment in Belgium. The result is a relatively quick and flexible procedure. This means that for *all* highly skilled shortage occupations, there already is a flexible procedure in place. Additionally, the regions hold lists of shortage occupations that used to be applied in a fast and flexible procedure for EU-citizens from new EU Member States in the framework of transitional measures regarding free movement of labour. These lists are still applied for Croatian workers *and* for third country nationals who obtained long term residence (in the EU sense of the word) in another member state: third country long term residents who want to work in Belgium, have to obtain a work permit for an occupation on the regional shortage occupations lists for the first year of work in Belgium.

In short, Belgium does not explicitly use labour migration to address labour shortages, but does so indirectly through flexible procedures for highly skilled workers (and other categories such as managers and researchers) and for third country long term residents from other EU member states.

A recent study revealed Belgium to be one of the most attractive labour migration countries for the highly skilled (at least in terms of procedures) thanks to the speed, flexible conditions and low cost of the procedure (Deloitte 2013). Since 2014, the Regions in Belgium can draft their own labour migration regulations. The largest Region, Flanders has explicit plans to introduce a list of shortage occupations for middle schooled occupations that up until now do not qualify for the flexible procedure for the highly skilled (see next section).

Before the most recent state reform, the Belgian regions and the German Speaking Community were already competent for the implementation of labour migration policy. Since the recent (sixth) state reform they have the full competence (regulatory and implementing) power regarding labour migration policy. Hence, the content of this report will mostly focus on regional policies. Even though the main system of economic migration (flexible for highly skilled, restrictive and with labour market test for the non-highly skilled) is still the same for all regions, the regions developed over the years (when they only had implementation power on economic migration) their own accents and policy preferences. Next to economic migration, the regions have been competent for large parts of labour market policy for many years. This means that labour shortages are regionally monitored and addressed. The information below reflects this regional variety.

(Q1, EMN questionnaire)

## **2.2. Recent public and policy debates in the area of labour migration**

There has not been a grand debate about the future of labour migration from third countries in recent years in Belgium. Rather policy makers and public opinion focussed on the problems associated with intra-EU mobility and service provision (social dumping and fraud issues). Having said that, the regional governments and social partners have undertaken policy plans or reflections regarding labour migration. Labour shortages are sometimes part of that vision.

Flanders has been the most active in envisaging its own economic migration policy. The new Flemish government, in power from 2014 till 2019 published its policy brief regarding work and the economy in which its intentions regarding economic migration were stipulated (Vlaamse Regering, 2014). The policy brief stated that Flanders will draw its own labour migration policy, taking into account the specific Flemish labour market needs. As one of the policy goals, the brief mentioned the development of a shortage occupation list as a basis for the flexible inflow of middle schooled workers. Flanders did, however, stress that its priority lies in the activation of the available labour reserve and in the increase of interregional mobility with Brussels and Wallonia. Moreover, the Flemish social partners have published an advice on economic migration in the framework of the sixth state reform (SERV, 2013). One of its recommendations was to render the individual labour market test less case-by-case but more structural and more anticipative. Labour market research in the framework of economic migration should be integrated in competence-oriented labour market policy to eradicate structural shortages. The social partners suggested to work on the basis of adapted shortage occupations lists, hence simplifying the elaborate procedure of labour market testing.

The Walloon government also expressed its plans in its government declaration, but did not link its policy to labour shortages. Rather, it focused on facilitating labour market access, or renewing that access for workers already in possession of a work permit (Wallonie, 2014). The Walloon social partners concur and rather focus on protecting workers' residence rights while increasing their possibilities to look for another job (CESW, 2014). Moreover, the Walloon, Brussels and Flemish regions are currently working with the federal level towards the (late) implementation of the single permit directive which proves to be a challenge in view of the recent state reform and the devolution of the economic migration competence to the regions.

(Q2 EMN questionnaire)

## 3. Overview of instruments used for identifying current and future labour and skills shortages and for anticipating the need for labour migration

### 3.1. Labour shortages defined, identified and classified in Belgium

In Belgium, a federal country, the identification and classification of labour shortages is a regional matter. In the course of several state reforms, a substantial part of economic policy competences has been transferred to the regions – being Dutch speaking Flanders, French speaking Wallonia and Brussels-Capital region (both languages). Each region has its own public employment office (that work together well, among others for intra-regional mobility). The employment offices have developed elaborate tools to get a grasp of labour shortages in their region that go beyond the classical lists of labour shortages.

#### 3.1.1. Regional shortage occupations lists

Labour shortages are 'classically' identified through the use of shortage occupations lists. The three regional public employment services as well as the German speaking language community annually compose their own list of shortage occupations. The basic definition used to qualify labour shortages is 'occupations for which employers have a hard time finding suitable candidates' (VDAB<sup>1</sup> 2015). All regions go through a similar procedure to draft an annual list of shortage occupations (detailed below in section 3.6). Every year the regional public employment agencies update the list.

At the same time, regions use different strategies to further their knowledge about labour shortages. We list them below, as all *these studies are related to tackle shortages or avoid shortages in the future.*

#### 3.1.2. In depth studies on shortages and prospective studies in Brussels

Brussels focuses on in depth studies of certain shortage occupations as well as prospective studies. The Brussels Employment Observatory is part of Actiris<sup>2</sup>, the PES of Brussels Capital Region. The observatory has been charged by the Brussels government and the social partners to develop *prospective studies* regarding employment and education. The new series is called 'Monitoring and Anticipation'. The series enables the observatory to gain in depth knowledge of occupations that are under tension, but also to find out about upcoming occupations or occupations in transformation. Each issue focusses on one sector. Brussels started this series based on the observation that there is a need for anticipation in the short term regarding the evolutions on the labour market. It can

---

<sup>1</sup> Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling; [www.vdab.be](http://www.vdab.be)

<sup>2</sup> [www.actiris.be](http://www.actiris.be)

contribute to better align the socio-economic development of the Brussels Region with its educational and training system. Actors in the field of employment and education/training can use the studies in their operations.

Two sectors have been the subject of an extensive 'monitoring and anticipation' study: Commerce and Education. In 2015, studies on the health care sector, and transport and logistics will be published.

(<http://www.actiris.be/marchemp/tabid/243/mctl/5/idTheme/13/language/fr-BE/Description-thematique.aspx>)

### **3.1.3. 'Promising professions' (Métiers Porteurs) in Wallonia**

Wallonia considered that a simple listing of shortage occupations in annual shortage occupations lists insufficiently indicated what the needs are in the Walloon labour market. Its public employment agency *FOREM*<sup>3</sup> undertook a broader approach to determine which occupations are 'promising' for the Walloon labour market which allows policy makers to adjust its policies. This more thorough analysis comprised administrative data of 5 years, allowing to capture evolutions in shortages combined with several variables, such as the ratio labour reserve for specific occupations and job opportunities, difficulty of the employers to find candidates, job exits, the level of work contracts of unlimited duration by occupation, etc. This approach is broader, and includes more occupations than are listed on the shortage occupations list. Occupations can be divided in:

1) *attractive occupations that are in demand*: these are occupations with a lot of job offers, but also with high job take up, and a high labour reserve. These occupations also show a rising tendency concerning job offers. Interestingly, not all these occupations are on the shortage occupations lists; they are nevertheless considered to be in (rising) demand, which enables policy makers to adjust training and other measures to these tendencies.

2) *occupation with a strong labour reserve*: these occupations are in demand, but not 'promising'. Even though there are numerous job offers for these occupations, there is a strong concentration of job seekers, resulting in high competition. These occupations are for example, construction worker, general food vendor, surface technician, etc.

3) *occupational niches*: these are promising occupations, that generate less job opportunities in the region. Only 16 of the 37 occupations in this group are on the shortage occupations list. But of the 21 occupations that are not on the list, 10 show an upward tendency concerning job demands. (FOREM, 2014- b).

### **3.1.4. Series on occupations in demand**

The Walloon public employment office further focuses on individual occupations that are in demand. It takes again a broader approach than only shortage occupations, and includes new occupations, evolving occupations, occupations linked to sustainable development and occupations in line with the economic revival in Wallonia. FOREM produced files for occupations in at least 6 sectors (FOREM

---

<sup>3</sup> [www.leforem.be](http://www.leforem.be)

2014- c). For every individual occupation, a study describes the required competences, the labour reserve, the job opportunities, the gap between these two and a discussion of its causes, and how and where people interested in the occupation can train themselves.

### **3.1.5. Prospective studies in Wallonia**

Next to studying promising occupations, occupations and sectors of the future are also the subject of research in Wallonia (FOREM 2013, a). FOREM studies new occupations, but also existing occupations that are developing, or 'hybrid' occupations displaying changing content and fusing with the content of other professions. The studies aim to help to be less surprised of certain evolutions.

