

Regional Review
of the Global Compact for Safe,
Orderly and Regular Migration
(GCM)
ECE Region

Voluntary Contribution Belgium

30/09/2020

1. Context and methodology for preparing the voluntary GCM review

This document was prepared on the basis of a mapping exercise carried out by the Federal Public Services Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation - Service of the Special Envoy for Migration and Asylum in the course of 2020.

The mapping exercise aimed at providing an overview of the state of play regarding the implementation of the 23 objectives of the GCM in Belgium. The overview is based on contributions of Belgian public institutions involved in the Belgian migration policy, both at federal and regional level¹. As such, it contributed to a "whole of government" approach regarding migration.

The state of play is conceived as a factual overview of the achievements, challenges and initiatives identified as "good practices" for each of the 23 objectives of the GCM. Based on this, a proposal for the Belgians voluntary contribution was compiled which was submitted again to all relevant Belgian institutional actors for comments after which the document was finalized for submission.

In a parallel exercise, civil society organizations involved in the migration issues elaborated an Action Plan following the one year implementation of the GCM and put forward five main priorities at the attention of the Belgian government, as well as other recommendations for most of the objectives of the GCM.

This effort was led by 11.11.11. and CNDC, the umbrella organization of non-governmental development organizations as a coordinated approach.²

2. Policy and enabling environment

Belgium is a federal state with competences in most policy areas distributed between the federal level and regional level (Communities and Regions). This is also reflected in the organization of the migration and asylum policy, where a lot of different levels and actors play their (autonomous) role. There is no central government body responsible for all migration related issues. However, the main departments on migration and asylum, as well as the most relevant law (Aliens Act of 15 December 1980) are still a federal competence, whereas competences on integration and labour migration are mainly the responsibility of the Communities, and e.g. working permits are delivered by the Regions.

¹ At federal level these include : the Immigration Department (Dienst Vreemdelingenzaken/Office des Etrangers), the Office of the Commissioner General for refugees and stateless people (CGRS), the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum seekers (Fedasil), the Office of the State Secretary for Migration and Asylum, the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation and Enabel (Belgian Agency for Development Cooperation), among others. At regional level these include the departments involved with labour migration and integration.

² <https://www.cncd.be/Pacte-global-des-migrations-la>

Since the adoption of the GCM, Belgium has a 'minority' government and since June 2019, following federal elections, a care-taker government is in place. This situation has limited Belgium's capacity to develop a long term strategy and an action plan in order to implement the GCM in a comprehensive way.

Still, at the administration level a series of policy initiatives have been taken, among which the elaboration of a strategy on 'International Migration and Development'. This strategy should serve as the strategic reference framework for the Belgian Development Cooperation and its partners in the field of migration and development in order to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Objectives (SDOs) of Agenda 2030.

A first draft of this strategy reference framework was prepared by the FPS Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade (Directorate General Development (DGD) - Special Envoy for Asylum and Migration) and is the result of a broad consultation process carried out upstream and downstream with the institutional partners and operational actors of the Belgian development cooperation, including Belgian embassies in partner countries. This process lasted from December 2019 to June 2020. It should lead to a validated policy document by the end of 2020.

At the international level, Belgium was actively involved in international (GFMD, IDM, etc.) and regional migration dialogues (la Valetta, Rabat and Khartoum Processes). Under the presidency of Belgium, members of the Rabat Process adopted the Marrakech Declaration and Action Plan 2018-2020. Belgium remained active in the Steering Committee of the Process and organized, together with France, a thematic workshop on remittances and their impact on sustainable development in countries of origin (November 2019).

3. Progress on GCM objectives

The mapping exercise conducted in 2020 provides an overview of the state of play with regard to the implementation of the 23 objectives of the GCM. Hereafter some of the progress, innovative policies and promising practices are listed, as well as some difficulties encountered.

Objective 1: Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence based policies

Data collection for administrative use is traditionally carried out by a number of public entities like the Immigration Office and the CGRS that provide the statistical data to Statistics Belgium, Eurostat, EBCG and the EASO on a number of migration issues (protection, law enforcement, resettlement, asylum application, ...). Statistical data are generally disaggregated by age, gender and citizenship and used on an European level for comparative studies and analyses of trends.

The services of the State Secretary of Asylum and Migration have been improving the chain cooperation between the different asylum institutions whose functioning are strongly intertwined. Through a better shared definition of data collection and regular working groups, they manage to fine-tune forecasts on influx and outflow of the applicants for international protection. The impact that the operational decision of one institution has on the other institutions becomes clear in the recurrent analysis of shared data collection and enforces shared responsibility between institutions.

The independent public institution, the [Federal Migration Centre Myria](#) strives to make data and analysis on migration in Belgium more accessible. These data come from various public institutions (both federal and at the level of the Regions and Communities) concerning economic migration, educational migration, socio-economic integration of migrants, smuggling and trafficking in human beings. Through its analyses, Myria promotes public policies based on evidence and human rights.

At regional level, several statistical monitoring mechanisms exist, like the Flemish integration monitor, Statistiek-Vlaanderen, local integration follow-up systems, as well as communal and city monitoring mechanisms.

At the academic level, several Belgian universities³ and specialized centers have a department to investigate migration and provide migration education.

Still, centralization of migration data to enable more comprehensive and evidence-based analysis, to inform policies and to ensure accurate information to the public remains a challenge; as is the coordination and exchange of information between involved stakeholders.

On the international level, via the EU Trust Fund, Belgium supports several programs in third countries (countries of origin) in Africa in order to establish or enhance civil registration systems, which contributes to better data.

OBJECTIVE 2: Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave

The Belgian development cooperation has put the sustainable development objectives of the 2030 Agenda at the center of its policy framework. The framework is structured around two main axes: a right based approach and sustainable economic growth. From 2016 on, migration and the refugee crisis were introduced as a special area of attention. In the same sense, Enabel, the Belgian agency for development cooperation, identified [human mobility](#) as one of the 5 global challenges to work on.

