



ExpLORe:

Expérience Liégeoise pour l'Orientation des Reconversions

-

Liège Experience for the Orientation of Reconversion

Partnerships and Networking

This regional report has been written on the basis of information from both article 6 partners in Belgium: Brussels Free University and Le Forem (Public Employment Service). In this report, we have decided to make a double analysis: one on the macro and one on the micro level. On a macro level we list all existing actors and partners in the Liège area who help identify Regional Key Competencies and who eventually help create proactive scenarios. On a micro level we provide detailed information about a specific tool, the "reconversion units". These units were developed in the Walloon Region in order to respond to the consequences of downsizing, a common strategy in modern HRM. Reconversion units respond in a reactive manner to company closures, companies moving to low wage countries and economic changes, and the collective redundancies resulting from these changes. After acceptance of collective redundancies or company closure, the reconversion units are an important place to experience the identification and appropriation of Regional Key Competencies and economic redeployment.





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1. The organisation's/the region's experiences with regional co-operation

With whom do you co-operate?

How do you co-operate? On a formal basis or an informal basis?

1.1 Le Forem: Formal co-operation within the Walloon region and its sub regions

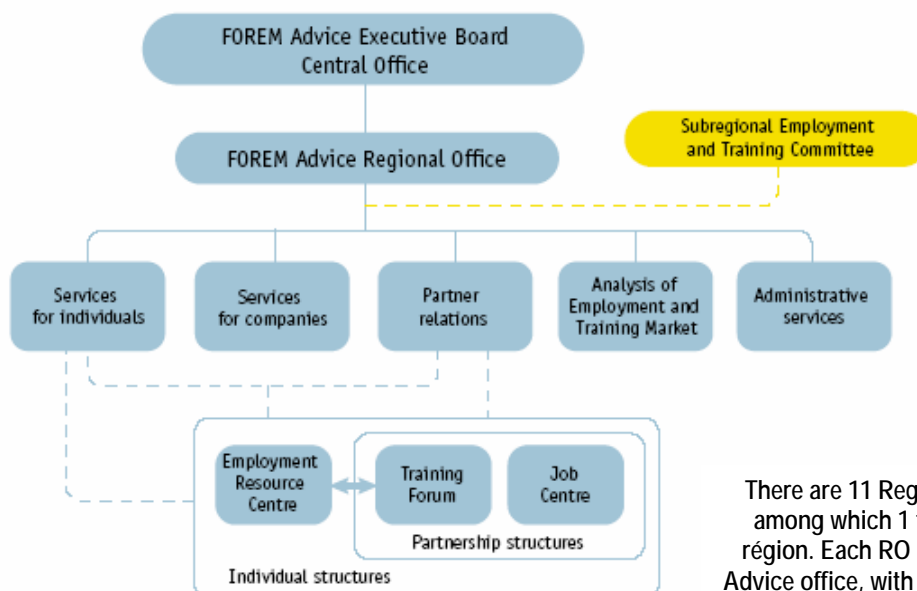
1.1.1 The department "Partner Relations" - FOREM Advice

Partner Relations, a department of Forem Advice was created in order to mobilise and gather together the expertise of the various players on the market. Working in partnership with these players to provide the information and advice that is essential to the transparency of the market for these users. A more intense collaboration with other players also allows new concrete responses to needs to be made and new methods to be experimented with to enable the market to evolve for the benefit of users.

Within this framework, Le Forem provides information on the employment market, its developments, the services to be organised to respond to emerging needs, and services offered by other bodies. Partner Relations informs them in their search for potential partners and on the employment policies adopted by various levels of power and finally on the financing options available for certain actions.

To facilitate access to the market, Le Forem is joining with local players to offer services close to the local population with "single windows" such as *Job Centres*, *Training Forums*, *Employment Resource Centres* and *Cities of Jobs*. (for more details, see below)

FOREM Advice: regional services



There are 11 Regional Offices, among which 1 for the Liège région. Each RO has its Forem Advice office, with its own Partner Relations department.





The department *Partner relations* co-operates with many local actors. This happens on a formal basis (conventions). Some examples:

Le Forem's Job Centres (Maison de l'Emploi):

Partnership with local authorities, CPAS (Public Service for Social Security) and other local participants in Wallonia's small- and medium-sized towns, where job-seekers find all the information they need in order to find a job.

Employment Resource Centres: (Espace Ressources Emploi)

Enable anyone to have autonomous access to information, job offers and the tools necessary in his or her job search (Telephone, PC, fax, etc.). There are 10 Employment Resource Centres in Wallonia.