### **3.1.6. Prospective studies in Flanders**

Flanders started a European funded project (ESF) to collect coordinated and structured collections of information on future *competence needs* (VLAMT, Flemish labour market research of the future). Only part of it is executed by the Flemish public employment office (VDAB). The strategy consists of a few axes. The first axis is to make quantitative projections. These are done by the Policy Research Centre Work and Social Economy - which accumulates expertise regarding the labour market on behalf of the Flemish Government (<http://www.steunpuntwse.be/node/28>).

The second axis concerns a very innovative database of competences developed by the Flemish social partners in cooperation with the Flemish public employment agency, which will be a strong tool to tackle labour shortages. The database is called COMPETENT (<http://www.competent.be/competentieteam>) and is a database of occupations. It contains datasheets with detailed information on occupations, which activities a worker must be able to perform, what he need to know and how the work is organized. COMPETENT is based on ROMEv3, the French Operational Directory of Occupations and jobs of the French public employment office. The French datasheets have been complemented and adjusted to the Flemish labour market (Muyters, 2015). The important thing about the database is that the Flemish public employment agency (VDAB) integrated the database into its operations (KOMEET database). It develops its operations on the basis of competences, which allow a better matching between jobseekers and vacancies, as well as better orientation of education and training. Vacancies can be described much more clearly, and make use of the competence lists of the required occupation as developed by COMPETENT, jobseekers can more accurately portray their competences in their individual profile at the Public employment office and can more effectively be reoriented to occupations that fit their competences (VDAB, 2014). Eventually occupations become a set of competences.

This evolution will allow much better matching between offer and demand of labour: the public employment agency can not only match the degree and the job context, but can now also match on the basis of competences of job seekers. Employers can define their vacancies by listing what competences they need exactly. This widens the scope of potential matches substantially:

competences can cross sectors and other barriers more easily (Van der Hallen et. Al. 2011). Furthermore, education and training systems can be better aligned to evolving competence needs on the labour market. The resulting better matching between offer and demand of labour is a dedicated way to tackle shortage occupations.

Furthermore, Flanders concluded an agreement with the other regions to start working together on the basis of the COMPETENT occupational profiles and competences. Furthermore, Malta is the first member state that took over the COMPETENT-based labour market matching, and several other EU member states have expressed their interest (Muyters 2015).

The third and last axis of the Flemish prospective studies (VLAMT) concerns strategic focus studies on future competence needs. Several sectors have already been studied and allow a better preparation to the labour market needs, hence tackling (future) bottlenecks (<http://www.werk.be/beleidsthemas/competentiebeleid/vlamt-competentieprognoses>).

(Q3 a – EMN Questionnaire)

### **3.2. The level of analysis of labour shortages**

For the regional shortage occupations lists, the level of analysis is the level of occupations, or occupational groups. Labour shortages are measured at the regional level only, so by definition the regional level is taken into account. Additionally, the two larger regions (Flanders and Wallonia) consult sub-regional experts to test the critical nature of shortage occupations for their level.

The Flemish list is complemented with additions proposed by provincial (i.e. sub-regional) labour market specialists. The Walloon list is co-drafted by sub-regional labour specialists from the various sub-regions of Wallonia, in the course of the second step of internal verification.

In more in-depth studies, sector studies are done, such as the above mentioned elaborate sector studies by Brussels called 'Monitoring and Anticipation', as well as the prospective studies in Wallonia and Flanders.

(Q3 b & d – EMN Questionnaire)

### **3.3. No classifications of shortages defined in legislation or soft law**

In Belgium, there is no legal basis for the classification of shortages. In the 1990s the Flemish region started to categorize the shortage occupations by cause (quantitative, qualitative and due to working conditions). This was taken over by the other regions. In time, each region developed its own methodological accents, but the basis remains similar.

(Q 3 c EMN Questionnaire)

### **3.4. Distinctions between different types of labour shortages in Belgium**

Labour shortages are well studied in Belgium. What follows is an overview of the different typologies developed regarding labour shortages in Belgium

#### **3.4.1. By cause: quantitative, qualitative & working conditions**

The first type of distinction is based on the *cause* of the shortage: quantitative, qualitative and labour circumstance. For quantitative shortages, there is a further subdivision by educational level. This causal approach is used by all Belgian regions.

*Quantitative shortages* are due to a lack of candidates. This can be due to 1) the fact that the occupation is not part of the educational system (anymore), 2) there are not enough graduates from certain educational programs, 3) part-time workers are not available for full-time jobs, 4) there is a shortage of workers for a certain occupation.

Within the quantitative shortages, Flanders distinguishes further by educational level.

*Quantitative highly skilled shortages* have mainly to do with the fact that too few students choose for these occupations. That is especially the case for STEM-occupations (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths). The Flemish PES indicates that interregional and international mobility is one of the strategies to address this problem. It refers to the flexible inflow conditions for the highly skilled to facilitate this.

*Quantitative middle schooled shortages* have to do with a lack of youngsters that graduate from technical and vocational high school. Technical and vocational education is not regarded well in Belgian society, which influences both the fact that not enough youngsters choose for it, and not enough schools offer the correct educational programs.

*Quantitative low skilled shortages* also exist. Even though for some occupations there are no degree requirements, other requirements exist, such as suitable driver licences, certificates of competence, etc. (VDAB 2014)

*Qualitative shortages* have to do with the fact that the job candidates do not match the required profile. This can be due to the fact that 1) there are enough job seekers, but there is a shortage of skilled candidates, or 2) there are enough job seekers but there is a shortage of people with experience or with additional specific knowledge (e.g. of certain techniques). For some shortages, workers do not have the competences that the employer requires, such as specific IT skills or knowledge of languages. For some occupations, such as hairdresser, more than enough graduates are available, but they lack the right motivation or attitude to apply for this occupation (Fehmieva 2007).

*Working conditions* are the third distinction made to categorize labour shortages. Employment is less attractive due to heavy, dirty work or due to irregular or stressful shifts. Or the pay is low. Many labour shortages combine a qualitative or quantitative cause with problematic working conditions (VDAB, 2014).

### 3.4.2. By type of tension (only in Wallonia)

The Walloon public employment agency (FOREM) also classifies shortage occupations by type of tensions. FOREM distinguishes between frictional, cyclical and structural tensions, all of which can either have causes external to the labour market or internal to the labour market. This results in the following grid:

#### Typology of tensions

	Frictional	Cyclical	Structural
	Job offers and job seekers coexist but do not meet each other	Imbalance in offer/demand linked to economic cycle	Inadequacies in location, salaries, competences
Causes <b>external</b> to the labour market		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Real estate cycle, construction sector, food sector ...</li> <li>- Technological shocks and demand for IT people (beginning 2000, ...)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of mobility, of transport or child care infrastructure</li> <li>- Bad reputation of certain manual occupations</li> <li>- Insufficient level of qualifications</li> <li>- Maladjusted qualification domains in schools</li> </ul>
Causes <b>internal</b> to the labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insufficient diffusion of information</li> <li>- Selectivity and discrimination by employers</li> <li>- Insufficient intensity of searching behaviour</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Benefit structure</li> <li>- Unemployment traps</li> <li>- Insufficient pay or bad working conditions...</li> </ul>
<b>Remedial Actions</b>			
	Frictional	Cyclical	Structural
Causes <b>external</b> to the labour market		Studies to anticipate innovations and impact on competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better orientation of the educational offers</li> <li>- Operators' information on the mismatches (geographic, competences, ...)</li> <li>- Working on professional mobility</li> </ul>

Causes <b>internal</b> to the labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Propose a professional repository</li> <li>- Publish more job offers in more adapted recruitment channels</li> <li>- Activation of employment search</li> <li>- Specifying recruitment criteria</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implement regulations and policy apparatus: e.g. training cheques</li> <li>- Improve the image of certain professions</li> <li>- Inform orient training</li> </ul>
---	---	--	---

The Walloon public employment agency (FOREM) uses both methods (cause based and tension based) in its analysis. Quantitative or other cause based shortages can be found in the analysis based on tensions. A quantitative lack of candidates can be found in the tension-rubric 'causes internal to the labour market', with a structural tension (e.g. for nurses) or a cyclical tension (e.g. IT professionals approaching the year 2000).

The advantage of the tensions typology is that it better enables the public employment agency to identify possible actions to address the tension, as displayed in the second part of the table. The advantage of the 'causes approach' (quantitative, qualitative or working conditions) is the ease of use and the clear diagnosis of the shortage.