³ These centers include : (1) CESSMIR, the Centre for the Social Study of Migration and Refugees at the University of Ghent, <https://www.ugent.be/cessmir/nl/onderzoeksthemas/identiteit/>; (2) CeMIS, Centre for Migration and Intercultural Studies at the University of Antwerp: <https://www.uantwerpen.be/nl/onderzoeksgroep/centrum-migratie-intercul-studies/> and (3) CEDEM, Centre d'Etudes de l'Ethnicité et des Migrations at the University of Liège: <http://labos.ulg.ac.be/cedem/en/research>

The Belgian development cooperation supports projects in countries of origin and transit for sustainable development and tackling the root causes of migration. In Morocco, one of the partner countries of the governmental development cooperation, migration figures among the priority sectors of the bilateral development program.

Belgium subscribes to the Valletta Declaration and Action Plan, which contribute to the fight against the root causes of irregular migration. Through the EUTF, Belgium supports projects in the regions of North Africa, the Sahel and Lake Chad and the Horn of Africa. Belgium was an early bilateral contributor to the Trust Fund. Through the EUTF, Enabel (the Belgian Development Agency) implements several projects to strengthen resilience of communities (e.g. in Niger and Mali) and to create opportunities for youth in communities of usual residence (e.g. in Guinea, and Senegal).

Via humanitarian funds, Belgium supports several projects on resilience and conflict prevention. Belgian development cooperation contributes to strengthening the cooperation between humanitarian and development actors (nexus humanitarian-development-peace). Examples that can be mentioned are the Belgian support of humanitarian organisations (ICRC, UNRWA) and the MADAD funding (specifically a professional training program for migrants in Jordania).

OBJECTIVE 3: Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration

The websites of the FPS Foreign Affairs, the Belgian embassies and the Immigration Department contain the necessary information on regular migration channels to Belgium and procedures and requirements for visa and asylum applications. The website of the Immigration Office will soon be renewed in order to enhance the accessibility and the comprehensibility of the information.

The website of the CGRS (Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons) contains detailed information for applicants for international protection. An expansion is foreseen at the end of 2020 with detailed information for several categories of applicants to give a correct image of what to expect and will be available in different languages.

Applicants for international protection receive targeted information about the procedures they have initiated on the day they arrive in Belgium. Within the reception network, further information and legal support is possible through, among others, social workers. For refugees coming to Belgium via resettlement, there are also pre-departure training courses (e.g. "cultural orientation") in the countries of origin or transit.

All Regions have integration trajectories that provide newcomers with tailored training packages on life in Belgium (access to work, education, health, ...), as well

as information on the history of Belgium, its norms and values. A counselor (usually in a language spoken by the newcomer) can provide individual assistance. ⁴

To combat irregular migration, dissuasion and information campaigns are organized by the Immigration Department in countries of origin, transit and destination. Irregular migrants, especially transit migrants, are informed of their rights and possibilities, through outreach activities. Tailored approaches are being set up towards vulnerable groups such as families in irregular stay, non-accompanied minors and victims of trafficking of human beings.

Good practices in the field of information dissemination include:

- Visa applicants can follow the administrative processing of their applications online via the website of the FPS Home Affairs (in French and Dutch).
- Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen ("Refugeework Flanders") provides support to all applicants for international protection, refugees and professionals (info line, "[startpunt](#)").
- Belgium contributed to the development of "[MigApp](#)", an application for smartphone/tablet developed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for migrants on the migration route .
- The Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (hereinafter: Fedasil) developed a mobile information platform with reliable information for applicants for international protection in 12 languages, 8 of which are also audio versions.

OBJECTIVE 4: Ensure that all migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation

Belgium has a highly developed civil registry system and issues all relevant identity and civil registry documents (among which birth, marriage and death certificates) to all of its citizens in a secure way. It supports the establishment or enhancement of civil registry systems in countries of origin and transit, including through EUTF projects. As an example, Enabel implements EUTF-funded projects on civil registry as a fundamental human right in countries such as Mali and Senegal.

Belgium ratified the Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons and tackles statelessness through various measures among which the granting of Belgian nationality to children born in Belgium who would otherwise be stateless, whose parents are unknown, or with a Belgian parent if they have no other nationality.

Participation in local community life remains a challenge for people without legal documentation, but access to certain basic social services like health care and education for minors is provided to all migrants, regardless of their legal status.

⁴ <https://www.atlas-antwerpen.be/en/new-in-antwerp>;
<https://www.integratie-inburgering.be/inburgering/engels>; <https://bon.be/en>;
<http://www.cpcp.be/formations/civic-integration-course-wallonia/>

OBJECTIVE 5: Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration

Work related migration: Since the 6th State Reform (2014), the regions have acquired the competence on economic migration. However, the federal government is still competent on residence rights and legislation on the employment of foreigners who are in a specific residence situation. These are foreign nationals whose main motive for coming to Belgium was not work, and whose admission to work is directly derived from a specific residence situation. To this end legislation regarding the employment of foreign workers in a specific residence situation was passed in 2018.

Since January 2019, third-country nationals (outside EU/EEA and Switzerland) wishing to work and stay in Belgium for more than 90 days can apply for a 'single permit' at the level of the competent Region. The permit contains both an authorization to reside and an authorization to work and is valid for the whole country. Consequently, paper work permits will no longer be issued. The residence document ("single permit") will contain a reference to the authorization to work.

The single permit procedure was opened up to highly skilled labour, seasonal workers and a number of medium-skilled professionals for which there is a structural shortage and need (varies according to the Region).

The federal government for Social Security has developed a mandatory digital declaration and registration system, "Working in Belgium: Limosa", which considerably simplifies the administrative obligations for employers of foreign nationals and self-employed person wishing to establish themselves in Belgium.

Several pilot projects on circular migration with African countries (North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa) were launched, combining private sector and recruitment agencies in the participating countries to explore the opportunities of labour mobility and skills enhancement through circular migration⁵.

Other forms of regular migration:

- Belgium has a structural resettlement program which offers safe and legal pathway for people in need of international protection as an alternative to the illegal journeys refugees undertake. Since 2014 3.190 people have been resettled. On top of the resettlement program, Belgium punctually relocates applicants for international protection from other European countries. Since 2015 2.336 people have been relocated.
- Belgian authorities can deliver humanitarian visa to vulnerable people in need of protection.