Le Forem's Training Forum (Carrefour Formation):

Documentation and advice centre for the general public. Precise information on the training organised in the Walloon Region by public or approved training operators is available in the Training Forums. Anyone may consult, free of charge, information sources relating to the training organised in Wallonia, about qualifications required to get on the courses as well as their prospects or benefit from the assistance of a specialist training adviser.

Partnership with:

- AWIPH (Agence Wallonne pour l'Intégration des Personnes Handicapées):
Walloon Agency for the integration of disabled people
- CPEONS (Conseil des Pouvoirs organisateurs de l'Enseignement officiel neutre subventionné), FELSI (Fédération des Etablissements Libres Subventionnés Indépendants) & SeGEC (Secrétariat Général de l'Enseignement Catholique):
Boards of Walloon high schools in Wallonia
- EFT (Entreprises de Formation par le Travail),
Work Based Learning for Adults
- L'Enseignement de Promotion Sociale de la Communauté Française,
Adult Education Centre of the French Community (evening classes)
- FOREM Formation
- IFAPME (Institut wallon de formation en alternance et des indépendants et petites et moyennes entreprises)
Vocational training for small and medium sized companies and the self-employed
Work Based Training for Young People
- OISP (Organismes d'Insertion SocioProfessionnelle),
Organizations focused on reintegration into the labour market through training





Cities of Jobs: (Cités des métiers) :

In Liège, Forem Advice and several partners from the employment and training market want to create Cities of Jobs where anyone will be able to find all the information they require as well as personalised service, all in one location.

In addition to the services provided by Employment Resource Centres and Training Forum, the City of Jobs provides more in-depth support in terms of vocational guidance and in certain cases creation of companies and international mobility.

1.1.2 Analysis of Employment & Training market

The department "Analysis of Employment & Training Market" (AMEF: Analyse du Marché de l'Emploi et de la Formation) within *Le Forem* provides statistical information on the economic situation in each Walloon region. Within its missions, the AMEF co-operates with many partners (see point 2)

Every month a report containing statistical information on the Liège area is sent by e-mail to every member of *Le Forem* (*L'Emploi du Temps*). This report contains information on the number of job seekers, their profile, the evolution of job offers distributed by *Le Forem* and an analysis of booming/declining sectors.

1.1.3 Sub regional Employment and Training Committee

On a regional level, *Le Forem* works in close collaboration with the *Sub regional Employment and Training Committee* (Comité Subrégional de l'Emploi et de la Formation - CSEF). The CSEF is a local body for consultation and initiative of social partners (representatives of employers and employees) on Employment and Training policy. There are 11 local bodies, amongst which one for Liège.

The first objective is to watch over the co-ordination of training and employment policies in their region: they assure an optimal use of all means in order to respond to any problem related to employment and training.

The CSEF is composed of social partners and most of the social and economic actors of the region. Each Committee consists of 19 members, 8 of who representing companies and 8 representing the workers (parity). Each committee also comprises the regional director of *Le Forem* and a member representing an organisation for regional development. The representatives of employers and employees elect the president of the committee.

The decree of 6 May 1999 revised by the decree of 13 of May 2003 describes the role of the Sub regional Employment and Training Committee as follows: the CSEF advises, recommends and proposes on all matters related to employment and training, especially on:

- Analysis of the needs of the labour market
- The propositions related to the regulation of training offers





- The yearly national action plan by Le Forem
- Evaluation and guidance of the integrated disposition for re-integration (Dispositif Intégré d'Insertion)
- The existing means of integration into the labour market

The committee organises dialogue and consultation between regional companies and all partners involved in employment and training. It holds one meeting per month, co-ordinates their actions and encourages their co-operation.

A thorough analysis of the regional economic situation is made by AMEF every year. Every member of staff at Le Forem is invited to an official presentation of the research results.

1.2 Formal and informal co-operation within the "Reconversion Support Plan" department

"Reconversion units" are a partnership between the Trade Unions and Le Forem (PES). The decree of the Walloon Region (29/01/2004) is its formal basis. A partnership convention with trade unions (CSC & FGTB) was signed in 2004. Details about procedures and budget and other useful information are in the official Standard Expenses Book (Cahier des Charges), validated by a Royal Decree. For more details, see question 2, C (p. 10).

A Support Committee comprising of a representative from the Walloon Region's Ministry of Economy and Employment, representatives from trade unions and the public employment service is responsible for the management of each reconversion unit. The reconversion unit is set up for one year; the Support Committee is different for each unit.