### **3.4.3. Other causes of shortage occupations**

The Belgian Court of Audit audited the Flemish approach to divide shortage occupations by three large causes: quantitative, qualitative and working conditions. It suggested that this division is somewhat incomplete, as it does not cover many other potential and actual causes of shortages on the labour market, referring to other studies for Belgium, such as the following.

#### *Limited geographic mobility of the labour force*

The National Bank of Belgium (NBB) offers economic studies on mismatches on the labour market that complement and add to the causes-approach (quantitative, qualitative and working conditions) that the regions use. A study of 2012 indicates that another important cause of imbalances on the Belgian labour market is the *limited geographic mobility of the labour force*. Local vacancies that can be filled by jobseekers with the required competences are at times not filled as jobseekers are not ready to accept the job due to their place of residence. There is hence quite some sub-regional spread in unemployment degrees, as well as low mobility levels of some unemployed job seekers, resulting in a geographic mismatch (Zimmer 2012).

The regional spread of unemployment levels in Belgium is very high compared to other European countries. Unemployment can be four times higher in one province compared to another. Even though in Brussels jobs are more often filled by inhabitants of the other regions, the other regions have their vacancies filled by their own inhabitants and the exchange of workforce between Flanders and Wallonia remains modest. Low mobility is more prevalent among the low-skilled, but other barriers include the language difference, hard to reach work places and the costs linked to executing an occupation (Zimmer 2012).

#### *The role of public employment agencies as intermediaries*

Another study focused on the operational problems caused by public employment agencies (PES) that contribute to the perpetuation of labour shortages. A study for the Flemish PES suggested that training offered by the PES does not always result in the acquisition of competences that the employer requires, hence a proper match will not take place. Sometimes this has to do with the fact that there is a wrong match between a jobseeker and the training offered. If a job seeker is compelled to take up training that does not align with his previous education or with his interest, the chances are dim he will successfully finish the training trajectory. Moreover, it seems that some jobseekers are not suited to follow certain training (due to lack of motivation or skills). Furthermore, some training trajectories take too much time and rather seem to contribute to long term unemployment than to a facilitation of outflow to work. This problem was coined the 'trajectory trap'. Finally, employers complain that they receive too many unsuitable candidates for their vacancies. Behind this complaint, many realities can hide such as a lack of knowledge by the PES regarding the specific needs of an employer, excessive requirements by the employer, divergent attitudes of job seekers at the PES, or insufficient screening by the PES (Morissens 2008).

(note: this study was performed before the Flemish PES introduced its competence based operations)

*A different classification offered by the Court of Audit*

To make the picture of causes of labour shortages more complete, the Belgian Court of Audit added the following list of causes to the 'quantitative, qualitative and working conditions' causes (Rekenhof 2014).

Employer related causes	Recruitment and selection policy (e.g. asking higher qualifications than strictly necessary), company image, statistic discrimination, etc.
Personal causes	Mobility problems, family situations, job seeking behaviour, etc.
Causes related to public and private employment services	Bad matching, ineffective training, trajectory traps
Market environment	Business cycle, demographic developments (population ageing and dejuvenation lead to an increasing replacement demand and smaller inflow, a trend that is acute in certain sectors), frictional shortages, competition vacancies (profiles that are in demand in strongly competing sectors), etc.

(Q 4 – EMN Questionnaire)



<b>Employer Surveys</b>	Y	NO	NO	Individual Employers	Regional PES	regional
<b>Forecasts/foresight analysis</b>	Y	NO	NO	Sector	Regional PES	regional
<b>Qualitative studies or analysis</b>	Y	NO	NO	Individual employers + sector level	Regional PES	regional
<b>Other instruments/tools: Surveys of Temp Agencies</b>	Y (Wallonia does research on their recruitment difficulties)	NO	NO	Temp Agencies	Regional PES	regional

(Q 5 – EMN Questionnaire)

### **3.6. The development of the shortage occupations lists in Belgium**

The three main regions use a similar detection method which we briefly describe here. The three regional public employment agencies draft the shortage occupations lists for their respective region. The lists are updated annually.

***The first step is statistical:*** three criteria are used to select potential shortage occupations:

- 1) The number of job offers for a specific occupation is higher than a certain threshold, in order to avoid focusing on anecdotal situations. The threshold is 20 job offers for Wallonia and Brussels, 9 for Flanders.
- 2) The job-filling rate for the same profession must be inferior to the job-filling rate of the total of occupations under study (89% in 2012 for Wallonia, 80% in 2013 for Flanders, 70.1% in 2013 in Brussels).
- 3) The median duration of the vacancy must be superior to the median duration observed for the entire set of occupations (31 days in 2012 for Wallonia, 49 days in 2013 for Flanders, 0.9 months for Brussels)

***The second step involves internal consultations.***

The critical shortage nature of the occupations on the list obtained after step 1 are checked by consulting labour market specialists of the respective regional PES that confirm or deny the critical shortage of occupations on the list. The labour market specialists are sourced from the PES's recruitment counsellors. In Wallonia, teams of "Job Focus" comprising sector representatives, trainers and labour market analysts are consulted. These consultations result in adding or scrapping occupations.

***The third step involves external consultations.***

1) Wallonia additionally does follow-up surveys of the vacancies with the employers. Recruitment counsellors directly interview employers on the nature of their recruitment difficulties. They check whether the vacancies get filled, whether there are recruitment difficulties, what type of difficulties they encountered, and the reasons for these difficulties. From these interviews, two more selection criteria are deduced. An occupation will be found in shortage if 1) the proportion of employers for a specific occupation reporting recruitment difficulties must be higher than the median; and 2) the ratio 'jobseekers unemployed on 21 December 2012' / 'the number of vacancies in 2012' for a specific occupation must be less than 1.5. Only occupations satisfying these two additional criteria will be listed on the final shortage occupations list for Wallonia for a specific year.

2) Brussels-Capital Region (BCR) also relies on a third step of external consultations to finalise its shortage occupations list. Every two years, the Brussels PES Actiris holds extensive external

consultations with employer federations and 'occupational reference centres'.<sup>4</sup> The consultations cover recruitment difficulties, planned actions and current and future sector evolutions that may have an impact on the evolution of employment.<sup>5</sup> The Brussels PES Actiris sends a questionnaire to the employer federations (in 2015, about 40 federations were consulted). The main aim is to get a better view of all occupations for which the sectors experience recruitment difficulties and the causes for that. The next goal is to find out which past and future evolutions have had an impact or will have an impact on the requested qualifications and which actions have been undertaken by the sectors to address the recruitment difficulties or to anticipate to recruitment difficulties. Actiris also complements the questionnaire with a face-to-face interview with representatives of the occupational reference centres, as these centres have extensive knowledge about their sector.

3) In Flanders, sector managers as well as sector organisations and provincial specialists are consulted for additional information. Sector managers are managers employed by the public employment agency who serve as the first point of contact for the PES with a certain economic sector. The sector manager consults with sector organisations, i.e. employee and employer organisations, to ensure that offer and demand of labour get as well aligned as possible. They organise training, they inform labour market actors, and they trace shortage occupations. Through the sector managers, the social partners get a say in the draft of the shortage occupations list.

(Q 6 – EMN Questionnaire)

### **3.7. The way instruments used for identifying labour market shortages are used for policy purposes**

- The shortage occupations lists as well as the other studies are first of all publicly available through a systematic publishing on the websites of the regional public employment agencies.
- The different shortage occupations lists as well as the other studies mainly serve to illuminate labour market policy. First, the regional shortage occupations lists are sent to the federal employment office (responsible among others to pay the unemployment benefits). On the basis of these lists the Federal Employment Office drafts a list of educational programs or studies which unemployed workers can pursue without losing their unemployment benefit. The list drafted by the Federal Employment Office contains shortages with a quantitative cause.
- The lists also serve as input for PES policy making. Budgets for training and cooperation can be reserved for shortage occupations. The analyses made by the regional PES regarding shortage occupations serve as important input for adapting available training programs or to increase the number of available training slots.
- Shortage occupations lists are further used for programming education in general.
- In Flanders, the shortage occupations list also serves as a basis for the right to paid educational leave for training for shortage occupations (Rekenhof, 2014).

---

<sup>4</sup> Occupational reference centres are centres in Brussels-Capital region that pool public (region, Actiris, ...) and private funds to promote certain occupations. Employees can be trained to upgrade their skills and employers can easily determine which people correspond to the needed profile.

<sup>5</sup> The information collected in these external consultations is further complemented with input from labour unions, sector experts and occupation experts in task forces that aim to improve matching of offer and demand of labour in BCR in the framework of the Pact for Durable Urban Growth.

