LABOUR MARKET AND ORIGIN

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC
MONITORING

UN■A
Interfederal Centre
for Equal Opportunities

FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE
Employment, Labour and
Social Dialogue

Preface

This report is already the fifth to be produced in the framework of the project "Socio-economic Monitoring: Labour Market and Origin". This project, in which the FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Unia join hands, started in 2010, after a decade of conceptual and political discussions, with a feasibility test of the linkage of National Register data with social security data. The test showed that the resulting data could indeed provide a reliable picture of the Belgian labour market according to the national origin and migration background of the people working there. This opened the door to academic and policy research and led to our first report in 2013.

Since then, work to complete the data has continued, with the addition of education data being a very important step. Through thematic analyses in successive reports, we have also highlighted new facets of the labour market. In this edition, we zoom in on education trajectories (grade repetition) and student work, two phenomena that have remained underresearched from a labour market perspective, not only in the context of origin. In this way, we also contribute to strengthening the evidence base for Belgian policy.

In addition, we break new ground in this edition by trying to make up for some of the time lag in data availability. In this way, we manage to cover the recent COVID-19 period, which has had an unprecedented impact on our labour market – from which it has recovered in an equally unprecedented way. Finally, we have also added a chapter on the posting of workers, in collaboration with Myria, the University of Antwerp and the Federal Planning Bureau. A chapter that offers a lot of material for further analysis and gives us hope that further data linkages will be developed.

The data from the Datawarehouse Labour Market and Social Protection and the Crossroads Bank Social Security remain the prerequisite for the existence of this Socio-Economic Monitoring, and we are therefore very pleased to see that the Crossroads Bank is working on a real upgrade of the Datawarehouse.

This report was presented in "avant-premiere" at the second employment conference on 14-15 June 2022 and thus prompted policy makers and social partners to reflect on how we can achieve a labour market with equal opportunities for all, irrespective of national origin, without discrimination and with the 80% employment rate to which our country has committed itself. We hope that this report will continue to serve as guide and reality check for the ideas that have emerged.

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Managing Directors Unia

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Introduction

This fifth edition of the report "Socio-economic monitoring - Labour market and origin" is a continuation of the previous editions and aims to present a picture of the labour market according to the national origin and migration background of people. This report covers the period from 2008 to 2019 and is based on administrative data taken from the Labour Market and Social Protection Datawarehouse of the Crossroads Bank Social Security. This database contains the anonymous administrative data of all persons known to the Belgian social security institutions. This makes it possible to take into account the entire population of working age. These data make it possible to identify differences in labour market participation between origin groups, as well as existing inequalities and the extent of ethno-stratification of the labour market.

In addition to the fact that the period studied is extended by three years, this report contains several new features, both analytically and thematically. This year, in addition to the two recurring and updated themes (demography and labour market), we also analyse new themes concerning the labour market position of particular groups or realities. For example, this report could not ignore the COVID-19 pandemic that broke out in 2020. Its impact has been intensively monitored, both in Belgium and by international organisations, but here, for the first time, we report on the consequences for people of foreign origin in particular. However, the comprehensive administrative data available for this report only runs until 2019. Therefore, we zoom in on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in a special chapter, based on partial CBSS data for 2020 and on data from the Labour Force Survey (Statbel) for 2020-2021. The other chapters cover the period before

2020 and thus before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report begins with a demographic description of the working age population, with a focus on educational attainment and fields of study (Chapter 1). This is followed by an analysis of the evolution of the 'classic' labour market indicators by national origin and migration background and, where possible, by gender, age, region, household type, educational attainment, and field of study (Chapter 2).

We then focus on specific themes:

› In Chapter 3 we focus on the uneven impact of COVID-19 on the labour market situation of people of foreign origin. Specifically, we examine the access of people of foreign origin to a number of employee protection measures (in particular, teleworking, and temporary unemployment) and their overrepresentation in the most affected sectors and types of employment. We then examine the extent to which the socio-economic impact has been unevenly distributed across different origin groups (impact on employment, exit into unemployment or inactivity, probability of return to work).
› In Chapter 4 'Student Jobs and Diversity', we describe the demographics and labour market situation of working students according to their national origin. In addition, we examine some specific characteristics of student jobs, such as the sector, the link to the field of study and the intensity of student work. Finally, we analyse the hypothesis that student work is an asset for later labour market entry.

› In Chapter 5 "Grade repetition" we examine delays during studies of 20-34-year-olds by origin, and by gender and level of qualification. We then examine the relationship between the employment rate and educational delay by national origin and other demographic characteristics.