A reconversion unit is composed of staff from *Le Forem* and social counsellors. Social counsellors are Former trade union representatives from the company that has laid off (part of) its workers and are hired as social counsellors in the reconversion units, in order to guide job seekers in their search for work.

Within the organisation of the reconversion units we co-operate with Forem Training & Forem Advice and their different departments, amongst which the AMEF and Partner Relations, cfr. Infra. This happens on a formal basis and with as a main objective to assure vocational support that takes into account the realities of the labour market.

We also co-operate with external organisations and specialists in the domains of training and reintegration in the labour market, e.g.:

- Lire & Ecrire: adult literacy course
- Vie Féminine: feminist movement
- Guichet d'Entreprise: helps people create their own business

Sometimes we co-operate with regional operators who can provide a solution to specific problems, e.g.: "Centre de guidance": for people who need psychological aid.





Regional Key Competencies

- a way to manage structural changes [AT6]

Within the framework of European projects - in a continuous effort to improve our methods of reconversion- the department "Reconversion Support Plans" of *Le Forem* works closely together with the Centre for Sociology of Labour, Employment and Training (TEF, Centre de Sociologie du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Formation), a department of the Université Libre de Bruxelles.

Within this framework, the department "Reconversion Support Plans" also co-operates with the CEFRET (training centre for companies in the textile industry – parity) and CAREMPL0I (Created within the non-profit organisation *Etrave*, which is the operator for trade unions within the framework of reconversion. They are in charge of training of the social counsellors within the reconverion units. This organisation regroups the trade union representatives from the region of Mons-Borinage, FGTB & CSC)





2. The organisation's/the region's experiences with transforming information into knowledge, to be used on a strategic level

What kind of methods do you use?

In what form is the knowledge presented?

Describe your experiences with this form of presentation – advantages and disadvantages.

2.1 Sources within Le Forem

Le Forem's department "Analysis of Employment & Training Market" (AMEF) (cfr. Question 1) provides detailed statistical information about the Walloon region. Each AMEF department of a Regional Office provides statistical information for its area, in this case: Liège. Some examples:

- Etats des lieux socio-économique de la Région de Liège (Analysis of the socio-economic situation in the Liège area), January 2005
- Les attitudes et les pratiques à l'égard de la gestion des ressources humaines dans l'écosystème du transport de marchandises et logistique (Attitudes and practices in HR in the ecosystem of transports of goods and logistics), December 2004
- Les attitudes et les pratiques à l'égard de la gestion des ressources humaines dans l'écosystème du commerce et de la distribution (Attitudes and practices in HR in the ecosystem of commerce and distribution), December 2004
- Détection des fonctions critiques en Région Wallonne (Detection of critical function in the Walloon Region), 2004

For these reports, the AMEF co-operates with several other organisations that have written reports on the region, such as:

- L'Avenir du Pays de Liège (non-profit organisation): Redéploiement du pays de Liège – Méthodes et Perspectives. Mission exploratoire menée par Michel Foret et Guy Mathot (2003)
- CSEF: Subregional Employment and Training Committee: Tableau de Bord économique et social de l'arrondissement de Liège (2003)
- Ecodata: Service public Fédéral Economie, PME, Classes moyennes et Energie (FPS Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy)
- INASTI: Institut National d'Assurances Sociales pour Travailleurs Indépendants (NISSE: The National Institute for Social Security of the Self-employed)
- INS: Institut National de Statistique (National Institute of Statistics)
- IWEPS Institut wallon de l'évaluation, de la prospective et de la statistique (Walloon Institute for Evaluation, Perspective and Statistics)
- Ministère de la Région Wallonne, Direction de la Politique économique. Démographie d'entreprise et entrepreneuriat en Région Wallonne. (Ministry of the Walloon Region, Politics of Economy)





- ONNS: Office National de Sécurité Sociale (NOSS: National Office of Social Security)
- SPI+: Service promotion initiatives en province de Liège (Development agency for the Province of Liège)
- Trends Tendances: Belgian magazine on economy.

2.2 External sources

2.2.1 For the whole Walloon region

2.2.1.1 Observatoire Wallon de l'Emploi (Walloon Observatory for Employment)

The Observatory consists of 4 institutions:

- Le Forem
- La DGEE: Direction Générale de l'Economie et de l'Emploi du Ministère de la Région Wallonne - General **Direction** of Economy and Employment of the Ministry of the Walloon Region
- CSRF: Sub regional Employment and Training Committee
- The professional sectors.