⁵ Examples include the [PALIM project](#) (Pilot Project Addressing Labour Shortages Through Innovative Labour Migration Models) which provides training courses in Morocco and circular labour market places in Belgium for a number of Moroccan youngsters, the [THAMM project](#) « Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa », both executed by Enabel, or IOM's [Match labour migration project](#) in collaboration with Senegal, Nigeria and Belgian stakeholders.

- Belgium has a clear visa policy for students wishing to study in Belgium and its extensive network of educational institutions welcomes thousands of students from third countries every year.

OBJECTIVE 6: Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work

Although “decent work” as such is not explicitly enforced in Belgian laws, federal and regional legislation contain sufficient regulations and safeguards to guarantee decent work.

For migrants, discrimination in the labour market remains a reality. The Federal Public Service Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Unia⁶ have jointly developed the ‘[Socio-economic Monitoring](#)’ to analyze individual’s positions in the labour market according to their origin. The monitoring aims to help improve the situation of migrants and their access to decent work and to combat discrimination in. Similar initiatives exist in the regions.

Fedasil has agreements with the regional public employment services (VDAB, Forem and Actiris) to strengthen early assessment, referral and to improve the flow of information.

Several civil society organizations, among which Fairwork Belgium, defend the rights of migrant workers regardless of their status through a low-threshold helpdesk and individual counseling.

At the employers side, VOKA (Employers network in Flanders) strives for better matching between recruiting companies and highly skilled recognized refugees and provides training for companies, on “Working with refugees, how do you do that?”. In the same vein, the project “[Employer Tailored Chain Cooperation](#)” (ETCC) tries to bring applicants for international protection and job-seekers into contact with each other. The project runs in 7 European countries, including Belgium.

Other interesting examples include the “[Your Global Future](#)” project that provides entrepreneurship training for applicants for international protection whose procedure is ongoing, regardless the possible outcome of their procedure.

OBJECTIVE 7: Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration

For people who applied for international protection in Belgium measures to address and reduce vulnerabilities are foreseen by law. The Reception Act, adapted in 2018 to be consistent with European directives, ensures reception standards that are in line with respect for human dignity. Hereby, special attention is paid to gender issues and the overriding interest of children. For unaccompanied foreign minors a special system of guardianship is in place. Fedasil and the regions have a convention for high care residential places in regular youth services for UAM that need more

⁶ [Unia](#) is an independent public institution that combats discrimination and promotes equal opportunities

support. This convention also includes the use of semi-residence places at psychiatric hospitals.

All minors have a right to education and every person in a reception center has access to legal support.

Belgian laws foresee special treatment and reception for victims of human trafficking, non-accompanied minors and families. The Immigration Law also foresees procedures for migrants with medical needs and for migrants in a compelling humanitarian situation.

Fedasil recently carried out a study into the vulnerability of persons in the reception network and their specific needs⁷. Together with CSO (Civil Society Organisations), they have also put several projects in place to address people with specific needs.

There is room for improvement for migrants in irregular situations ('trans-migrants' for example).

As far as vulnerabilities of migrants in third countries are concerned, Enabel implements a pilot initiative in Morocco (*Empowerment Juridique des Personnes Migrantes*) to support Moroccan public, non-governmental and private stakeholders ensuring the access to justice and fundamental rights for third country nationals present in the country.

OBJECTIVE 8: Save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants

Search and rescue operations seem less relevant for the Belgian situation. Belgium supports EU-operations in this field.

Regarding missing migrants, the Red Cross supports families who are looking for relatives from whom they have been separated by conflict via their 'tracing'-department. On the International Day of the Missing (30th of August) 2018, the Belgian Red Cross launched a new website: www.RestoringFamilyLinks.be. The website is also a practical tool to consult Belgian legislation regarding family reunification.

OBJECTIVE 9: Strengthen the transnational response to smuggling of migrants

Belgium has signed the UN Conventions against Transnational Organized Crime (trafficking in human beings and smuggling of human beings) and its three protocols, of which the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. It is an active member of the different working groups of the UNTOC and the major contributor to the Trust Fund for victims of smuggling of human beings.

⁷ https://www.fedasil.be/sites/default/files/content/download/files/fedasil_studie_kwetsbare_personen.pdf

Belgium has adopted appropriate legislation and other measures to put its engagement into practice. Specialized magistrates are appointed for all judicial districts to counter smuggling and police, immigration officers, guardians and reception officers received training on the matter. Still, a specific strategy for smuggling of vulnerable migrants and people looking for protection, like woman and children, is lacking

To dissuade people using the services of smuggler, the immigration office distributes information and organizes prevention and information campaigns in the countries of origin and in Belgium. As explained above, Belgium further contributes to the European resettlement and relocation programs to offer alternative paths for smuggling of migrants.

OBJECTIVE 10: Prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration

Belgium has signed the UN Conventions against Transnational Organized Crime (trafficking and smuggling of human beings) as well as the related protocols (against trafficking and smuggling of human beings) and has drawn up clear legislation on this matter. It elaborated an [action plan 2015-2018](#) against trafficking in human beings that was updated in 2019.

Belgium holds a seat at the UN Security Council and within this framework, follows the implementation of sanctions regimes, at EU and UN level, with regard to human trafficking (as is the case in Libya)

Judicial arrondissements dispose of a reference magistrate for trafficking in human beings and human smuggling: as a consequence there is better and more uniform case-law.

The interdepartmental anti-trafficking cell brings together specialized officials from the various competent government agencies on a monthly basis.

At the level of police services, there is the Specialized Human Trafficking Unit of the Federal Judicial Police.

Belgian policy provides, under certain conditions, legal and administrative support as well as psychological, medical and social follow-up to victims of human trafficking. Three centers (vzw Payoke, Pag-asa, Surya) provide reception and psychological and medical assistance. These centers are authorized to submit applications for residence documents in the framework of the special status 'victim of human trafficking'. There is a thorough cooperation between police services and personnel of the specialized reception centers.

Networks of trafficking and smuggling operate across districts and national borders, however the cross-border cooperation between countries is often too limited to counter gangs operating internationally.

OBJECTIVE 11: Manage borders in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner.

Belgium has clear border procedures in case of irregular entries, embedded in an EU policy framework.

There are clear guidelines regarding border arrivals of unaccompanied foreign minors. The Guardianship Service provides 7 days a week for situations where minors are found at the border (or on the territory).