› In the sixth and final chapter, 'Posted Workers', we map the scale of posting to Belgium and the provenance of workers (by sending country and nationality) between 2010 and 2020. We then analyse several characteristics (gender, age, occupational status, sector, and region of employment) of posted workers in Belgium according to their national origin.

All the data in this report are - as in previous editions - available in detail on the website of the FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue. Those who wish to do so can carry out specific analyses or choose a different angle to that proposed in this report.

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Demography

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Key elements

Demography

In **2019**, 61.5% of **the population aged 18 to 64** is of Belgian origin, 33.7% of foreign origin and 4.7% of unknown origin. Between 2008 and 2019, the share of the population of Belgian origin remained relatively stable, while the population of foreign origin increased by 9.0 percentage points and the population of unknown origin decreased by 9.0 percentage points.
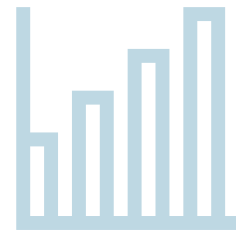
The **distribution of the foreign-born population by origin** shows that in 2019 the largest group is the EU-14 population (40.5%). Its share in the foreign-born population has decreased by 6 percentage points since 2008. The second largest group is people of Maghreb origin (16.0% in 2019) and its share remained stable between 2008 and 2019. People of EU-13 origin show the largest increase between 2008 and 2019 (3.8 percentage points).

There are **regional differences in the distribution of the population by origin**. In 2019, the population of Belgian origin constitutes the largest share of the population in Wallonia (59.6%), in the German-speaking Community (55.5%) and in Flanders (70.6%); whereas in Brussels it is the population of foreign origin that constitutes the largest share of the population (76.5%). In the four entities, people from an EU-14 country constitute the largest group of people of foreign origin. The second largest group is the one of Maghreb origin for Brussels, Wallonia, and Flanders, while in the German-speaking Community, it is the group of people of other European origin.

Level of qualification and field of study

In Belgium, in 2018, 23.6% of the 20–64 year-olds have at most a **lower secondary education degree**, 35.2% have a **higher secondary education degree** and 31.8% have a **higher education degree**. For 9.4% of the population aged 20-64, the level of education is unknown.

The analysis of persons for whom the level of education is known, shows that the share of graduates with at most **lower secondary education** among persons of Belgian origin amounts to 26.0%. People of Near/Middle Eastern (56.8%), other Asian (52.6%), Sub-Saharan African (51.1%) and EU candidate origin (50.7%) have the highest shares of people with this level of qualification. 53.4% of lower secondary graduates are in "general programmes" and 24.9% in "engineering, manufacturing and production".

The share of **upper secondary education graduates** among people of Belgian origin is 40.6%. It is lowest for people of Near/Middle Eastern (16.4%) and Sub-Saharan African (22.3%) origin. For upper secondary school graduates, 36.2% are in "engineering, manufacturing and production" and 18.9% in "social sciences, business and law".

The **share of tertiary education graduates** among people of Belgian origin is 39.1%. People of North American origin have a higher share (53.0%) than people of Belgian origin. People of EU candidate (10.5%) and Maghreb origin (17.3%) have the lowest shares. For tertiary graduates, 32.5% are in "social sciences, business and law" and 19.8% in "health and welfare".

1. **Methodological reminder**[1]

As a reminder, within the framework of the Socio-economic Monitoring, the origin of persons is apprehended in two complementary ways: via the creation of an "origin" variable and a "migration background" variable. The "origin" variable makes it possible to be more precise than indicators that stop at the nationality of the individual, by capturing in an optimal way – via the nationality at the birth of the parents or the individual – the second generation as well as persons who have become Belgian. Moreover, the "migration background" variable makes it possible to distinguish between recent and older immigrants, immigrants and members of the "second" or "third generation"[2], persons who obtained Belgian nationality or who were born Belgian to parents of foreign origin, persons who remained foreigners, etc.

The variable "**national origin**" combines the following variables: 'nationality'[3] of the individual, 'nationality at birth'[4] of the individual, 'nationality at birth'[5] of the individual's parents. The algorithm for determining origin consists of four steps that define mutually exclusive and exhaustive groups of people. For the sake of readability, the term "origin" will be used in the following. The term "origin" should therefore be understood to mean "national origin".

The first step identifies persons of foreign origin via the information available on the birth nationality of the individual or his/her parents or on the current nationality of the individual. The individual's origin will be the country corresponding to the nationality at birth of their father if this is known and not Belgian, if not, it will be the nationality at birth of his or her mother if this is known and not Belgian; if not, it will be his or her own nationality at birth if this is known and not Belgian; and finally, it will be his or her current nationality if this is known and not Belgian. with this approach, by first apprehending people of foreign origin, when one of the parents was born Belgian and the other was born foreign, priority is given to the parent whose nationality at birth is foreign. On the other hand, when the parents were born foreign and the father's nationality at birth differs from that of the mother, priority is given to the father's nationality at birth.