Comment [AD1]: I don't know if this means directorate (organization) or direction, as in "way to go".

Its missions:

- Analyse needs in labour force and adapt the training curricula
- Assure a permanent distribution of collected information
- Organise and realise an evaluation of different measures that have an impact on development of employment and that decrease the number of job seekers.
- Establish and update a number of indicators that characterise the working of the labour market

2.2.1.2 IWEPS Institut Wallon de l'Evaluation, de la Prospective et de la Statistique (Walloon Institute for Evaluation, Perspective and Statistics)

The general mission of the IWEPS is to help in the decision-making processes, on one hand by a scientific mission and on the other hand by strategic consulting. The scientific mission consists of the gathering, publication and treatment of regional statistics, working out statistical development plans over several years, and realising fundamental and applied research, notably in the fields of economy, social and political science and the environment. The institute is the only regional representative for federal and European institutions. Strategic consulting consists of conducting evaluations demanded by the government. They are assisted by the Conseil Wallon d'Evaluation (Walloon Council for Evaluation), which consist of the presidents of Walloon universities, 4 members from the Walloon Region Economic and Social Council (CESRW), 1 member of the Conseil Wallon de l'Environnement (Walloon Council for Environment) and 5 members of staff from the academic and scientific world.



2.2.1.3 CESRW Conseil Economique et Social de la Région Wallonne (Walloon Region Economic and Social Council)

Regional body organizing consultations and social dialogue, the Walloon Region Economic and Social Council (CESRW) comprises the social partners in Wallonia (representatives of employers and employees).

Instituted by a Decree of 25 May 1983, the CESRW is often described as the "Social Parliament" of the Walloon Region. The tasks assigned to the CESRW by the 1983 Decree are:

- conducting surveys, **issuing advisory opinions** and recommendations about all matters that come within the Region's sphere of influence, and those making an impact on the economic and social sectors in the Walloon Region;
- Organising **consultations** between both sides of business in Wallonia and the Government. For several years now, the CESRW and the Walloon Government have been meeting at regular intervals so as to make progress on a series of issues of key importance for the economic and social development of Wallonia;
- The **secretariat for the Advisory Committees**. These are made up of different partners depending on the subjects being addressed (the members of the Advisory Committees or Councils may include representatives of both sides of business, trade federations, the administration, universities, environmental protection agencies, consumer protection agencies, local authority groups, social organisations, public agents, etc.). The Advisory Committees issue advisory opinions about a whole series of regional issues (environment, land planning, heritage protection, etc.).

The CESRW **General Assembly** has 50 members (40 direct and 10 co-opted members), whose terms of office are for four years, renewable. The 50 members represent organisations representing workers, industry and major non-industrial companies, tradespeople and agriculture. The 50 members include:

- 25 members presented by the Union wallonne des Entreprises (Walloon Union of Enterprises), the Entente wallonne des Classes moyennes (the Walloon Tradepeople Coalition), the Fédération wallonne de l'Agriculture (the Walloon Agricultural Federation) and the Union francophone des Entreprises du Secteur Non-marchand (French-speaking Union of Enterprises in the Non-Commercial Sector) ;
- 25 members presented by the Walloon Regional Committee of the Confédération des Syndicats chrétiens (CSC - the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions) and the Walloon Inter-regional entity of the Fédération générale du Travail de Belgique (General Labour Federation of Belgium).

The **Bureau**, the CESRW's executive body, has 14 members plus 2 experts. Those who serve in the Bureau are the Chair (who is elected for two years according to the principle of alternating between the representatives of employers and employees) and the Council's three Vice-Chairs.



The **Committees** comprise representatives of and experts from the CESRW's constituent organisations; these are tasked with preparing advisory opinions and considering matters presented to the CESRW.

The **Internal Services of the CESRW** are responsible for the secretariat and for organising the proceedings of the various Committees. They enable the Council to duly exercise its activities for conducting surveys, carrying out research and issuing a series of publications.

2.2.1.4 Other external sources

- Reports and analyses made by Trade Unions and Sectoral Organisations
e.g. Fondation André Renard
- Reports written by universities
Université de Liège (Ulg) , Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB)

2.2.2 For the Liège area

- Comité Subrégional de l'Emploi et de la Formation – DR Liège
(Sub regional Employment and Training Committee) See 1.1.3 for detailed information
- Asbl "Avenir du Pays de Liège"
Redéploiement du pays de Liège – Méthodes et Perspectives. Mission exploratoire menée par Michel Foret et Guy Mathot (2003)
- SPI+
- Banque Nationale de Belgique

For more information on research within the Liège area, you can find a list at the end of this paper (annex1)

2.3 Transforming Information into Knowledge within the "Reconversion Support Plan" department

Within the reconversion units, a transparent and efficient tool has been developed in order to transform information into knowledge: statistics. Information on profiles, training and employment, contracts etc. is gathered by the team and is presented to the support committee during their meetings.