Cooperation with neighbouring countries are developed within the framework of the EU. For example, Belgium supports EUBAM European missions in Libya and Gaza, as well as police and military trainings of coast guards (former Irini-mission in the Mediterranean in link of the Libyan conflict).

OBJECTIVE 12: Strengthen certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral

Migration procedures are communicated in a transparent way via the website of the Immigration Office, although only in official Belgian languages and English.

First responders, government officials, border officials,... receive trainings in order to standardize the identification and referral of victims of trafficking, victims of smuggling or exploitation, vulnerable persons, minors. These training are organized by or with support of Payoke and Pag-asa, Fedasil, Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen, the Red Cross ,...

Fedasil has a website to inform applications for international protection on their rights and obligations during their reception phase, and gives information on living and working in Belgium. The Arrival Center for new applicants for international protection provides a thorough screening during the first week of their stay in Belgium. During this week, information about the procedure and stay is also given in a standardized way. Nurses and social workers conduct a first arrival assessment.

Unaccompanied minors (UAM) are in Belgium referred to one of the Observation and Orientation Centers for UAM. There are centers in Neder-over-Heembeek, Steenokkerzeel, Woluwe-Saint-Pierre and Sugny. All these centers foresee a thorough observation in order to refer the child afterwards to the most adapted center for UAM in Belgium. Legal guardians are appointed for all UAM.

It remains difficult to distinguish between minor and adult applicants for international protection, despite clear legislation regarding the age test.

OBJECTIVE 13: Use immigration detention only as a measure of last resort and work towards alternatives. There are clear procedures for detention, based on international law.

Detention of migrants is a measure of last resort in Belgium, which can be used only under strictly limited conditions, notably when the person concerned did not

voluntarily comply with an order to leave the country or when access to the Belgian territory has been denied at the border. Procedural safeguards are foreseen.

All migrants in detention have the right to legal assistance and can contact their family, their embassy,... . Detention is always in accordance with international law and consistent with human rights.

Forced return takes place according to a step-by-step plan in cooperation with the Federal Police and Immigration Department.

Several good practices exist, such as the open facilities for families, but exploring new possibilities is necessary, such as intensive coaching of families who reside in a private home.

The "open facilities for families" offer open housing for families who are no longer entitled to regular residence and are an alternative to the detention of families. This offers children the opportunity to continue school, for example. The duration of stay can vary from a couple of days to a couple of months. During their stay, return counseling is provided.

OBJECTIVE 14: Enhance consular protection, assistance and cooperation throughout the migration cycle.

Belgium has several 'Representative Agreements' with other Schengen countries to issue visas.

Family members of recognized refugees and subsidiary protected in Belgium can submit their visa application for family reunification in any Belgian consulate in the world in order to make the procedure more accessible (other visa applications must be submitted to the consulate of the jurisdiction of the country concerned).

Irregular migrants are informed on their right to contact their consul.

OBJECTIVE 15: Provide access to basic services for migrants.

Access to certain basic services is granted through the right of residence.

Persons holding documents for long-term regular residence have the same access to services as Belgian nationals.

Fedasil's reception facilities are responsible for the care of applicants for international protection. Residents have access to all medical care, necessary to lead a life in accordance with human dignity, including psychological counseling. The reception center provides the 'first line care' in the center where nurses do a first triage, and GP provide medical care. A wide network of medical institutions and medical specialists guarantee the second and third line care.

Conventions have been concluded with specialized psychiatric centers to ensure permanent and continuous accessibility, although there can be long waiting lists.

For persons without a right of regular residence, there is in certain cases a right to basic services such as emergency medical care, education for minors and support for families with minor children.

UNIA receives, investigates and monitors complaints of discrimination, including those related to people in an irregular situation.

Good practices include :

- “Samenlevingsopbouw Brussel” emancipates, supports and informs people without regular documents.
- The non-profit organisation Medimmigrant strives for accessible health care for people in precarious situations.
- Fairwork Belgium strives for rights for workers, regardless of the legal status of the person.
- As far as international cooperation is concerned, Enabel supports the education system(s) in Uganda – particularly in the Northern districts bordering South Sudan – to adapt to the rapid and massive inflows of people fleeing war and instability. Support to Skilling Uganda is a long-standing contribution that Belgium/Enabel gives to national and local authorities in Uganda to ensure the access to education, TVET and employment for youth and women, South-Sudanese refugees and for hosting communities.

OBJECTIVE 16: Empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion

All applicants for international protection in the reception system receive information about our culture, traditions and customs. Mutual respect is promoted.

The regional authorities organize official civic integration courses. They consist of social orientation, language lessons and career orientation. They are accessible for persons holding documents for long-term regular residence in Belgium. In Flanders a civic integration course is compulsory for some categories of newcomers.

On top of the structural programmes from the regional authorities, local and citizens initiatives such as “Welcome in Mechelen”, “Communes Hospitalières” en “Gastvrije Gemeente” have been set up.

Through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) Fedasil funds projects that contribute to mutual understanding, respect or provides specialized care for people with specific needs.

All minors, regardless of their residence permits, have access to education at all times.

Enabel implements education and social inclusion activities in schools (for pupils, teachers and surrounding communities) through the programmes Annoncer la couleur / Kleuren bekennen.

Since 2006, citizens of third countries have been able to take part in municipal elections under certain conditions.

Foreigners from outside the EU are entitled to social housing under certain conditions linked to their residence permit.

Many NGO's and regional institutions provide specific training and awareness raising sessions on general values and norms of Belgian society, as well as sexuality and individual freedom.

The access to basic services of people without regular residence documents, such as persons who have exhausted all legal remedies and transit migrants is still challenging.

OBJECTIVE 17: Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration

In Belgium discrimination is prohibited and punishable by law.

Several independent institutions at federal level monitor the situation closely and give recommendations to the authorities.

UNIA works as accessible as possible to anyone in Belgium who feels that he or she has been discriminated or has witnessed discrimination and gives priority to amicable settlements rather than litigation.

Myria supports the fight against human trafficking, informs and questions authorities about migration and protects the fundamental rights of newcomers.