The second step identifies persons of Belgian origin via the nationality of the individual and the nationality at birth of the individual and his/her parents. Thus, persons of Belgian origin are those who are of Belgian nationality, born with Belgian nationality and whose two parents were born with Belgian nationality.

The third step identifies Belgian born persons for whom it is not possible to attribute Belgian origin because information on the nationality at birth of one or both parents is missing. And finally, **the fourth step** identifies persons for whom it is not possible to identify their origin because information on the nationality at birth and the current nationality is missing.

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1   See, for the details of the methodology, Chapter 1 of FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism (2015), "Monitoring socioéconomique 2015. Marché du travail et origine". Only the essential elements are recalled here.

2   With limitations in this case which are explained in the text.

3   It is important to note that when a person has dual nationality (Belgian and another nationality) on the same date, the Belgian nationality takes precedence over the other nationality.

4   This is the nationality at the time of first registration in the National Register. For the vast majority of people, it is the nationality at birth. Similarly, being "Belgian born" does not necessarily mean "born in Belgium".

5   Same as above (see above).

Groupings by nationality[6] had to be made for privacy reasons. It is important to recall that, due to the lack of information in the National Register, the national origin cannot be determined for all persons. Indeed, when the National Register was set up at the end of the 1960s, not all the necessary information (nationality, nationality at birth, nationality at birth of parents, etc.) was collected systematically by the municipalities. This is particularly true for older people. Nevertheless, the data from the three previous reports[7] showed an improvement, via a cohort effect, in the determination of origin for the older groups. Indeed, older persons for whom it was not possible to identify the nationality at birth of the parents are less present in the study population and have been "substituted" by young people for whom all the information necessary to determine origin is available.

The variable **'migration background'** combines the following variables:

›   'nationality' of the individual,
›   'nationality at birth' of the individual,
›   "nationality at birth" of the individual's parents,
›   'country of birth' of the individual,
›   'nationality at birth' of the individual's grandparents (and this only for Belgian-born persons with Belgian-born parents),
›   "date of registration in the National Register" of the individual,
›   "date of nationality obtained" by the individual.

An algorithm was constructed in five steps to define mutually exclusive and exhaustive groups of people.

The first step identifies the persons composing **the "third generation"**[8] via the individual's nationality, the nationality at birth of the individual, his/her parents, and his/her grandparents. The third generation consists of people with Belgian nationality, born with Belgian nationality, whose two parents were born with Belgian nationality. This group can be divided into five categories according to the na-

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6   **EU-14**: France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Ireland, United Kingdom, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Finland, Sweden and Austria.
    EU-13: Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia.
    EU Candidates: Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, and Serbia.
    Other Europeans: Iceland, Andorra, Lichtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, Russia, Holy See, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Bosnia-Herzegovina, etc.
    Maghreb: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, and Mauritania.
    Sub-Saharan Africa: Burundi, Cameroon, South Africa, Congo, Senegal, Rwanda, etc. It is important to note that our grouping differs from that used by the United Nations (https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49).
    Near/Middle East: Iran, Israel, Palestinian Territories, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Egypt, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.
    Oceania/Far East: China, India, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, etc.).
    Other Asian: Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, etc.
    North America: Canada, United States of America.
    Central and South America: Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, etc.
7   See FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism (2015), "Monitoring socioéconomique 2015. Marché du travail et origine", FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Unia (2017), "Monitoring socioéconomique. Marché du travail et origine - 2017" and FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Unia (2020), 'Socio-economic monitoring. Labour market and origin - 2019".
8   In this report, if an individual is a 'third generation Belgian', this means 'Belgian for *at least* three generations'. The 'third generation' therefore actually includes the third, fourth and subsequent generations. In the text, the term third generation will be used to refer to all of them.

tionality at birth of the grandparents[9]: ***Belgian*** if all four grandparents were born Belgian, ***non-EU*** if at least one of the grandparents was born with the nationality of a non-EU country (non-EU-14 and non-EU-13), EU if at least one of the grandparents was born with the nationality of an EU country (EU-14 and EU-13) ***unknown*** if the nationality at birth of all four grandparents is unknown and ***partially unknown*** when one to three grandparents were born Belgian and for the other(s) the nationality at birth is not known.

The second step identifies the individuals comprising the **second generation** via the nationality of the individual and that of his/her parents, the nationality at birth of the individual and that of his/her parents and the country of birth of the individual. The second generation as we define it is composed of individuals of Belgian nationality, born in Belgium or abroad or born in Belgium as foreigners, and is broken down into five categories according to the nationality at birth or current nationality of the parents: ***non-EU of Belgian parents, EU of Belgian parents, non-EU of foreign parent(s), EU of foreign parent(s) and undetermined***.