The procedure is simple, but efficient: the team- made up of social counsellors (former trade union representatives) and staff from Le Forem - keeps track of the worker's profiles in their personal record.

Fiche Technique: le Dossier Individuel

Technical file: the Personal Record





During their weekly meeting, which is documented in the minutes, called the

Comité de Suivi - Follow-up Committee

the information is shared between staff members to guarantee a made-to-measure follow-up, adapted to the needs of each individual, and then is transcribed in a listing that is updated weekly.

Fiche Technique: Listing des Evolutions des Projets

Technical File: Listing on the Evolution of the Projects

This file is a document for internal use only. This listing contains all the names of workers that were laid off, plus such information as date of birth, past working experience, seniority, age group and contact information. The team keeps track of changes in the personal and professional situation (reconversion contract, working, training, waiting for training, professional profile,...). This is done each week.

Before the information reaches the support committee, it is transcribed into another format:

Fiche Technique: Statistiques du Mois - Technical File: Monthly Statistics

This document regroups schematically and technically the same information as in the internal document. The public is divided into two groups: white-collar workers and blue-collar workers, a general overview is presented in table 1. All information is classified per category: age group, sex and seniority in the company. The spreadsheet contains 8 different pages, in which the same information is presented in different ways, sometimes in a more global view, sometimes with more details.

Table 2 regroups information on the public in relation to the reconversion unit and the labour market. The team keeps track of the numbers of reconversion contracts that were signed, the number of people keeping in touch with the unit, individuals enrolled in trainings, or in individual searches. In the situation on the labour market we find the following figures: number of people at work, pension, on health benefit and number of job-seekers. The 3rd table represents the same information, but with details on age group and sex. There is also detailed information about the types of contracts signed (temporary contract or other) (table 4).

Table 5 keeps track of the number of people that have found a job or have had a job each month. The number of reconversion contracts and completed/applied for/abandoned training programmes are regrouped in table 6, with details in 3 complementary tables (7.1-7.3).

The last table regroups all the activities that were held in the reconversion unit with details as number of participants, topic/theme, name of the speaker and date (table 8).





This data is presented to the support committee who makes decisions for the management of the reconversion unit, such as information to be passed on to the public, changes in labour and social law, benefits for workers, procedures, ...

The committee also decides on training demands. For reasons of confidentiality, equal opportunities (gelijkheid van kansen) and impartiality, information is represented anonymously. In order to release a budget for training needs, the committee decides whether a request for training is granted or not. If necessary, the committee may vote.

The members of the committee that have the right to vote are designated during the first meeting.

This committee can be composed of Le Forem –Trade Unions –Sectoral Organisations (3 parties) or of 2 parties: Le Forem and Trade Unions. Only effective members can vote, and the vote is only legal if 50% of the effective members are present.

The support committee also has consultative members and invited members, but they MAY NOT vote. Minutes of the Support Committee's meetings are kept in the archives.

From the daily working of a reconversion unit information is gathered and put into the official files by the team of the reconversion unit. Advantages of this system are the involvement of each partner at his or her level. Although managing a partnership takes a lot of time, the partnership with trade unions - and sometimes the sectoral organisations -has undeniable advantages. It guarantees objectivity and helps to find the best solutions for the fired workers. The fact that the interlocutors/spokesmen are different for each reconversion unit can be an inconvenience from time to time.

The way information is organised is also satisfactory but it is true that the systematic collection of information is a slow procedure requiring much work.





3. The organisation's/the region's experiences with identification of regional key competencies and regional intelligence¹

How do you do this?

On the basis of what kind of information and knowledge?

Which kinds of organizations co-operate to do the work?

How are the key competencies presented to the regional stakeholders?

How do you make sure that you have acceptance and understanding on a political and a practical level at the same time?

Comment [AD2]: see previous note

Comment [AD3]: idem

3.1 Identification of regional key competencies within the Walloon Region

See annex 1 for the basis of information and knowledge in the Liège area

In question 2, the most important information sources are listed, for Liège and for the whole of the Walloon region.