- The lists moreover serve different training providers to propose new forms of training or to adapt the content of existing training modules. The Walloon government can allocate supplementary budgets for training and education that leads to shortage occupations. It does this in the framework of its Marshall Plan: in an effort to boost the competitiveness of the Walloon Region in sectors where it already had potential, the Walloon government adopted the Marshall Plan in September 2005 (and has a second one running). Some of its aspects concern enhancing human capital.
- Private training providers focus their operations on the shortage occupations list.
- The shortage occupations lists were used as a basis to select and draft the 'EU shortage occupations list', i.e. the specific shortage occupations list designed to allow flexible inflow of citizens of new EU Member States (EU10, EU2, and now only Croatia and third country nationals who received the status of long-term resident in another member state).
- Some municipalities use the shortage occupations list to decide seniority premiums for (new) personnel or to grant higher pay for certain occupations.

(Q 7 – EMN Questionnaire)

### **3.8. The limited use of labour shortage instruments to determine policy instruments for managing economic migration**

Even though Belgium indirectly supports a flexible procedure for highly skilled occupations, including shortage occupations, it does not explicitly foresee general labour shortages lists or other instruments to ensure a flexible inflow of middle or low schooled third country workers into the country. There are some exceptions to this situation which indicate that the Belgian regions are increasingly interested to link their labour market needs to shortage occupations in their region. We list them here below. Moreover, we remark that since 2014 the Belgian regions have become competent for economic migration, which means that in the coming years legislative changes may occur in the direction of addressing labour market shortages through economic migration. Flanders is already considering this.

1) Shortage occupations lists are used for a very small category of candidate workers: i.e. third country nationals who obtained a long-term residence status in another EU member state (based on directive 2003/109/EC): for the first year of work in Belgium, the regions demand a work permit for an occupation on the regional shortage occupations lists drafted in 2006 in the framework of the transitional measures for new EU Member States (new EU member states' citizens could temporarily only work in Belgium with a work permit for an occupation listed on the shortage occupations list). These shortage occupations lists are now only applicable to Croatians and long-term residents who obtained this status in another member-state. After one year of work in a shortage occupation long-term residents have access to the labour market with a normal work permit (this may highly likely change to free access to the labour market, but this legislation is not finalised at the time of writing this report).

2) Moreover, the Flemish Public Employment Agency VDAB, uses the shortage occupations list to recruit candidates for certain shortage occupations from other EU member states. Based on the

shortage occupations list, it organizes 'job datings' in other EU countries (e.g. Portugal): VDAB cooperates with the PES of another member state that selects local job seekers with shortage occupation profiles, such as nurses and engineers. VDAB, along with Flemish companies then fly over to the host country where the job dating takes place between Flemish employers/recruiters and EU job seekers. Furthermore, VDAB participates in EURES funded job fairs across Europe to recruit shortage profiles.

3) Another way that the general shortage occupations lists are used for managing economic migration is found in Brussels Capital Region. The public employment agencies execute labour market tests for applications for non-highly skilled workers' work permits (jobs of highly skilled workers are exempt from labour market tests). The labour market tests are executed by the regional PES. The Brussels PES Actiris skips the labour market test for applications for occupations that are on the list of quantitative shortages in the Brussels Capital Region.

4) Further, Wallonia designed a flexible system for two shortage occupations that usually had to run through the restrictive procedure for non-highly skilled occupations (entailing a labour market test, but also an appeal procedure with the minister of labour when the applicant did not originate from a country with which Belgium concluded a bilateral treaty, etc.). Since 2011 no more labour market test is undertaken for applications for nurses and seasonal horticultural workers. Labour permits are flexibly granted in a time span of one to two weeks. The Brussels Region similarly deviates from the labour market test for one specific shortage occupation: nurses. Even if they are not in the highly skilled category, they are also exempted from the usual restrictive conditions. This is a policy regarding shortage occupations, in view of the structural problems for employers to find nurses in Belgium.

5) As mentioned before, Flanders is planning to start using shortage occupations lists for the flexible inflow of middle schooled occupations. This plan is in the policy preparation phase. The new Flemish government, in power from 2014 till 2019, published its policy brief. It stated that Flanders will design its own labour migration policy and among others, will facilitate a flexible influx of highly skilled employees as well as of middle skilled employees - the latter will flow in on the basis of a shortage occupations list (Vlaamse Regering, 2014).

(Q8 – EMN Questionnaire)

### **3.9. Mechanisms to monitor intra-EU mobility of workers filling job vacancies in the national labour market or leaving to work in other Member States**

Belgium developed some databases that directly or indirectly can be used to monitor intra-EU mobility of workers filling job vacancies in the national labour market or leaving to work in other Member States.

First, Belgium developed a system to register/monitor temporary service provision towards Belgium. The 'LIMOSA' database of the federal government registers workers who are posted from another EU

country or from a third country to execute a temporary service in Belgium, as well as self-employed workers who come to execute work in Belgium. Before they start their activities, posted workers/self-employed service providers must register on a website: <http://www.limosa.be/>. This registration system reveals quite interesting movements to Belgium. Numerically, the inflow of temporary service providers or posted workers is *much* higher than the regular (EU and non-EU) inflow. In 2012 156,542 individuals registered for a total of 381,193 service provisions. To compare with other forms of inflow: in the same year, 12,578 third country nationals and 24,226 new EU citizens obtained a normal work permit (FOD werkgelegenheid 2012). The LIMOSA figures show that most short term service provision and posting originates from EU15 countries, namely about 60%. 50% of posting originates from Belgium's neighbouring countries. The share of EU10 and EU2 workers grows steadily, however. Third country nationals who are posted to Belgium also need to register, they account for about 10%. Limosa does not focus on shortage occupations particularly.

Belgium also monitors the number of individuals posted *from* Belgium to other countries. In 2012, almost 30,000 individuals were posted from Belgium (registered by the Federal Public Service for Social Security, see Mussche et al., 2013).

Other national sources that can be used to trace EU nationals are the following. Belgium uses both survey data as well as administrative data to understand the situation of EU citizens in Belgium. First, the labour force survey (EU-LFS) and the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) give an indication of the presence, employment or inactivity of EU citizens in Belgium. LFS and SILC work with representative samples of the entire population. The sample has not been designed for the migrant population, however, which renders migrants partly underrepresented. Therefore, it is necessary to group the individual member states to ensure a large enough sample. This also means that no accurate data can be retrieved for individual member states based on these surveys.

More comprehensive information can be found in administrative data. Belgium developed the *Crossroads Bank for Social Security and the Labour Market* to improve the service delivery to the socially insured and companies. If linked with the national register, the database enables policy makers among others to distinguish labour market indicators by nationality, and hence can be used to trace the employment situation of EU citizens. Based on the Crossroads Bank for Social Security, the Federal Public Service for Work (in collaboration with the Centre for Equal Chances) developed a series called '*socio-economic monitoring*' which analyses the labour market situation of people by origin and migration background (<http://www.werk.belgie.be/publicationDefault.aspx?id=39707>). The database and the socio-economic monitoring can offer a relatively complete picture regarding free movement towards Belgium.

(Q 9 – EMN Questionnaire)

### **3.10. The role of social partners and other stakeholders in identifying the need for migrant labour**

Social partners are actively involved in the development of labour market policy in Belgium. Concerns on the need for migrant labour can be voiced through the following channels.

Since 1999 Belgium has an Advisory Council on the Employment of Foreign Workers. The council works under the Minister of labour and can spontaneously or by request devote studies and advice regarding the social, economic and administrative problems regarding the employment of foreign workers (the circumstances of immigration, the criteria for granting permits, harmonization). Nine representatives of employer organisations and labour unions are members of the council.

The sixth state reform has devolved economic migration to the regions. This means that this Advisory Council needs to be reconsidered. The Flemish social partners submitted an advice expressing a preference for the continuation of the Advisory Council where all levels of government would be represented (as is the case right now). Additionally, a regional council is also advised (SERV 2013).

In all three regions, it is the case that if new legislation on economic migration is passed, the social partners are consulted.

In the same vein, when the Flemish social partners reached an agreement on the sixth state reform (which would devolve economic migration to the regions), the social partners published a statement regarding economic migration comprising their recommendations and concerns on the topic (SERV 2013). The Walloon social partners similarly published an advice (CESW, 2014).

(Q 10 – EMN Questionnaire)

### **3.11. The limited findings of policy instruments to identify labour shortages and the need for migrant workers**

Belgium has elaborate systems to identify labour shortages, but does not systematically link them to the need for migrant workers. Having said that, some remarks need to be made:

1) Belgium, and after the sixth state reform the three regions, have a very flexible, cheap and fast system to allow highly skilled third country workers into Belgium. This means by definition that for all highly skilled shortage occupations, Belgium has an inexplicit policy that tackles highly skilled shortages through labour migration.