The third step identifies the individuals in **the first generation who have acquired Belgian citizenship**, on the one hand, for more than 5 years and, on the other hand, for 5 years or less via the individual's nationality and the date of obtaining Belgian citizenship. It is made up of individuals of Belgian nationality, born with the nationality of a country other than Belgium and having acquired Belgian nationality for more than 5 years or for 5 years or less and breakdown into four categories according to nationality at birth and the date of acquisition of Belgian nationality: ***non-EU nationals who acquired Belgian nationality more than 5 years ago, EU nationals who acquired Belgian nationality more than 5 years ago, non-EU nationals who acquired Belgian nationality 5 years ago or less and EU nationals who acquired Belgian nationality 5 years ago or less***.

The fourth step identifies the **first-generation** individuals **with foreign nationality** who have been registered in the National Register for more than 5 years and for 5 years or less, depending on the individual's nationality and the date of registration in the National Register. It consists of individuals of foreign nationality, registered in the National Register for more than 5 years or for 5 years or less, and is broken down into four categories according to nationality and date of registration in the National Register: ***non-EU registered in the National Register for more than 5 years, EU registered in the National Register for more than 5 years, non-EU registered in the National Register for 5 years or less and EU registered in the National Register for 5 years or less***.

And finally, the fifth step identifies those persons for whom it was not possible to determine a migration background because none of the variables needed to determine it were available.

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9   If at least one of his or her grandparents was born with a foreign nationality, the individual will be third generation with a foreign migration background (EU or non-EU). If more than one grandparent was born with a foreign nationality, priority will be given to the nationality at birth of the grandparents on the father's side: the nationality at birth of the grandfather will be looked at first; if the grandfather was born Belgian, the nationality at birth of the grandmother will be looked at. If both grandparents on the father's side were born with Belgian nationality, then the nationality at birth of the grandparents on his mother's side will be looked at, starting with the grandfather and then the grandmother.

2. Population by national origin and migration background

2.1. According to origin

The figure below shows the distribution of the population aged 18-64 according to the 'national origin' variable.

FIGURE 1: **Distribution of the population by origin (18-64 years, 2019)**

Population aged 18 to 64	
6.980.711	

Belgian origin[1]	4.296.053 61.5%

Foreign origin[2]	2.354.241 33.7%
EU-14[3]	953.346 13.7%
EU-13[4]	240.240 3.4%
EU Candidate	176.399 2.5%
Other European	118.255 1.7%
Maghreb	375.952 5.4%
Sub-Saharan Africa	189.874 2.7%
Near/ Middle East[5]	71.563 1.0%
Oceania/ Far East[6]	52.763 0.8%
Other Asian	82.309 1.2%
North American	15.219 0.2%
South/Central American	53.903 0.8%
Not determined	24.418 0.3%

Origin not determined	330.417 4.7%
Belgian born, one parent born belgian, the other undetermined	220.436
Belgian born, undetermined parents	109.833 1.6%
Other	148 0.0%

1 Belgian origin: persons of Belgian nationality, born in Belgium and whose parents were born in Belgium.

2 Foreign origin: persons with a non-Belgian nationality or who were born with a non-Belgian nationality or one of whose parents was born with a foreign nationality or has a foreign nationality.

3 EU-14: France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Ireland, United Kingdom, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, and Austria.

4 EU-13: Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia.
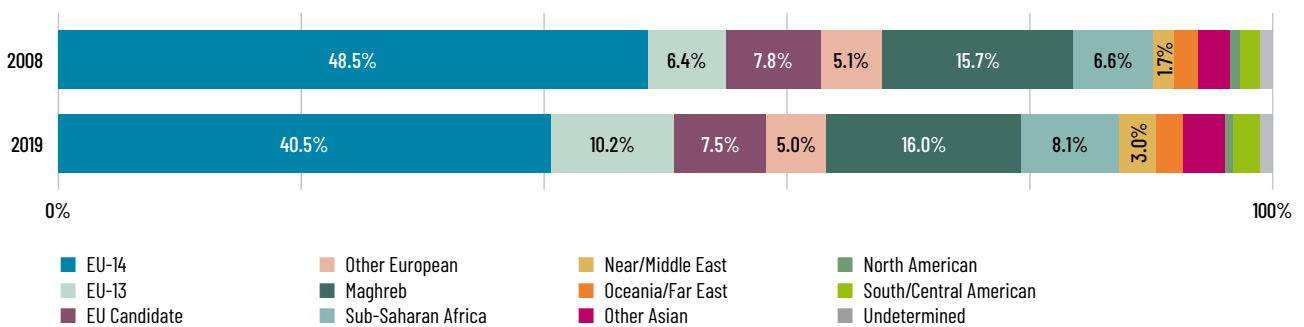
5 Near/Middle East: Iran, Israel, Palestinian Territories, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Egypt, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