3.2 Identification of regional key competencies within the "Reconversion Support Plan" department

Within the reconversion units, we make use of privileged networks depending on the difficulties related to reintegration and professional reconversion. As explained in detail in question 1, Le Forem has a well-established network of contacts with local operators. There are the official entities such as Le Forem's *Training Forum* (Carrefour Formation), a documentation and advice centre, that offers an inventory of all possibilities in vocational training in the Liège area, the *Employment Resource Centres* (Espace Ressources Emploi) inventory of all companies and information in one region, and *Cities of Jobs* (CarEmploi) which regroup both.

For information on regional key competencies, we rely on reports written by the department "Analysis of Employment & Training Market" and the Sub regional Employment and Training Committee. The support committee also provides useful information. Other external organisations providing information are listed under question 2.

Information is presented in the form of publications, reports, statistics and analyses, very often publicly available on the Internet, but always available in print. A modest documentation centre, containing the key documents on the economic situation of the region, has been created within the framework of this project. A very good source for this sort of documents is la SPI+, the agency for regional development. Annexe 1 lists the information sources that can be found in their library.

¹ Please see project application page 29 for further explanation of regional key competencies, as it is used in this project.





4. The organisation's/the region's experiences with developing strategies, that support the regional development & the region's experience with working with scenarios
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4.1 An example of a pro-active strategy: Le Groupement de Redéploiement Economique du Pays de Liège (Group for Economic Redeployment – Liège)

4.1.1 Context of the strategies for the economic redeployment in Liège

In January 2003, the direction of ARCELOR (number 1 in the steel industry, owning 4.5% of the world market) has decided not to proceed in investment that has been promised to the steel site of Cockerill in Liège. This decision condemns, in the long term, the primary steel making in the Liège area (blast furnace, steel-mill and creation of large strips of steel). The management has accepted to spread the closing of the primary steel-making site between 2005 and 2009. This decision was made after the social movement that existed after the announcement of closure had been made. Because of the impact of the closure on human and social levels, reconversion was judged vital. The total loss of jobs is estimated on 2700.

The non-profit organisation "Avenir du Pays de Liège" (The Future of the Liège area), created in 2001 in order to reflect on the main Liège topics (dossier), created in June 2003 a specific unit for economic redeployment of the Liège Area, associated with Verviers and Huy-Waremme. A first report published in December 2003 already affirms that the secondary steel making processes of the steel industry will remain one of the main industrial pillars in Liège and that the reconstruction of the sector will pass via the development of existing companies. Transport and logistics (air-railway-waterway), new technologies developed within universities and the construction and service sector are also mentioned as main pillars.

4.1.2 Tripartite agreement and strategies for redeployment

In May 2004, an agreement was signed between la Région Wallonne (the Walloon Area), Arcelor and the non-profit organisation "Avenir du Pays de Liège" (The Future of the Liège area) in order to create structures responsible for the redeployment of Liège.

Two main areas are of concern: real estate (demolition, renovation, new destinations for abandoned industrial sites) and industrial development (development of new activities).

Real Estate

The company provides 300 hectares of future abandoned industrial sites (50% Arcelor – 50% Region Walonne via "Sopega"), via a reconversion fund sponsored by Arcelor (19.2 million Euros).





On the industrial level

The company shows willingness to contribute at the creation of 2700 jobs via an organisation called "Sodie-Liège", which will be capitalised with 20 million Euros and a financial structure will be brought into life: the non-profit organisation " Le Groupement de Redéploiement Economique du Pays de Liège (Group for Economic Redeployment – Liège).

4.1.3 Groupement de Redéploiement Economique du Pays de Liège (Group for Economic Redeployment – Liège)

Main objectives, as described in the articles of association:

- define a general plan for and, more specifically, define directive guidelines for the future of industrial sites that are now used by Arcelor but that will be free of use when the department closes down.
- assure coherence between different revitalising structures and regional tools; act as a spokesman and consultant for investors
- assure the instruction of projects that are granted financial support coming from the budget provided by Arcelor to SOPEGA (19.3 million €)
- develop a methodology that counts created jobs & assures their follow-up
- execute every activity related directly or indirectly to social matters as defined above: acquire real estate, rent buildings, realise or order scientific research, promote the region and every other action necessary to reach the social objective

The day after their first executive board, on the 16th of October 2004, GRE presented its action as follows: regroup all the regional forces and assure 3 main objectives:

- coordination of economic structures in Liège
- making it easier for investors to realise their projects
- intensify reconversion projects

Another pursued objective is to get Liège in the top 100 of European Cities (class 5 by Datar standards) in 2015, whereas today the city is 118th.