Enabel works with local authorities and civil society in its partner countries to develop territorial approaches that include diversity management, anti-discrimination and urban sociology to foster social inclusion and balanced debates on migration, e.g. EUTF-funded project DEPOMI (Déploiement des politiques migratoires dans trois régions) au Maroc.

Discrimination is still present in, for example, education, the labour market, the rental market and continues to be difficult to measure and hard to tackle.

OBJECTIVE 18: Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences

Fedasil assures that every applicant for international protection is informed, in his first month upon arrival, about his right to work and to engage in volunteering activities. Social workers provide assistance in the administrative process.

The agency has agreements with the regional public employment services (VDAB, Forem and Actiris) to strengthen early assessment and to improve the flow of information. Some employment services come to the reception centers to do intakes for access to support programmes or training opportunities.

The Regional Public Employment Services assess the skills and qualifications of all migrants with residency in Belgium. They have specific trajectories, trainings and support programs for people who do not have the official languages as mother tongue.

Recognition of foreign diplomas is regulated, although the duration of the recognition process in some cases is deemed too long.

There are many projects that support the early-onset activation of migrants, skills development, improved matching and screening and improved chain cooperation.

- Rising You(th) allows young people, after participating in a climbing club, to move on to bottleneck occupations working at height.
- ETION, the platform for social entrepreneurs, and VOKA provide information on how bottleneck jobs can be filled and a better matching can be made.
- Through the European Social Fund and the AMIF, various initiatives in Belgium are funded in order to guarantee better chain cooperation between institutions dealing with employment of third country nationals, improved matching and screening, ... (ETCC by Fedasil, Activering Vluchtelingen Antwerpen, Vluchtelingen Gent, ...).
- The PALIM project (Pilot Project Addressing Labour Shortages Through Innovative Labour Migration Models) provides training courses in Morocco and circular labour market places in the Flemish region for a number of Moroccan young people. The Flemish region is a partner in the PALIM project. Similar projects are in preparation in Tunisia and Senegal.
- Your Global Future' is a transnational cooperation with the municipalities of Antwerp and Utrecht and COA (Centraal Orgaan Opvang). The project will develop a series of educational courses for asylum seekers who wish to engage in self-employment either in the country of origin (in case of voluntary return) or in the country of reception (in case of recognition).
- The cities of Gent and Antwerp worked on a "one-stop-shop" counter for newcomers where several organizations and institutions are present and work together on the access to the labour market for new individuals.

A number of Belgian universities increase access for recognized refugees and persons eligible for subsidiary protection to higher education with individual support measures and a flexible study trajectory based on the former study career⁸.

In spite of all the innovative projects, the number of employed third country nationals remains quite low and an recognized system for qualifications of competences and skills (besides recognition of diploma) is not yet available.

OBJECTIVE 19: Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries

⁸ <https://student.vub.be/en/refugees#home>;
<https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/study/international-mobility/refugee-students/>

Belgian development cooperation supports initiatives through various channels (governmental, non-governmental and multilateral cooperation) that strengthen the impact of diaspora in Belgium in the development of countries of origin and various diaspora organizations are active in Belgium. Diaspora organizations unite in umbrella organizations, such as the Minority Forum or the Fédération Internationale de la Diaspora (FIDA), but have difficulties to get registered as an official NGO, due to strict administrative admission procedure.

There are promising projects that support Moroccan residents in Belgium to set up business and productive investments in Morocco⁹.

A better identification and definition of the role and position of diaspora organizations in the Belgian development policy could be useful.

OBJECTIVE 20: Promote faster, safer and cheaper money transfers for better financial engagement.

Belgium has a clear framework for money transfers, in line with European directives and monitored by the National Bank. Due to the high requirements (necessary for security), transaction costs are still relatively high.

Efforts are being made to increase transparency and innovation.

Belgium has been involved in the creation of MigApp, an app that refugees and migrants can use, so that it continuously has up-to-date information available on money transfers to the 14 partner countries of Belgian development cooperation. This makes it possible to find the fastest and cheapest provider for each of these 14 countries to make a transfer from Belgium.

The Belgian NGO IDAY pleads for a better use of money transfers.

OBJECTIVE 21: Work together to facilitate safe and dignified return and enable sustainable reintegration.

Belgium has clear legislation on voluntary and forced return. Voluntary return should be favored whenever possible but forced return must remain possible when the person concerned refuses to comply with an order to leave the country.

The Immigration Department is responsible for the return of migrants in an irregular situation. There are bilateral, multilateral and EU agreements with countries of origin for the identification and return of their nationals.

Both the Immigration Department and Fedasil are involved in voluntary returns. Fedasil cooperates with a wide range of partners (IOM, Caritas, cities and municipalities, etc.) and often provides them with financial support.

There is a robust path, network and (financial and administrative) support system for voluntary return and reintegration. The voluntary return and reintegration program

⁹ See for example the Maghrib Belgian Impulse programme, implemented by Enabel

is easily accessible for a broad target group. A great deal of importance is attached to voluntary return, informed choice, the reversibility of a decision, feasibility and accessibility, and support for vulnerable persons.

There are many support possibilities for specific target groups (women, children, people with medical issues...) and specific countries (Chechnya and Cameroun f.e.). Children are one of the target groups for whom a specific approach was developed. The main goal is to involve children in a positive way by the preparations of the voluntary return. The "child booklet" prepares children before departure and throughout their journey back. The booklet enables them to give way to their emotions and to talk to others about their return and it helps them to keep some memories of their temporary stay in Belgium. The project "My Future" aims at supporting unaccompanied minors with little prospect of staying on a legal basis. Through intensive vocational training (eg welder, assistant cook, kitchen worker...) the youngsters get a baggage for the future. The Fedasil team prepares them for the end of their stay in a reception facility and coaches them towards greater autonomy and future prospects in the country of origin.

A wide network of local stakeholders assures the information flow and the individual counselling in Belgium: cities, NOG's, social services for people in irregular situations, etc. There is a collaboration network with local authorities regarding voluntary return. The return support has an exemplary position in Europe. Fedasil is involved in several projects with other agencies or countries to disseminate its experience and knowledge. Fedasil also carries out projects in countries of origin to promote a sustainable reintegration.