6 Oceania/Far East: China, India, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Oceania.

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

In 2019, 61.5% of the population aged 18 to 64 is of Belgian origin, 33.7% of foreign origin and 4.7% of unknown origin mainly because it is impossible to determine the nationality at birth of one or both parents. Between 2008 and 2019, the share of the population of Belgian origin remained relatively stable (it increased very slightly from 2008 to 2016, from 61.5% to 62.5%, and then decreased to 61.5%

in 2019), while the share of people of foreign origin increased by 9.0 percentage points and that of people of unknown origin decreased by 9.0 percentage points[10]. The decrease in the latter group reflects, via a cohort effect as explained in the previous point, the improvement over the years in the quality of the data for determining the origin of individuals.

GRAPH 1: **Distribution of the population of foreign origin by origin (18–64 years, 2008–2019)**

	EU-14	EU-13	EU Candidate	Other European	Maghreb	Sub-Saharan Africa	Near/Middle East	Oceania/Far East	Other Asian	North American	South/Central American	Undetermined
2008	48.5%	6.4%	7.8%	5.1%	15.7%	6.6%	1.7%					
2019	40.5%	10.2%	7.5%	5.0%	16.0%	8.1%	3.0%					

- ■ EU-14
- ■ EU-13
- ■ EU Candidate
- ■ Other European
- ■ Maghreb
- ■ Sub-Saharan Africa
- ■ Near/Middle East
- ■ Oceania/Far East
- ■ Other Asian
- ■ North American
- ■ South/Central American
- ■ Undetermined

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The breakdown by origin of the foreign-born population shows that in 2019 the largest group is the EU-14[11] population (40.5%). Its share in the foreign-born population has decreased by 8.0 percentage points since 2008. The second largest group is people of Maghreb origin (16.0% in 2019) and their share remains constant between 2008 and 2019. The second largest increase between 2008 and 2019 is for people of EU-13[12] origin, with their share rising by 3.8 percentage points. Also noteworthy is the 1.5 percentage point increase in the share of people of Sub-Saharan African origin and the 1.3 percentage point increase in the share of people of Near/Middle East origin.

The distribution of the population by origin[13] varies greatly between the federated entities. In 2019, the population of Belgian origin represents the largest share of the population in Wallonia[14] (59.6%), the German-speaking Community (55.5%) and Flanders (70.6%), while in Brussels it is the population of foreign origin that constitutes the largest share of the population (76.5%). In Wallonia, the German-speaking Community and Flanders, the share of the Belgian population increases slightly between 2008 and 2019 (+1.4 percentage points in Wallonia, +0.8 percentage points in the German-speaking Community and +0.9 percentage points in Flanders), while in Brussels it decreases by 6.4 percentage points. The population of foreign origin increases in the four entities, but more strongly in Brussels (+11.7 points) than in Flanders, Wallonia and the German-speaking Community (+9.0, +7.1 and +6.6 points respectively).