The actors

GRE is composed of regional actors for Liège: a permanent team assures the communication between them. The GRE is composed of representatives of several institutions represented in the Executive Board and of partner economic actors.

The Executive Board:

- **Politicians**, amongst which the ministry of Finance, Economy and Labour, Scientific Research
- **Trade union representatives:** FGTB – Steel & CSC- Steel





- **Arcelor** (Observer)
- **AGORIA**: multisector federation representing companies active in 11 branches of industry
- **SOPEGA**, the real estate agency. The 2 latter ones are merely observers of reconversion are distributed on a political, social and European level

Partner organisations

SPI +: regional development agency of Liège, regroups different parts of the city, took the initiative to conduct a research project called “Liège 2020” based on a method of territorial **prospection** leading to 4 scenarios for the future of the job market in Liège

Comment [AD4]: Know idea what this word means, but it isn't English

Le Forem: has established the plan “Forma Liège”, that finances training programmes adapted to the needs of the projects introduced by the GRE. Le Forem also plays an important role as “producer/set designer”: the organisation provides global information on the labour market.

MEUSEINVEST: is considered the “technician” of the GRE for all redeployment files. Meuseinvest is a development tool and redeployment tool of the province of Liège. Their strategy is investing in new companies.

Ulg: University of Liège is involved via its cell “Interface Entreprise-Université” (Interface company – University) in the creation of spin-offs (“Spinventure”, common department/partnership with Meuseinvest)

Union Wallonne des Entreprises de Liège (UWEL): Walloon Union for Companies

Agence Wallonne à l'Exportation: Walloon Export Agency

AGORIA: multisector federation representing companies active in 11 branches of industry

4.2 An example of a reactive strategy: Reconversion Units

Reconversion units are set up when the negotiation process related to company closure or collective redundancy has ended. Reconversion units were set up by trade union organisations more than 20 years ago. Today, the decree of 29th of January 2004 is the legal basis of the reconversion units.

When collective redundancy is announced in a company Le Forem is informed about this decision. Trade union representatives within the company can introduce a request to set up a reconversion unit. This request is transcribed into a note to the Executive Office, who decides whether a reconversion unit is set up or not.





Reconversion units are a quick response to collective redundancy. They promote occupational mobility and help laid-off workers to reintegrate the labour market. A reconversion unit is established close to the (former) company, whenever possible. This is done to make sure that people will benefit from the facilities and services offered by the unit.

The team focuses on three major areas: individual activities, collective activities and tailor-made solutions for individual problems. The individual activities are related to the coaching principle: after an intake session, an analysis of the job-seeker's profile is made. The team, as well as staff members of Le Forem and the social counsellors from the trade unions, assist and encourage the person in his or her search for a job. During collective activities, information sessions are given on topics related to job searches, the labour market, training offers, financial benefits,.... It helps promote the group dynamism, which is a positive element in reconversion.

Social counsellors are there to help find solutions for personal problems of all kinds.

The basis of our strategy is the experience we have in reconversion in the Walloon Region for all professional sectors. In our work, we co-operate with the following entities and organisations:

- Ministry of Economy and Employment of the Walloon Region
- Trade Unions
- Le Forem's Regional Offices
- Local actors

Notes to the Executive Offices within Le Forem give detailed information about the company closing down/downsizing.

At the end of every reconversion unit, a report is written with detailed information on the final results of a reconverion unit. An average of 75% of the workers find a solution to reintegrate the labour market. Of course, reconversion units are a reactive reply to collective redundancies; they are set up when the negotiation process has ended and when there are no other solutions left.

Development strategies for the Walloon Region can be found in the Contract for the Future of the Walloon Region (Le Contrat d'Avenir de la Région Wallonne).





5. The organisation's/the region's experiences with a strategic use of the social

dialogue²

What background does your organisation have to work with the social partners and the social dialogue?

Which organisations in your region co-operate within the frame of the social dialogue?

What is the main goal for your work with the social dialogue?

Have you registered any benefits within the work of the social dialogue in your region? If so, what kind of benefits?

The Walloon region has a long tradition of social dialogue. In the Walloon region, 70 % of workers are member of a trade union, which is a very high percentage.

Reconversion units are a partnership between Le Forem and the trade unions (CSC & FGTB), and this partnership has many benefits. Social counsellors know the public very well, and their former role as a trade union representative enables a privileged contact with the public.

The partnership helps us to find the best solutions for our public because our combined knowledge gives better result. From the basis to top level, the consultative decision-making process is highly estimated. No decision can be made without acceptance of all parties involved, whether it is in the team's weekly follow-up committee or in the Support Committee where there is parity as far as the members are concerned.