2) When it comes to middle skilled shortages (such as technical and nursing occupations) Flanders, as the largest region, granting the largest number of work permits to third country nationals is in the process of drafting policy and legislation that would explicitly take into account labour shortages. The Flemish policy brief on work of the new Flemish government explicitly states that for middle-skilled shortage occupations labour migration will be organized on the basis of a shortage occupations list (Vlaamse Regering 2014).

3) As mentioned before, regional shortage occupations lists were used as of 2006 to flexibly organize the influx of citizens from new EU member states in the transitional period before free movement of labour. The lists were drafted based on the general regional shortage occupations lists. These lists are still used for Croats and third country nationals who acquired the status of third country national in another member state and who wish to come and work in Belgium. For the first year of work in

Belgium, these third country nationals are allowed on the basis of the same shortage occupations lists.

(Q 11 – EMN Questionnaire)

### **3.12. Challenges and risks associated with the use of instruments for identifying labour shortages and the need for migration labour in Belgium**

A challenge for labour shortages lists to be used for labour migration, concerns the accuracy of the 'name' of the individual occupations. The shortage occupations lists drafted in 2006 as transition measure for citizens of new EU member states, have as weakness that the occupation names listed are sometimes too broad, which makes it difficult to use the list as a sharp labour migration tool. An alignment with the COMPETENT/KOMEET database would make the labour shortages lists much more accurate (see section 4.3. at page 27).

(Q 12 – EMN Questionnaire)

### **3.13. Shortage occupations which are not addressed through labour migration**

The shortage occupations lists used for Croats and third country long-term residents from other EU member states were drafted in 2006. The regional lists did not include all shortage occupations, among others due to the fact that Belgium has a very large labour reserve and some of the occupations, such as cleaning, are part of heavily subsidized employment schemes. Policy makers and social partners deemed that such professions need to be sourced from the Belgian labour reserve.

(Q12 b – EMN Questionnaire)

## 4. Monitoring the outcomes of labour migration policy in relation to shortage occupations

This section examines the tools and mechanisms to monitor the outcomes of labour migration policy in relation to shortage occupations.

### 4.1. Outcomes of labour migration policies in relation to shortage occupations monitored in Belgium

#### *General Statistics on the number of granted work permits*

The Belgian regions keep annual statistics on the number of work permits granted. These statistics do not allow a breakdown to specific shortage occupations, except for the smaller categories of Croats and third country long term residents from other member states that are allowed in Belgium on the basis of the 2006 regional shortage occupations lists. The statistics below are hence mostly concerning intra-EU mobility to give an indication of what is technically available in Belgium, but does not cover third country nationals - unfortunately.

For example, the Flemish economic migration service kept statistics of the shortage occupations taken up by citizens of new Member States from 2006 till today (Vlaamse Overheid 2014). The statistics indicated that the vast majority of the work permits went to horticultural occupations, mostly for seasonal labour. Except for some other take-up of shortage occupations like bus and truck driver, technician, meat and fish worker and food handler, the number of work permits granted are very modest. The trend remained similar for the entire period.

Work permits for shortage occupations for citizens of new EU Member States - 2013			
Limited top list		Most other shortage occupations: small take-up, e.g.:	
Horticulture/agriculture	11,806	Bakers	77
Meat and fish worker	897	Roof workers	148
Food handler	635	Engineers	52
Bus and truck driver	657	Insulation workers	16
Carpenter, scaffolder, road worker	674	Printer	5

Source: Flemish economic migration service (Vlaamse Overheid 2014)

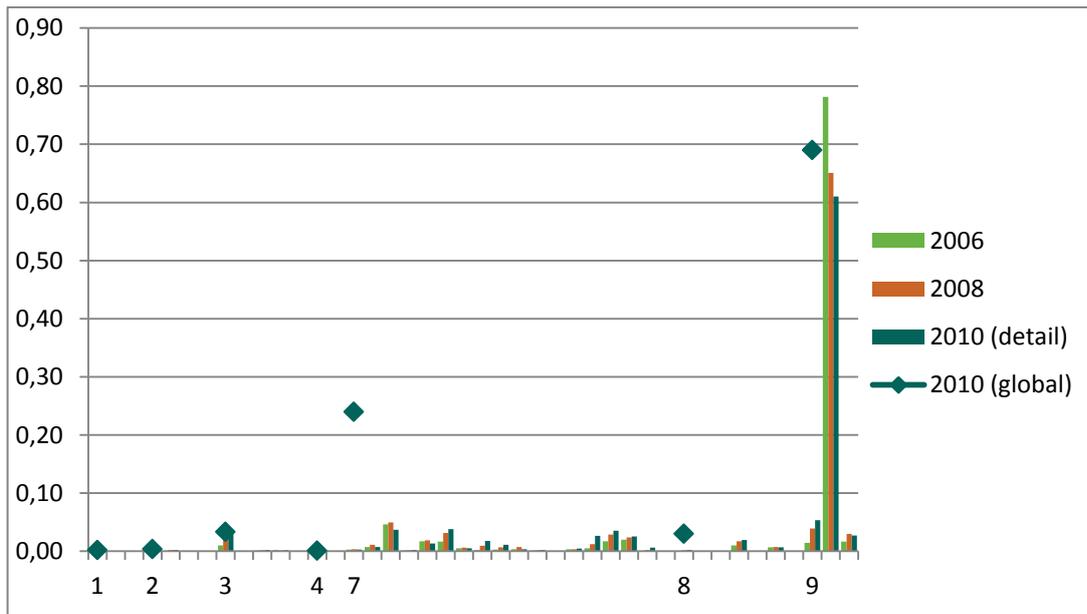
The Flemish Public Employment Agency noted that even though it does not extensively study the effect of labour migration on the labour market, it does notice that evolutions take place in the general shortage occupations list as a consequence of intra-EU mobility. Due to the numerical success of a limited set of occupations on the EU shortage occupations list for new EU member states, such as fruit picker, some occupations have disappeared from the general shortage occupations list. Other occupations, such as mason, first changed status from quantitative to qualitative shortage

occupation and then disappeared from the shortage occupations list altogether, due to intra-EU mobility.

*Evaluation of the Flemish shortage occupations lists for new EU member states - Academics*

A study from the Centre for Social Policy of the University of Antwerp further tested the effect of the Flemish shortage occupations list for new EU member states of 2006 on labour shortages in Flanders (Mussche, 2013). The Centre concluded that numerically the shortage occupations list had been a success: in 2011 (when Romanians and Bulgarians still needed to apply for a work permit), the vast majority of work permits were granted based on the shortage occupations list. In that year, 15,029 work permits were granted to new EU citizens on a total of 22,449 work permits in Flanders (WSE, 2011). This did not mean however, that Flanders saw significant relief for its shortage occupations. Most of the influx was directed to seasonal labour in the Flemish horticultural sector. The high number of work permits did not translate into a general relief for labour shortages.

Figure 1. Work permits for labour shortages (new EU citizens), Flanders, 2006-2010 (data 2010)