In third countries, Enabel – the Belgian development agency – invests in designing comprehensive reintegration approaches in continuity with the return programs implemented by Fedasil, IOM and other stakeholders. Enabel develops a long-term reintegration approach based on reskilling and creating economic opportunities. Examples can be drawn from the PARERBA project in Senegal.

Forced return takes place according to a step-by-step plan in cooperation with the Federal Police and Immigration Department. For persons with special needs, the Immigration Office foresees reintegration support in the country of origin.

Carrying out the return of persons in an irregular situation remains a challenge: cooperation with certain countries is sometimes very difficult.

There is a need for a "whole-of-government" approach to the reintegration section.

OBJECTIVE 22: Develop mechanisms for the portability of social security rights and acquired benefits.

With regard to social security, Belgium has concluded agreements with 25 different countries, either bilaterally or via an EU regulation. This regulates the scope of application of Belgian legislation and the social security legislation of the third

country. The social security legislation applies to the country where the work is actually carried out.

Migrants with long term residence have equal rights and obligations compared to Belgians.

Persons in an irregular situation do not have a work permit can in principle not work. As a result, they are not entitled to social security.

Information for migrants has been assembled and is available on [the government's website](#).

OBJECTIVE 23: Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration.

Belgium is a major donor of development aid to African countries. Many of them are in a fragile situation.

Belgium is very active on European and international platforms that promote the principles of the Global Compact on Migration.

Belgium participates in various global and regional migration dialogues (Rabat, Budapest, Prague and Khartoum Process) and platforms (Global Forum on Migration and Development, International Dialogue on Migration of IOM, ...) .

Belgium is represented at numerous European consultative forums under supervision of the European Commission and formal political consultation process (High Level Working Group, SCIFA,...)

Belgium contributes to the implementation of the "Joint Valletta Action Plan", through the EUTF, since its launch in 2015.

Belgium focuses its actions on the least developed countries of Africa and tries to tackle the underlying root causes of migration.

The migration and development programs financed by Belgium are implemented by a variety of actors, including the Belgian development agency Enabel, BIO, international organizations such as IOM, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), NGOs or civil society associations.

Belgium has numerous operational projects with European and other countries to exchange experience and knowledge and to provide support in migration management, to promote development opportunities of migration in countries of origin, transit and destination.

Belgium has concluded many Memoranda of Understanding with countries of origin on migration management.

Sustaining the impact of development cooperation and embedding it in a long-term perspective remains challenging.

4. Means of implementation and next steps

As indicated above, competences with regard to migration are distributed between different levels of government and several public institutions, who all play their (autonomous) role. In 2008 Belgium had for the first time a federal Minister solely responsible for Migration and Asylum Policy. Since the end of 2011 there is a State Secretary for Migration and Asylum who is also in charge of Social Integration, and thus also responsible for the reception of asylum seekers. It proves the growing importance and the need for a more coordinated approach in migration and asylum issues. Still, coordination between different policy departments but also between policy levels (EU, federal level and regional authorities) could be reinforced and deepened, through both formal and informal coordination mechanisms¹⁰, to assure a “whole of government” approach.

Given the political environment in Belgium since the fall of the government in December 2018 and the subsequent ruling by a care-taker government after the elections of May 2019, a formal mechanism and Action Plan for the implementation and monitoring of the GCM could not be developed. This task will have to be taken up by the new government.

¹⁰ As an example, coordination mechanisms exist to define Belgium's foreign policy in the field of asylum and immigration at both European and multilateral level. This responsibility is shared by the FPS Foreign Affairs and the Immigration Office.

Addendum to the Belgian contribution of the Regional Review of the Global Compact for Orderly, Safe and Regular Migration : Belgian response to COVID-19 pandemic

In this addendum we will discuss the implementation of Belgian measures in response to the COVID-19 crisis and in compliance with the Global Compact.

1. Registration and hearings of applicants of international protection (Objective 3¹¹ and Objective 12¹²)

As in most in countries, the COVID-19 pandemic lead to an abrupt halt of international movement and a standstill to migration mobility in a matter of days and put strong pressure on the reception and asylum procedures. The COVID-19 measures were very tangible in the asylum institutions, since registration and screening of the application of international protection is the first link in the asylum chain..

Due to the unprecedented character of this event, many procedures were not foreseen to address this crisis and a lot of effort went into finding a balance between setting up adequate health and prevention measures in protection of applicants and personnel while at the same time continue to provide services with respect of the measures in protection of personnel and applicants. This lead in the earliest stages to a closure of registration possibilities and reception for applicants of international protection in order to protect the applicants already in residence, as well as personnel in the asylum institutions.

a. Registration and reception

In the week following the lockdown, the Immigration Department no longer registered new asylum applications. Fedasil's Arrival Centre closed and no new persons were received. An exception was made for persons released from detention centers (with a right to reception) and vulnerable unaccompanied foreign minors (Objective 7; address and reduce vulnerabilities).

Registration of new asylum applications at the Immigration Department resumed in the beginning of April with an online form¹³. This system avoids queues in front of and within the registration center. An e-mail is sent to the applicant with a confirmation of the date and the time of the appointment. Dublin transfers were suspended in the first weeks.

b. Hearings

The Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS) decided to suspend hearings the day of the lockdown in order to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus. Ongoing dossiers and dossiers for which no interview is required were still being dealt with and decisions were being taken. Applications for post-statutory certificates were also being dealt with. Personal interviews held through video conference with applicants in closed centers continued to take place.

The Council for Alien Law Litigation (CALL) temporarily adapted its functioning : regular hearings scheduled were postponed to a later date. Hearings relating to appeals in extreme urgency and accelerated procedures continued to be organized.

Royal Decrees also provided automatic extensions of the terms of the judicial process at Council of State to prevent legal issues due to the lockdown.

¹¹ OBJECTIVE 3: Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration

¹² OBJECTIVE 12: Strengthen certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral

¹³ <https://arrivalcenterappointment.ibz.be>

The hearings of the Council of State were limited to what was deemed strictly necessary.

c. Current situation

Early May the asylum institutions prepared exit strategies and more flexible measures in order to restart registration services and physical asylum hearings, since the government allowed more flexible measures.

End of June the registration and hearings of unaccompanied minors at the Immigration Office in the context of an application for international protection resumed, with the necessary precautions.