10   Detailed data can be found in the annexes.
11   For a detailed analysis of persons of EU-14 origin, see the chapter on persons of EU origin in the 2019 Report.
12   For a detailed analysis of persons of EU-13 origin, see the chapter on persons of EU origin in the 2019 Report.
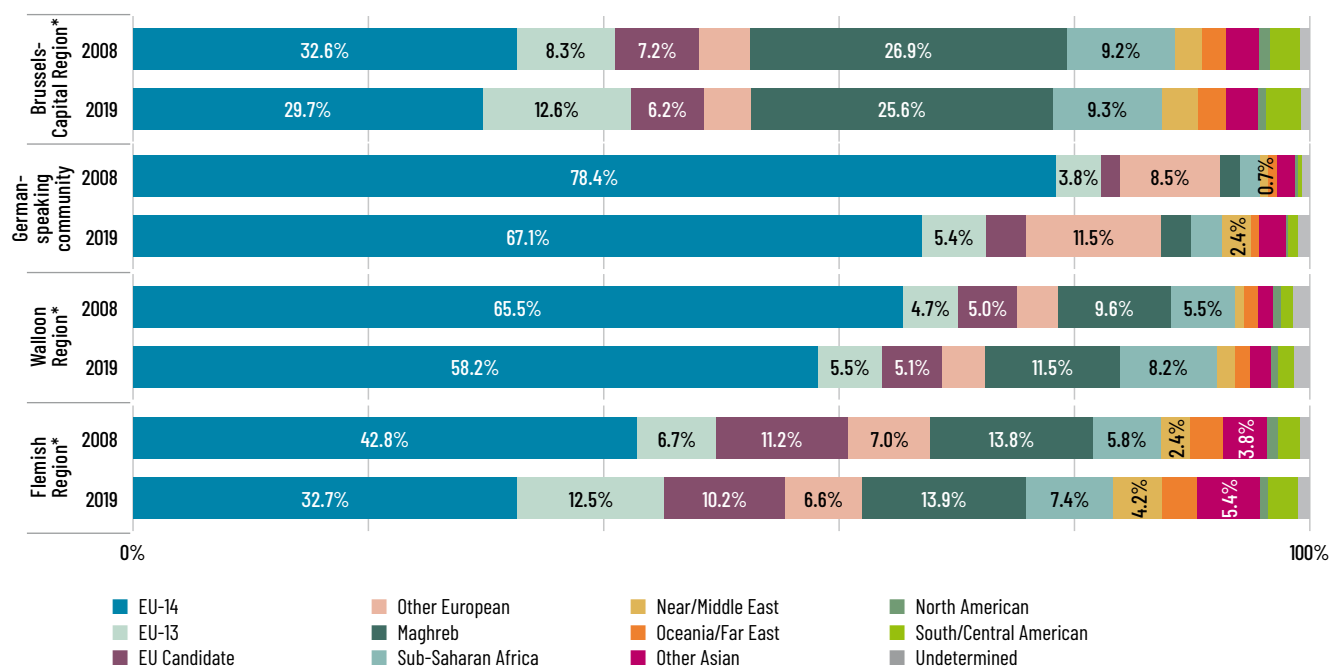13   Complete data can be found in the annexes.
14   Walloon Region without the German-speaking Community.

In the four entities, people of EU-14[15] constitute the largest group of people of foreign origin, but in very different proportions: in the German-speaking Community, this group constitutes 67.1% of people of foreign origin in 2019, 58.2% in Wallonia, 32.7% in Flanders and 29.7% in Brussels. This share decreases in all entities between 2008 and 2019, more strongly in the German-speaking Community and in Flanders (-11.3 and -10.1 percentage points respectively) than in Wallonia (-7.3 points) and Brussels (-2.9 points). The second most important group is that of Maghreb origin for Brussels, Wallonia, and Flanders, while in the German-speaking Community it is the group of people from another European country. In Brussels, the share of people of Maghreb origin amounts to 25.6%, while in Wallonia (11.5%), Flanders (13.9%) and in the German-speaking Community (2.5%) the share is much lower. While this share is stable in Flanders between 2008 and 2019, it decreases slightly in Brussels (-1.3 percentage points) and increases slightly in Wallonia (+1.9 points). In the German-speaking Community, the share of people from another European country increases by 3.0 percentage points. It is important to note the increase in the share of people from an EU-13 country by 4.3 points in Brussels and by 5.8 points in Flanders. It is also interesting to note an increase in the share of people of Sub-Saharan African origin in Wallonia (+2.7 points), Flanders (+1.5 points) and the German-speaking Community (+1.0 points), as well as people from the Near/Middle East in all four entities (+0.8 points in Brussels, +0.9 points in Wallonia, +1.7 in the German-speaking Community and +1.8 points in Flanders). The share of other groups remains relatively stable between 2008 and 2019 in all four entities.

GRAPH 2: **Distribution of the foreign-born population by origin and entity (18-64 years, 2008-2019)**

Legend:
- EU-14
- EU-13
- EU Candidate
- Other European
- Maghreb
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Near/Middle East
- Oceania/Far East
- Other Asian
- North American
- South/Central American
- Undetermined

For the sake of readability, in the following graphs we will note the regions "Brussels", "Wallonia" and "Flanders".
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

15   For a detailed analysis of persons of EU-14 origin, see the chapter on persons of EU origin in the 2019 Report.

The analysis of the data by gender remains the same as in previous reports[16]. Thus, in 2019, the population breakdown aged 18 to 64 was 50.3% men and 49.7% women. People of Belgian and EU-14 origin have a similar gender distribution to that of the population as a whole. The same origin groups as highlighted in the previous report stand out by a higher share of women: people of South/Central American origin (58.7% women) and, to a lesser extent, people from Other European countries (54.6% women), from Oceania/Far East (53.9% women), from North America (52.4% women), as well as Sub-Saharan African origin (52.0% women). People from the Near/Middle East stand out by a significantly higher proportion of men (59.4% men). There are no significant changes between 2008 and 2019[17], except for an increase of 3.4 percentage points in the share of women from the Near/Middle East (and a corresponding decrease in the share of men) and an increase of 2.1 percentage points in the share of women from Other European countries (and thus an equivalent decrease in the share of men) and a decrease of 2.8 percentage points in the share of women from other Asian countries (and thus an equivalent increase in the share of men).