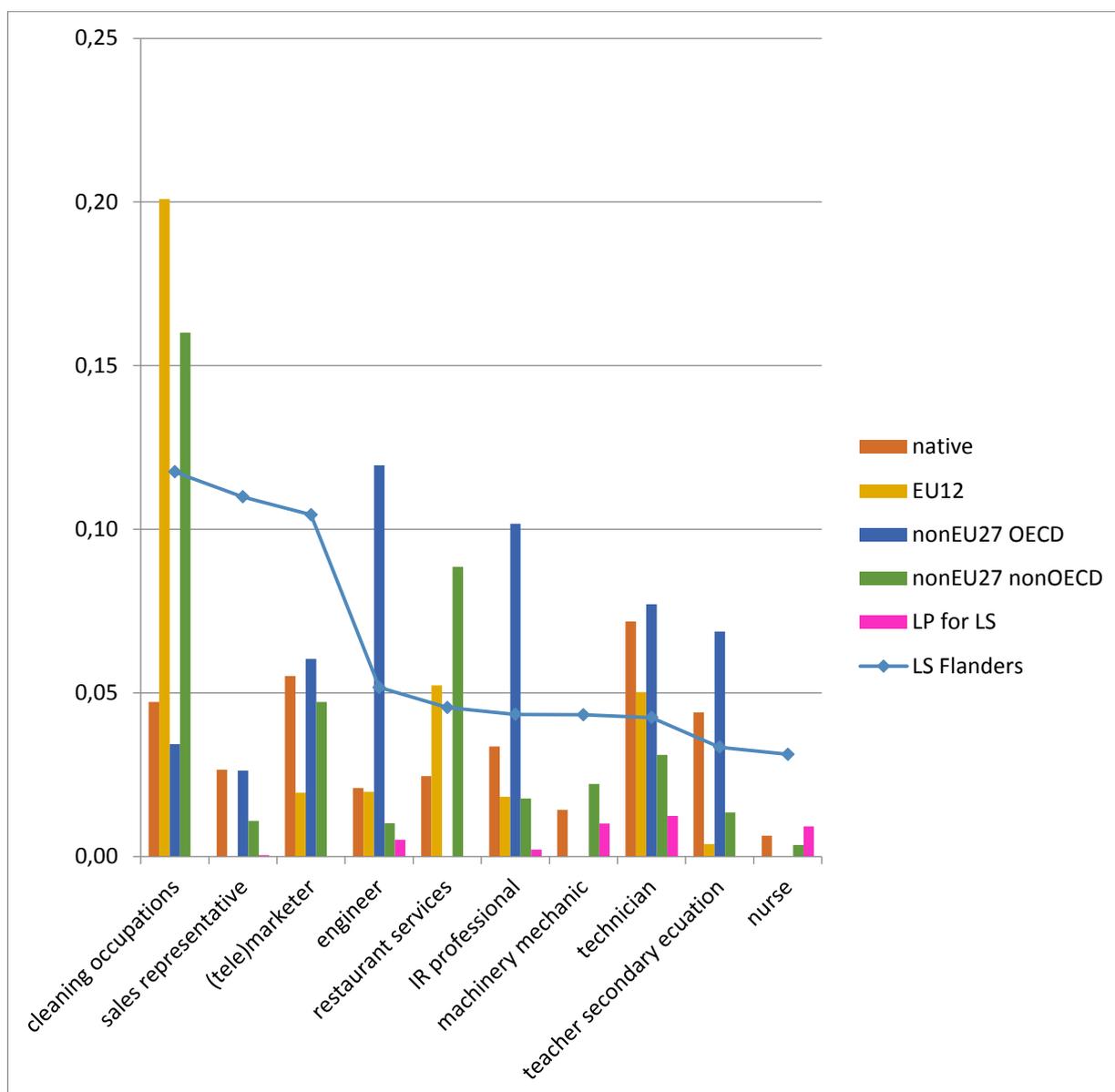
Source: Flemish Agency for Work and Social Economy

Figure 1 gives an overview of the labour shortages filled by new EU migrants via the Flemish shortage occupations lists for the years 2006-2010. The numbers 1 to 9 on the X-axis indicate different ISCO groups of occupations, with 1 being managerial functions, 7 trades, and 9 elementary occupations. The small tall bars indicate individual shortage occupations. The blue squares indicate the importance of the global ISCO class in the whole of the filled shortage occupations by new EU Migrants. The elevated blue square for ISCO 9 occupations (elementary occupations) shows that 69% of work permits went to elementary occupations such as horticulture. Next to elementary occupations there is only one other occupational group for which a reasonable number of work permits have been granted,

namely ISCO 7 occupations (trades). 25% of the total number of work permits for new EU migrants went to trades such as welder and meat worker.

This overview shows that the shortage occupations list only very limitedly addressed acute needs on the Flemish labour market. In figure 2, we present the top most acute shortage vacancies in Flanders for 2010. The blue line indicates the importance of each of the 10 shortage occupations in the total of Flemish shortage vacancies. 12,7% of all shortage vacancies are for cleaning, 10% for tele-vendor. The contribution of work permits based on the shortage occupations lists for new EU members is presented by the (tiny) pink bars (at the right of every cluster) (LP for LS – labour permit for labour shortage). In view of the fact that the top 3 shortage occupations have been barred from the shortage occupations list for new EU member states (cleaning, sales representative and tele-vendor), no work permits have been granted for these. The total share of work permits granted through the shortage occupations lists for the top 10 shortage vacancies is only 2%. Only 1.2% of specialized technicians are sourced from the list. A similarly small contribution to vacancies for maintenance mechanic and nurse can be noted.

*Figure 2. Top 10 shortage occupations in relation to the Flemish labour market and inflow by EU-work permits (2010)*



Source: Flemish Agency for Work and Social Economy & Labour Force Survey  
*Statistics on third country nationals who acquired long term residence in other member states*

The regions further keep statistics on the number of third country nationals who obtained long term resident status in another member state, and who want to work in Belgium. They require a work permit for a shortage occupation for the first year of work. The category is numerically not very important. In Flanders, only 455 work permits were granted, on a total of 6,699 work permits in 2014. A large share went to Moroccans (154 or 33,85%) and Indians (113 or 24,84%). In 2014 many applications for a shortage occupations work permit were refused to long term resident third country nationals. On the one hand people who got refused applied for occupations that were not on the shortage occupations list. On the other hand people could not always prove that they had obtained the status of long term resident in another member state. 116 applications were refused in 2014 (Vlaamse Overheid 2014). In Wallonia only 75 long-term resident work permits were granted, out of 1,885 work permits in 2014 (Wallonie 2014)

(Q 13 a EMN questionnaire)

#### **4.2. The level of labour migration policy monitoring, the organisations carrying them out, and the legal source of monitoring**

As mentioned, monitoring labour migration policy is mainly limited to keeping statistics of the number and category of work permits granted. These statistics are developed by the regional economic migration services of Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels Capital Region. Further, academics publish studies on labour migration on an ad hoc basis.

The statistics on work permits of the regional economic migration services are mostly based on the level of labour migration 'categories', such as 'the highly skilled', 'researchers', 'third country nationals who are long-term residents', etc. Moreover, the Walloon economic migration service also gives an overview of the sectors in which work permits are granted.

For shortage occupations on the list for new EU member states, the actual occupation for which people get a work permit is recorded. For this labour migration category, the level of analysis are the shortage occupations themselves.

No labour migration monitoring has been fixed in legislation or soft law in Belgium.

(Q13 b & c & d EMN questionnaire)

#### **4.3. The way instruments and tools used for monitoring the outcomes of labour migration policy in relation to shortage occupations are used and the challenges associated with monitoring**

As noted, monitoring the outcomes of labour migration is of quite a modest level in Belgium. The regional economic migration services publish statistics related to work permits in general. But only very few categories explicitly relate to shortage occupations (Croats and third country nationals who acquired the long term residence status in another member state). These figures are published on the respective websites of the regional economic migration services.

For labour shortage uptake to be monitored, the regional economic migration services would need to be able to register every work permit by occupation. This is not an easy ride, since the descriptions of the occupations that applicants give on their application vary drastically – to the degree that a categorization is impossible in practice.

For labour shortage uptake by labour migration to be monitored, a concerted effort would be needed to link two different systems: 1) the databases of the regional public employment services giving an accurate name and description of each (shortage) occupation, linked to occupational codes (ideally comparable at the European level), and 2) the application systems of the regional economic migration services.

The latter would then only grant work permits on the basis of the codes based database. In this way labour migration would be accurately linked to what the public employment service knows of the needs of the labour market and the shortage occupations.

(Q14 & 16 EMN questionnaire)

#### **4.4. The role of social partners in monitoring the effects of labour migration on the labour market.**

There is no formalised role of social partners in monitoring the effects of labour migration on the labour market. However, in a broader perspective, social partners and other stakeholders have been involved in the debate regarding fraud and social dumping in the framework of intra-EU mobility and free service provision.

(Q 16 EMN Questionnaire)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Actiris (2014), Analyse van de knelpuntberoepen in het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest in 2013, <http://www.actiris.be/marchemp/tabid/242/language/nl-BE/mctl/5/idPub/106/Publicatie-beschrijving.aspx>

CESW (Conseil Economique et Social de Wallonie)(2014), Avis A.1203 sur la migration économique et l'occupation de travailleurs étrangers en Wallonie suite à la sixième réforme de l'état, [http://www.cesw.be/uploads/fichiers\\_avis/1203.pdf](http://www.cesw.be/uploads/fichiers_avis/1203.pdf), consulted 20 May 2015.

Deloitte (2013), *Communiqué de presse – La Belgique : un pays attirant pour les talents étrangers grâce à une politique migratoire efficace*, [http://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/be/Documents/about-deloitte/communiqué\\_presse\\_Belgium%20attracts%20international%20talent\\_FR.pdf](http://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/be/Documents/about-deloitte/communiqué_presse_Belgium%20attracts%20international%20talent_FR.pdf)

Fehmiva, E. (2007), De impact van de arbeidsmigratie op de belgische arbeidsmarkt na de uitbreiding van de EU, [http://statbel.fgov.be/nl/modules/digibib/arbeidsmarkt\\_levensomstandigheden/1614\\_de\\_impact\\_van\\_de\\_arbeidsmigratie\\_op\\_de\\_belgische\\_arbeidsmarkt\\_na\\_de\\_uitbreiding\\_van\\_de\\_europese\\_unie.jsp](http://statbel.fgov.be/nl/modules/digibib/arbeidsmarkt_levensomstandigheden/1614_de_impact_van_de_arbeidsmigratie_op_de_belgische_arbeidsmarkt_na_de_uitbreiding_van_de_europese_unie.jsp).