From the 8 June the CGRS gradually resumed the physical interviewing with respect. CGRS and Fedasil set up a procedure for physical hearings at CGRS for the residents of the reception centers, where they deprioritize some vulnerable categories or people at risk in protection of applicants and CGRS personnel. Strict protective measures are in place (applicants summoned at different times, wearing protective masks, use of plexiglass screens).

CGRA's hearing appointments are sent to the reception centers, who communicate to CGRS if the resident is able to attend the hearing. The CGRS will start, in collaboration with Fedasil, a video conference project for the organization of the personal interview of a limited number of applicants. The objective of the project is to organize personal interviews via videoconference in the short term, parallel to the system of face-to-face interviews at the CGRS. Secondly, the project aims in the longer term, also post-COVID, a broadly developed structural framework for hearings to replace hearings at the CGRS. Neither objective is intended to replace hearings via video conference on a large scale at the CGRS. Hearing at the CGRS, with the physical presence of all actors (applicant, PO, interpreter and lawyer), remains preferred. Since September the hearings have resumed to a "normal" number of interviews.

All measures with an impact on the hearings or residency of applicants of international protection, are published online in several languages on the websites of the asylum institutions (Objective 3; provide accurate information).

2. Reception of applicants of international protection (Objectives 7¹⁴, 3¹⁵ and 15¹⁶)

Taking into account the communal nature of the reception centers, FEDASIL has done a great effort to protect residents in order to prevent a possible spread of COVID-19 from the beginning of the pandemic. Collective reception centers usually have a capacity between 100-500 (some up to 800) people so an infection can quickly spread. Fedasil's occupancy rate was already quite high at the start of the pandemic, but in spite of the little flexible margins left, they managed to control the infection rate .

In March, Fedasil immediately took action to lower the occupancy rate in the centers in order to create more space and decrease the infection risk. On top of that, extra capacity had to be created to isolate residents with COVID-19 symptoms and separate them from residents without symptoms. This caused a greater need to open new centers.

Fedasil designed an isolation procedure for residents with symptoms: if a resident tests positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms of the disease, the medical service places this person in the medical wing or an isolation room provided for this purpose in the center. The sick person (and possibly his family) remains in isolation until his complete recovery.

Masks were provided for residents and personnel and it was recommended when impossible to respect the safety distances. Hygiene measures were strictly followed.

Fedasil also issued an instruction making it possible for residents to temporarily stay with relatives or friends, while receiving meal vouchers and receiving remote support from their social worker via phone.

¹⁴ OBJECTIVE 7: Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration

¹⁵ OBJECTIVE 3: Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration

¹⁶ OBJECTIVE 15: Provide access to basic services for migrants

Residents in the risk group of COVID-19 were relocated with their family members to individual housing or a specific collective center for people in the risk group (Objective 7; address and reduce vulnerabilities).

External visits to the centers were quickly prohibited. Activities and essential movements outside the centers were only authorized for families or accompanied by a limited number of friends (according to the governmental measures). Only lawyers, legal guardians, interpreters and other people deemed essential for the functioning of the centers were allowed. In the centers mutual contact was kept at a minimum and with the exception of information sessions about COVID-19 all collective activities were temporarily suspended: sports and leisure activities were prohibited, cafeterias were closed,

Fedasil provided material (computers, printouts, ...) and educational support to the students who participated to distance learning (e-learning) although access to computers and Wi-Fi often posed practical problems (Objective 15; provide access to basic services).¹⁷ Psychologic support at the reception centers was offered through video consultation with the residents' regular psychologist or psychiatrist (objective 7; reduce vulnerabilities).

On top of the isolation procedure, Fedasil's screening and testing procedure and capacity was crucial for the reception of new applicants of international protection: new applicants (in the beginning only exceptional cases) above 6 years were medically screened from the beginning of the pandemic (when testing was not yet available) and tested from beginning of April.

From 11th of May the government slowly scaled down the lock down. Despite the gradual de-containment, the movements of residents, both inside and outside the centers, remain limited as much as possible. Non-essential tours and activities were still canceled. Strict prevention and hygiene measures (for both staff and residents) remained in force.

The continuous changes in rules and measures made it necessary to publish a vademecum at Fedasil in order to communicate with the 80 collective centers and 480 municipalities in charge of the individual housing. The vademecum is updated on a weekly base and contains detailed medical, logistical and operational instructions, as well as recommendations on more sensitive topics, such as dealing with deceased patients, managing a center during Ramadan, dealing with the mental health of residents and personnel. Instructions were made in consultation with Sciensano and the Risk Management Group, the Belgian authorities in charge of the formulation on COVID-19 measures. The vademecum was also shared with local mayors and regional governors to be transparent on the COVID-19 management in the reception agency. A number of regional measures that were taken by the governors or mayors, additionally to the federal measures, made it necessary for Fedasil to design a color coded system where each reception center knew what measures had to be taken with respect to activities, external visits, organization of services, ... depending on the numbers of people infected in the reception structure.

Residents at reception centers are constantly informed about the various measures, via multilingual posters and leaflets, but also via the info site (in 12 languages) www.fedasilinfo.be which was adapted to the latest regulations (Objective 3: provide information¹⁸). Living in a community requires putting in place specific measures, often more complex than those that we apply at home. But the vast majority of asylum seekers have understood the importance of following the instructions.

Increasing testing capacity of new applicants by Fedasil's medical staff, as well as testing internal transfers between centers, was an important factor in the restart of the hearings in the CGRS, on top of the

¹⁷ OBJECTIVE 15: Provide access to basic services for migrants.

¹⁸ OBJECTIVE 3: Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration.

prevention measures taken in order to prevent infection in the reception network coming from new applicants entering the network.

It is clear that, the medical situation in the 78 reception centers in the country remains under control. Medical monitoring and preventive measures have made it possible to reduce the number of infected people in the centers as much as possible.

Moreover the occupancy rate at the reception centers has stabilised since the hearings of the asylum institutions have resumed.

3. Voluntary and forced return of migrants (Objective 21¹⁹ and Objective 13²⁰)

From 16 March, most voluntary returns were suspended and Fedasil's return desks were closed as a result of national and international measures against the spread of the corona virus.

Although voluntary return numbers remain lower than before the COVID-pandemic, they are picking up gradually after the reopening of the return desks Mid- June.