2.2. Crossing of origin and migration background

As a reminder, crossing the origin variable with the migration background variable makes it possible to see within each origin the distribution between the first and second generations. And, for people of Belgian origin, to understand the origin of the third generation.

The data for the third generation indicate that, despite the improvement in data over time, it is still not possible to optimally capture this generation. Indeed, in 2019, for 25.3% of Belgian third generation individuals aged 18 to 64[18] (i.e. persons of Belgian nationality, born in Belgium, of parents born in Belgium[19]), it was not possible to retrieve exploitable information on nationality at birth for the four grandparents. This is largely because the grandparents or parents targeted by the methodology were either born, died or left the country before the National Register was set up, which makes it difficult or even impossible to collect the necessary information. This observation may also be reinforced by a cohort effect in the data: part of the second generation, for which we had no information on the parents, has children who are now in the third generation. For the latter, we therefore do not have information on the grandparents.

In 2019, 38.1% of third generation individuals had four Belgian-born grandparents, 2.1% had at least one grandparent born in an EU country and 0.2% had at least one grandparent born in a non-EU country. For 34.2% of third generation individuals, the known grandparents (i.e. one to three grandparents, the other(s) being unknown) were Belgian born (this cohort effect in the data also concerns this group). The evolution between 2008 and 2019 of the shares of the third generation for which all four grandparents were born Belgian shows, on the one hand, an improvement in the understanding of the mid-term history for the younger generations and, on the other hand, the exit of the older generations (over 64 years old) for which information on grandparents was not available.

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16 See chapter 1 Demography of FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism (2015), "Monitoring socioéconomique 2015. Marché du travail et origine', chapter 1 Demography and educational level of FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Unia (2017), 'Monitoring socioéconomique. Marché du travail et origine - 2017" and chapter 1 Demography of FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Unia (2020), "Socio-economic monitoring. Labour market and origin - 2019".

17 Detailed data can be found in the annexes.

18 As a reminder, when we talk about the third generation, we are talking about the third, fourth and subsequent generations. In the text, the term "third generation" will be used to refer to all of them.

19 People of Belgian origin.

GRAPH 3: **Distribution of the third generation of Belgian origin (18–64 years, 2008–2019)**
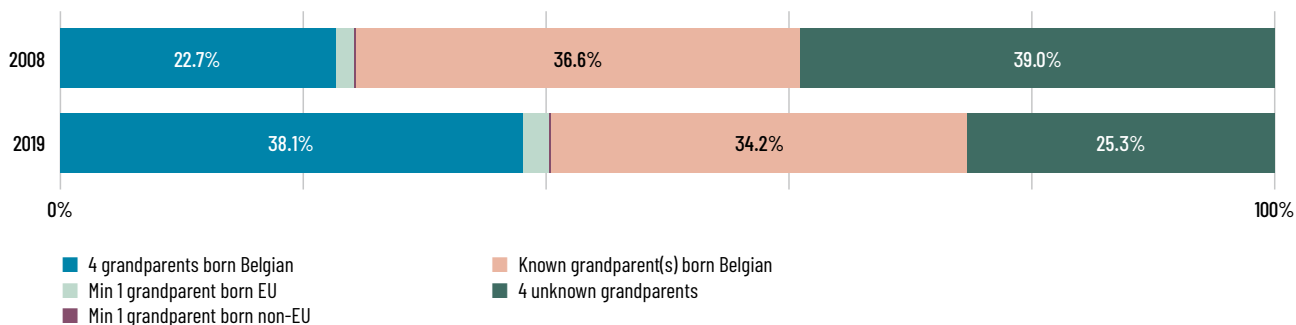
2008	22.7%	36.6%	39.0%
2019	38.1%	34.2%	25.3%

0%   100%

■ 4 grandparents born Belgian   ■ Known grandparent(s) born Belgian
■ Min 1 grandparent born EU   ■ 4 unknown grandparents
■ Min 1 grandparent born non-EU