Federale Overheidsdienst Werkgelegenheid, Arbeid en Sociaal Overleg, *Statistieken – Arbeidskaarten*, <http://www.werk.belgie.be/moduleDefault.aspx?id=8376>

FOREM – Service de l'analyse du marché de l'emploi et de la formation (2013), *Marché de l'Emploi, Détection des métiers en fonctions critiques 2012*, [https://www.leforem.be/MungoBlobs/154/816/20130730\\_Rapport\\_intermediaire\\_DetectionMetiersFonctionsCritiques2012.pdf](https://www.leforem.be/MungoBlobs/154/816/20130730_Rapport_intermediaire_DetectionMetiersFonctionsCritiques2012.pdf), consulted 3 April 2015.

FOREM – Service de l'analyse du marché de l'emploi et de la formation (2013, a), *Métiers d'avenir, Etats des lieux sectoriels et propositions de futurs, Recueil Prospectif*, [https://www.leforem.be/MungoBlobs/684/940/20140506\\_Brochure\\_MAV\\_BD.pdf](https://www.leforem.be/MungoBlobs/684/940/20140506_Brochure_MAV_BD.pdf), consulted 13 May 2015.

FOREM (2014, a) – *Marché de l'Emploi, chiffres et commentaires, données de juin 2014*, [https://www.leforem.be/MungoBlobs/88/8/2014\\_3\\_MDE\\_juillet2014\\_donnees\\_juin2014.pdf](https://www.leforem.be/MungoBlobs/88/8/2014_3_MDE_juillet2014_donnees_juin2014.pdf), consulted 3 April 2015.

FOREM (2014,b) - *Marché de l'Emploi, Analyse Décembre 2014, Métiers porteurs, au-dela des listes*, [https://www.leforem.be/MungoBlobs/335/760/20150107\\_MetiersPorteurs\\_AuDeLaDesListes.pdf](https://www.leforem.be/MungoBlobs/335/760/20150107_MetiersPorteurs_AuDeLaDesListes.pdf), consulted 13 May 2015.

FOREM (2014 – c), *Métiers en demande - Etudes métier par métier*, <https://www.leforem.be/chiffres-et-analyses/metiers-en-demande.html>, consulted on 3 April 2015.

FOREM – Service de l'analyse du marché de l'emploi et de la formation (2014, d), *Marché de l'Emploi, Détection des métiers en fonctions critiques 2012*, [https://www.leforem.be/MungoBlobs/245/639/FOCUS\\_MDE\\_Liste2013\\_Fonctions\\_critiques\\_Wallonie%20C0.pdf](https://www.leforem.be/MungoBlobs/245/639/FOCUS_MDE_Liste2013_Fonctions_critiques_Wallonie%20C0.pdf), consulted 3 April 2015

Morissens, A. (2008), Vraaggerichte arbeidsbemiddeling als antwoord op knelpuntvacatures, [http://www.werk.be/sites/default/files/Vraaggerichte\\_AB\\_Eindrapport\\_23jan09\\_fin.pdf](http://www.werk.be/sites/default/files/Vraaggerichte_AB_Eindrapport_23jan09_fin.pdf)

Mussche, N., Corluy, V. & Marx, I. (2013), *Arbeidsmarktonderzoek als instrument en basis bij toekomstig arbeidsmigratiebeleid en EU vrijhandelsakkoorden*, Brussel, VIONA, [http://www.centrumvoorsociaalbeleid.be/sites/default/files/VIONArapport\\_November2013\\_DEF.pdf](http://www.centrumvoorsociaalbeleid.be/sites/default/files/VIONArapport_November2013_DEF.pdf)

Muyters (2015), Vlaamse Parlement, Commissie voor Economie, Werk, Sociale Economie, Innovatie en Wetenschapsbeleid, Commissievergadering, donderdag 19 maart 2015, <https://www.vlaamsparlement.be/commissies/commissievergaderingen/961095/verslag/968368>

Rekenhof (2014), *Knelpuntberoepen, kwaliteit van de beleidsinformatie, Verslag van het Rekenhof voor het Vlaams Parlement*, Brussel, <https://www.rekenhof.be/NL/Publicaties/Fiche.html?id=d006778c-2076-451f-8f5f-e4bda93d45e3>.

SERV (2013), Economische Migratie, [http://www.serv.be/sites/default/files/documenten/SERV\\_Economische\\_migratie\\_20130123\\_def.pdf](http://www.serv.be/sites/default/files/documenten/SERV_Economische_migratie_20130123_def.pdf)

Van der Hallen, P., Truyens, G., Diepvents P. (2011), *Competent bemiddelen, de mister proper in de strijd tegen de knelpuntberoepen?*, *Over Werk*, 1/2011.

Vlaamse Regering (2014), Werk, Economie, Wetenschap en Innovatie, Beleidsnota 2014-2019, ingediend door de heer Philippe Muyters, Vlaams minister van Werk, Economie, Innovatie en Sport, 2014.

VDAB (2015), <http://www.vdab.be/trends/vacatureanalyse.shtml>, consulted 2 april 2015.

VDAB Studiedienst (2014), *Knelpuntberoepen – Kansenberoepen*, 2014, [http://www.vdab.be/trendsdoc/vacatureanalyse/vacatureanalyse\\_2014.pdf](http://www.vdab.be/trendsdoc/vacatureanalyse/vacatureanalyse_2014.pdf), geconsulteerd 28 March 2015.

VDAB (2014), *Competent*, <http://www.talentenwerf.be/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Competent.ppt>.

Vlaamse Overheid - Departement Werk & Sociale Economie (2015), *Jaarverslag 2014, Arbeidsvergunningen en arbeidskaarten in het Vlaamse Gewest*, [http://www.werk.be/sites/default/files/online\\_diensten/migratie/jaarrapport/jaarverslagarbeidsmigratie2014.pdf](http://www.werk.be/sites/default/files/online_diensten/migratie/jaarrapport/jaarverslagarbeidsmigratie2014.pdf)

Wallonie, 2014-2019, Oser, Innover, Rassembler, [http://www.wallonie.be/sites/wallonie/files/publications/dpr\\_2014-2019.pdf](http://www.wallonie.be/sites/wallonie/files/publications/dpr_2014-2019.pdf), consulted 12 april 2015.

Wallonie, Département de l'Emploi et de la Formation professionnelle (2014), *Statistique 2014*, [http://emploi.wallonie.be/Emploi\\_Formation/Travailler/PermisTravail/statistiques.html](http://emploi.wallonie.be/Emploi_Formation/Travailler/PermisTravail/statistiques.html)

WSE, Vlaams Subsidieagentschap Werk en Sociale Economie (2011), [http://www.werk.be/sites/default/files/VSAWSE/docs\\_migratie/jaarrapport\\_migratie2011.pdf](http://www.werk.be/sites/default/files/VSAWSE/docs_migratie/jaarrapport_migratie2011.pdf)

Zimmer, H. (2012), *Mismatched op de Arbeidsmarkt*, NBB, [https://www.nbb.be/doc/ts/publications/economicreview/2012/ecotijdii2012\\_h4.pdf](https://www.nbb.be/doc/ts/publications/economicreview/2012/ecotijdii2012_h4.pdf)

## **Annex 1: List of institutions contacted**

To write this study we contacted civil servants of various public services, as listed below. We thank them wholeheartedly for their precious and competent input.

- Federal Public Service of work and social concertation – Department of Study, Statistics and Evaluation – Mr. Frédéric Poupinel de Valencé
- Public Employment Office Walloon Region FOREM – Mr. Géry Choteau
- Public Employment Office Brussels Capital Region ACTIRIS – Mr. Stéphane Thys & Sandy van Rechem
- Public Employment Office Flanders VDAB – Ms. Els Van Geel
- Social Partners Flanders - SERV – Social and Economic Council of Flanders – Mr. Niels Morsink
- Social Partners Brussels Capital Region – CESRBC – Economic and Social Council of Brussels Capital region – Ms. Joëlle Delfosse
- Civil Service Employment Policy – Cell Economic Migration – Brussels Capital Region – Mr. Wim Van den Steen & Ms. Driscart Fabienne
- Economic Migration Service (Department Work and Social Economy) – Flanders Region – Ms. Ann Bogman & Mr. Wouter Ottevaere
- Department of Employment and Work Permits – Walloon region – Mr. Stéphane Thirifay & Mr. Vincent Berger

## Statistical Annex

### A1. Workers employed by selected occupations and estimated unfilled vacancies (statistics for the latest available year)

Following are statistics on a number of EMN pre-selected occupations. The occupations in the table below are selected on the basis of the occupations that most frequently feature in (Member) States' shortage lists identified in the recent EMN Inform "Approaches and tools used by Member States to identify labour market needs".