On a daily basis, this consultative decision-making process ensures that the team, both Le Forem and social counsellors, supports any decision made. This positively influences communication with the people in reconversion.

The real social dialogue, i.e. between social partners (the official workers and employers unions), is very well developed in Belgium. The social partners are very important in work relationships in Belgium. A social or labour law is generally adopted once the social partners, the official workers and employers unions, agree on its terms. This can be done at a national level through the [Work National Council](#) , at the regional level through the [Economic and Social Council of the Walloon Region](#) and the [Socio](#) – Economic Council of Flanders. It can be done in particular industrial sector through the different equal representation commissions ([Group S](#) , [Ministry of Work and Employment](#): list of the different equal representations commissions) in charge of these legal agreements.

² Social dialogue is the term used to describe a joint consultation procedure involving the social partners. It involves discussion, joint action and sometimes negotiations between the social partners and discussions between the social partners and government institutions.





In companies, trade unions are present in the Health and Security Council (companies with minimum 50 workers) and also in the Company Council (minimum 100 workers).

The social partners are also present in the management of some social security agencies and in social law courts (on the first level, for example, a professional judge is assisted by two lay judges, one from the workers union and one from the employers union). The workers union are also allowed to distribute unemployment benefits.

Employers unions

The [Federation of Belgian Companies](#) is the main employers union in Belgium.

When the federalisation was launched some regional unions appeared: the [Flemish Economic Union](#), the [Walloon company Union](#), and the [Brussels Company Union](#).

There are also company unions for a particular industrial sector. For the example, [Agoria](#) (ex-Fabrimetal) is active in technological industries, and the [Fedis](#) in the distribution sectors.

There are also some unions for independent workers and small companies, like the [Union of the Middle Classes](#) and [Unizo](#).

Workers unions

The workers unions' movement in Belgium finds its origins in the XIXth century and the two main unions, which are still national organizations, were founded by groups of several organizations with two philosophical movements.

The socialist movement, known in Belgium as the [General Federation of Belgian Workers](#), is mainly present in Wallonia. In Flanders, the leader is the [Confederation of Christian Workers Union](#). As the organisations are basically confederations, most of the members (the federations) still have their own independence and personality. The most important federations are generally those from the public sector, the metal industry and education.

A third union exists, the [General Confederation of Belgian Liberal Workers Unions](#), which is less important than the two others. To be officially considered as a representative organisation and be a member of the [Work National Council](#) of the Central Council of Economy (now replaced by regional organisations, the [Social and Economic Council of the Walloon Region](#) and the [Social and Economic Council of Flanders](#)), a workers union must have 50,000 or more members. The [National Confederation of Executives](#), (non-political), has only about 10,000 members. The employers agreed in 1986 on the principle to accept organization as a legal partner but it was rejected by others workers unions (Rem : in Belgium, executives officially do not exist as a category of workers. They generally have independent or employee contracts).

Comment [AD5]: Don't know what this is supposed to mean

[Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens](#) , [Confédération Nationale des Employés](#) , [Fédération des Instituteurs Chrétiens](#)

[SETCA-Fédération Générale des travailleurs de Belgique](#) , [SETCA Bruxelles](#) , [Fédération Générale des Travailleurs de Belgique](#) , [Fondation André Renard](#) , [Metallos FGTB](#) , [Syndicat Enseignement Libre](#) , [Syndicat Libre de la Fonction Publique](#) : socialist workers union.

[Confédération Générale des Syndicats Libéraux de Belgique](#) : liberal workers union.

[Liens de l'Institut Supérieur du Travail](#)





Annex 1: Listing representing research on the socio economic situation of the province of Liège

Liste des ouvrages et études socio-économiques sur la province de Liège

Dernière mise à jour le 19.08.2004

1. SOCIO-ECONOMIQUE

- [1.1. Observatoire Economique des Intérêts Liégeois \(OEIL\)](#)
- [1.2. COMITES SUBREGIONAUX DE L'EMPLOI ET DE LA FORMATION \(CSEF\)](#)
- [1.3. UNIVERSITE DE LIEGE \(ULG\)](#)
- [1.4. AUTRES](#)

2. TRANSPORTS / INFRASTRUCTURES / MOBILITE

3. IMMOBILIER

4. EUREGIO - Fondation Euregio Meuse-Rhin

[Autres liens intéressants pour la localisation d'ouvrages et d'études socio-économiques](#)

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