At the end of August Belgium started executing international outgoing and incoming Dublin transfers. Prevention and testing measures for incoming transfers were put in place.

As for outgoing transfers executed to other MS, only persons who do not show any symptoms of COVID are to be transferred. In case of any doubt the transfer is cancelled. As of end of June transfers by air are possible again..

The number of forced returns dropped significantly. Detention and removal became difficult because of COVID-19 measures. As a result, about 300 foreigners – almost half of the detainees – were released from detention centers (excluding residents who have committed crimes). Lawyers were still allowed to visit residents at the detention centers (Objective 13; detention).

All measures were published on the Immigration Office's website.²¹

4. Resettlement (objective 5²²)

The resettlement program was already on hold since July 2019 due to capacity issues in the reception network. However the programme restarted end of September and arrivals followed in October and will follow in November. A pilot project on community sponsorship was launched at the end of October. Fedasil, together with all the involved partners, nationally and internationally are preparing the arrival in order to prevent infections..

In august 2020, 18 unaccompanied minors were relocated from Greece to Belgium

5. Undocumented migrants (Objective 7²³ and Objective 15²⁴)

Undocumented migrants were able to access COVID-19 related emergency health services free of charge due to the existing national scheme (Aide Medical Urgent/Dringende Medische Hulpverlening) to allow undocumented people to access a wide range of preventative and curative health services.

¹⁹ OBJECTIVE 21: Work together to facilitate safe and dignified return and enable sustainable reintegration.

²⁰ OBJECTIVE 13: Use immigration detention only as a measure of last resort and work towards alternatives.

²² OBJECTIVE 5: Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration

²³ OBJECTIVE 7: Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration

²⁴ OBJECTIVE 15: Provide access to basic services for migrants.

A COVID-19 screening campaign was carried out in community centers for homeless people, coordinated by the community health authorities in charge. The costs of testing were covered by the federal authorities.

The federal winter shelter for homeless people was extended in all major Belgian cities, additional shelters were created until the end of July and budgets were increased for actions of organizations and institutions in favor of the homeless and migrants.

Police interceptions dropped significantly, mostly due to a changed prioritization of the police services.

6. **Work (Objective 6²⁵)**

With respect to work and work permits, a number of practical and administrative measures have been taken to overcome problems related to the corona measures. Provision has been made for the temporary extension of work permits (Objective 12; strengthen predictability). Applications by e-mail instead of by post are encouraged to ensure rapid processing of applications. The deadline for submitting the required documents is extended (because corona makes it more difficult to obtain these documents) (Objective 12; strengthen predictability). The requirement for certain documents is temporarily waived). For third country nationals who, due to coronation measures, cannot leave the territory the possibility is provided to apply for a temporary extension of residence (federal competence) as well as an extension of the admission to work (regional competence) (Objective 15: access to basic services; Objective 7: reduce vulnerabilities; Objective 4; ensure adequate documentation).

The Federal Public Service Employment, Labor and Social Dialogue has worked on the development and communication and translation of a guide with the aim of preventing the spread of the coronavirus in the workplace. The materials have been translated into up to 17 languages in order to make them accessible to the various migrant workers in our country (Objective 3; provide accurate information).²⁶

For employers who regularly call on migrant workers, a webpage with preventive information and reminders of their specific obligations was developed (Objective 3; provide accurate information).²⁷

The corona crisis caused an imminent shortage of personnel in agriculture and horticulture because there were too few seasonal workers available and the demand for work was rising. As a result, employers were faced with sudden vacancies that are difficult to fill. In this context, a temporary royal decree was issued that allowed several measures in order to employ seasonal workers who are already in our country for longer: the days authorized for workers with seasonal status in agriculture and horticulture sectors were doubled (130 days instead of 65 days). For the specific sub-sector of fruit growing, this doubled to 200 days instead of 100 days.

The royal decree also provided measures for agricultural and horticultural businesses to employ more easily workers who have previously worked in the sector. In practice this meant the abolition of the 180-day rule limitation to the company level, instead of the sectoral level which previously prevented the seasonal worker to working in the agricultural or horticultural sector during if he had been working in the same sector in the past 180 days.

²⁵ OBJECTIVE 6: Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work

²⁶ <https://emploi.belgique.be/fr/actualites/coronavirus-materiel-de-sensibilisation-sur-le-lieu-de-travail-en-17-langues>

²⁷ <https://emploi.belgique.be/fr/actualites/travailler-avec-des-travailleurs-salaries-ou-independants-de-letranger>

Temporarily unemployed people could also be employed as occasional workers in agriculture or horticulture.

Moreover the decree allowed applicants for international protection to work without a waiting period of 4 months, if the employer provided shelter for the applicant for international protection and provided that the application for international protection has been made no later than 18 March 2020.

As part of a cooperation between Fedasil and VDAB (the Flemish agency for activation and guidance of unemployed people), a step-by-step plan was drawn up in mutual consultation to direct residents from the reception structures who want to work and are interested in short assignments in agriculture and horticulture to VDAB. (Objective 6; decent work).

7. Provision of information (Objective 12 ; strengthen predictability, objective 7 ; reduce vulnerability)

A specific and continuous attention has been given to communication to people with a migration background, but also persons with a disability or in a vulnerable situation, outside of the reception system. The national and regional Crisis Centers have entered into collaboration with the social interpretation and translation services in Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia and with an organisation specialised in low literacy.

In this way, information about the coronavirus and government measures was translated into more than 20 languages, in addition to the official national languages. In addition, appropriate images, audio and video are made available. Collaboration with the crisis centers guaranteed the accuracy of the information. The information is published on, among others, <https://www.info-coronavirus.be/en/translation/> and <https://www.integratie-inburgering.be/corona-meertalige-info>.

The information is actively disseminated to organisations that work directly with the target groups (care providers, local authorities, welfare organisations, educational partners, contact tracers, reception centres,...).²⁸

²⁸ The partners were [federale crisiscentrum NCCN](#), [het Vlaamse crisiscentrum CCVO](#), [Wablieft](#), [Agentschap Integratie en Inburgering](#), [atlas integratie & inburgering Antwerpen](#), [IN-Gent](#), [SetisWallon](#) en [SetisBruxelles](#).