**Table 1: Workers employed by specific occupations and estimated unfilled vacancies (last available year)**

Specific occupations	Total employment			Employment of EU-nationals from other Member States			Employment of third-country nationals			Number of residence permits issued to third-country nationals for specific occupations			Number of unfilled vacancies
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
<b>Health Professional (22)</b>	54,567	114,380	168,947	2,582	3,967	6,549	301	873	1,174				7,339
<i>Of which: Medical doctors (221)</i>	19,665	16,511	36,176	1,189	1,260	2,449	96	304	400				
<i>Of which: Nursing and Midwifery Professionals (222)</i>	9,121	44,505	53,626	244	950	1,194	205	450	655				6,088
<b>Personal care workers (53)</b>	9,523	151,631	161,154	673	5,941	6,614	642	2,580	3,222				3,949
<i>Of which: Child Care Workers (5311)</i>													1,115
<i>Of which: Health Care Assistants (5321)</i>													1,970
<i>Of which: Home-based Personal Care Workers (5322)</i>													1,303
<b>Personal Services Workers (51)</b>	58,871	87,149	146,020	5,678	8,351	14,029	3,488	3,348	6,836				7,418
<i>Of which: Cooks (5120)</i>													5,226
<i>Of which: Waiters (5131)</i>													2,192
<b>Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers (6)</b>	55,163	10,812	65,975	969	259	1,228	987	80	1,067				
<i>Of which: Field Crop and Vegetable Growers (6111)</i>													

<b>Of which: Gardeners; Horticultural and Nursery Growers (6113)</b>													659
<b>Of which: Livestock and Dairy Producers (6121)</b>													
<b>Information and Communications Technology Professionals (25)</b>	77,521	12,303	89,824	5,516	1,668	7,184	1,476	0	1,476				7,511
<b>Of which: Software and Applications Developers and Analysts (251)</b>	59,897	9,516	69,413	3,931	1,249	5,180	1,368	0	1,368				6,358
<b>Of which: Database and Network Professionals (252)</b>	17,624	2,787	20,411	1,585	419	2,004	108	0	108				1,153
<b>Teaching professionals (23)</b>	86,135	213,138	199,273	3,740	5,777	9,517	625	1,096	1,721				15,014
<b>Engineering Professionals (excluding Electro-technology) (214)</b>	35,896	6,301	42,197	3,686	1,325	5,011	839	374	1,213				9,862
<b>Architects, Planners, Surveyors and Designers (216)</b>	27,808	16,992	44,800	2,127	2,178	4,305							10,502
<b>Accountants (2411)</b>													1,214
<b>Cleaners and helpers (91)</b>	164,789	295,481	460,270	13,123	35,770	48,893	14,614	16,264	30,878				
<b>of which: domestic, hotel and office cleaners (911)</b>	22,691	222,343	245,034	2,104	31,209	33,313	4,544	14,029	18,573				20,141

COMMENT: For Belgium, we can only deliver ISCO 3 (three digits). The available statistics do not go any further.

COMMENT: We did not fill out the Occupations 'Cleaning and Housekeeping services in offices, hotels and other establishments (5151)' and 'Domestic Housekeepers (5152)'. The ISCO code 5 does not refer to the elementary occupation 'cleaning' which we find in Belgian statistics. In Belgium, there are indeed statistics for 'Cleaners and Helpers' (91) and 'Domestic, hotel and office cleaners' (911) (added in the table above in red). In Belgium third country nationals are predominantly employed in the ISCO codes 7 to 9 (and especially in 9-occupations, i.e. elementary occupations).

## A2. Top 15 professions included in lists of shortage occupations (statistics for the latest available year)

This part of the Statistical Annex collects data on the occupations included in lists of shortage occupations and any estimations of unfilled vacancies.

### Table 2: Statistics on lists of shortage occupations

There are three separate tables – one for each region (Flanders, Wallonia, Brussels Capital Region)

#### Table of top 15 shortage occupations in FLANDERS (2014)

	<b>Occupation included in the list of shortage occupations</b>	<b>Number of total vacancies</b>	<b>Is there a specified number of vacancies to be filled with labour migrants from third-countries? (Y/N) If yes, please provide the number</b>	<b>Are there any special conditions for migrants from third-countries applying for shortage occupations? (Y/N) If yes, please describe.</b>	<b>Source and additional information</b>	<b>Non-filled vacancies: only total figure available: 33% of vacancies did not get filled</b>
1	Cleaner	14714	N	N	PES	
2	Sales Representative	7744	N	N	PES	
3	Teacher secondary education	6473	N	N	PES	
4	Commercial back office co-worker	5148	N	N	PES	
5	Nurse	4800	N	N	PES	
6	Co-worker call-centre	4387	N	N	PES	

7	Analyst developer (ICT)	3423	N	N	PES	
8	Maintenance mechanic	3376	N	N	PES	
9	Cleaner (of spaces and rooms)	3251	N	N	PES	
10	Teacher pre and primary school	2916	N	N	PES	
11	Sit manager	2572	N	N	PES	
12	Co-worker kitchen	2010	N	N	PES	
13	Shop manager small and detail trade	1970	N	N	PES	
14	Nursing auxiliary/Careworker	1574	N	N	PES	
15	Electrical installer	1415	N	N	PES	

### Table of top 15 shortage occupations in Wallonia (2013)

	<b>Occupation included in the list of shortage occupations (ROME 5 CODE)</b>	<b>Number of total vacancies</b>	<b>Is there a specified number of vacancies to be filled with labour migrants from third-countries? (Y/N) If yes, please provide the number</b>	<b>Are there any special conditions for migrants from third-countries applying for shortage occupations?</b>	<b>Source and additional information</b>	<b>Non-filled vacancies - estimation</b>
1	Electrician installer (42211)	1769	N	N	PES (FOREM 2014, d) – see bibliography	194
2	Automobile mechanic (44321)	1730	N	N	PES	338
3	Nurse (general care) (24121)	1590	N	N	PES	152

4	ICT developer, analyst, Web developer (32321)	1311	N	N	PES	219
5	Maintenance mechanic (44311)	1299	N	N	PES	183
6	Sales representative in professional equipment (14311)	1296	N	N	PES	290
7	Cook (13212)	1127	N	N	PES	149
8	Sales person (33113)	1124	N	N	PES	184
9	Sales representative in business services (14314)	1052	N	N	PES	143
10	Technicien in machining systems (metal)(44121)	1043	N	N	PES	104
11	Site manager (61231)	871	N	N	PES	136
12	Slater (42123)	855	N	N	PES	124
13	Assembler sanitary and heating (42212)	803	N	N	PES	150
14	Construction engineer (61223)	702	N	N	PES	97
15	Sales representative in commercial consumption goods (14313)	649	N	N	PES	168

**Table of top 15 shortage occupations in Brussels Capital Region (2013)**

	<b>Occupation included in the list of shortage occupations  (own classification, occupations below cover several codes)</b>	<b>Number of total vacancies</b>	<b>Is there a specified number of vacancies to be filled with labour migrants from third-countries? (</b>	<b>Are there any special conditions for migrants from third-countries applying for shortage occupations? (Y/N) If yes, please describe.</b>	<b>Source and additional information</b>	<b>Non-filled vacancies</b>
1	Teacher secondary education	1,699	N	N	PES (Actiris 2014)	88
2	Administrative clerk, reception & communication	839	N	N	PES	434
3	Teacher primary education	637	N	N	PES	42
4	Sales person & business manager	550	N	N	PES	279
5	IT professional	496	N	N	PES	241
6	Sales representatives	454	N	N	PES	267
7	Engineers & technical engineers	448	N	N	PES	278
8	Care personnel	439	N	N	PES	95
9	Secretary	392	N	N	PES	137
10	Technician in natural and applied sciences	372	N	N	PES	176
11	Room waiters and servers	232	N	N	PES	90

12	Accountants & assistant accountants	213	N	N	PES	106
13	Preschool teacher	196	N	N	PES	20
14	Nurses & assistant nurses	190	N	N	PES	101
15	Clerk financial transactions and insurance transactions	118	N	N	PES	71