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The detailed data for the first and second generations by origin are shown in the graph below. It can be read as follows: Among the persons originating from an EU-14 country, 21.8% are Belgian born of Belgian parents born abroad, 25.0% are Belgian born with at least one foreign parent - these first two categories constitute the second generation - 2.6% are Belgian born foreigners having obtained Belgian nationality more than 5 years ago, 2.5% are foreign-born Belgians who obtained Belgian nationality 5 years ago or less - these two categories constitute the first generation to become Belgian - 21.9% are foreigners who have been registered in the National Register for more than 5 years and 26.2% are foreigners who have been registered in the National Register for 5 years or less - these last two groups form the first generation remaining foreign.
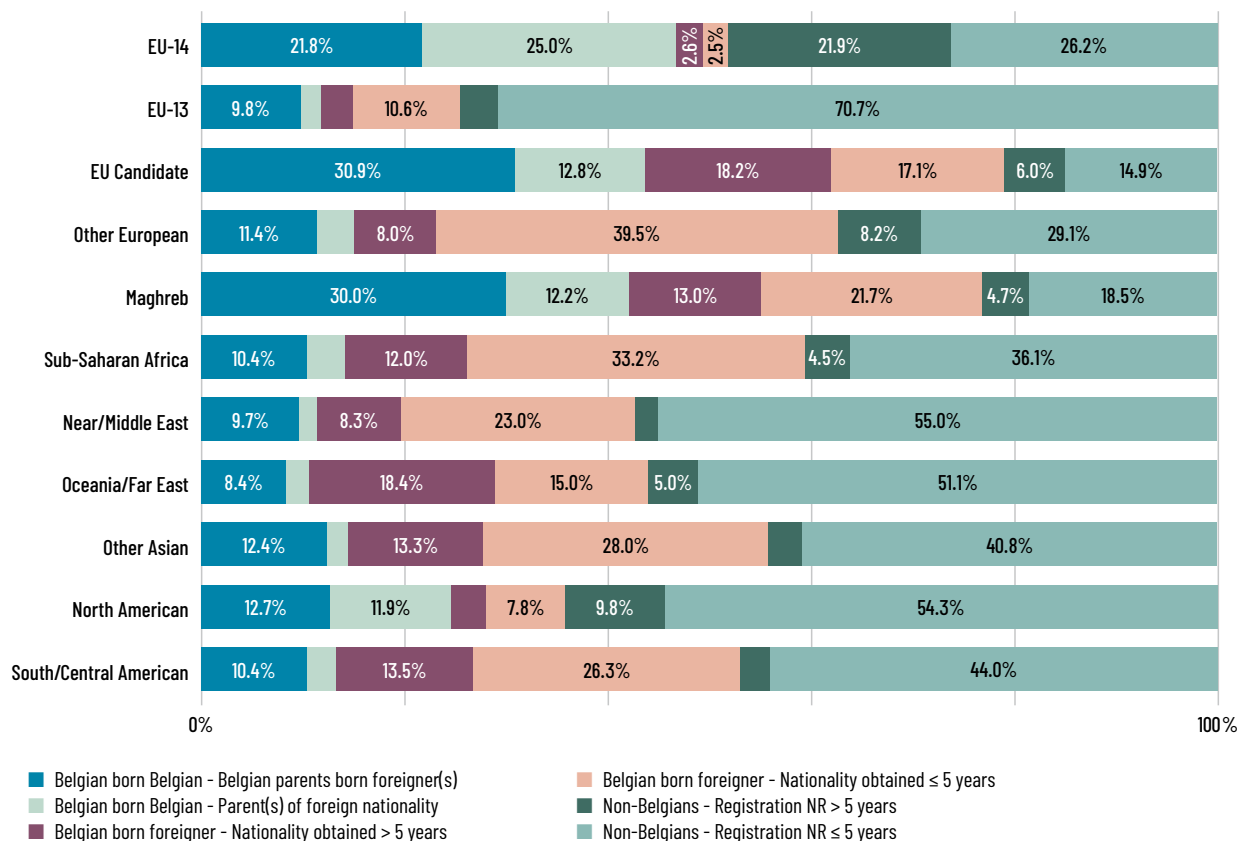
The analysis of the graph shows that, regardless of origin, the share of the first generation as a whole (i.e. those who became Belgian as well as those who remained foreign) is higher than that of the second generation as a whole. The share of the first generation is higher than 84%, except for people of EU-14, EU candidate, Maghreb and North American origin. People of EU-14, EU candidate and Maghreb origin have, due to their earlier immigration, higher shares

of second-generation people than the other origin groups (46.8%, 43.8% and 42.2% respectively). In general, between 2008 and 2019[20], the share of the second generation has increased for all origins except for those from an EU-13 country. This reflects the 'substitution' in the study population of older people for whom it was not always possible to identify the origin or migration background by younger people for whom all the information needed to determine the origin is available. And it seems that this young population belongs mainly to the second generation. The first generation, with the exception of people from an EU candidate country, another European country, and the Maghreb, is mainly made up of people with foreign nationality who have been registered in the National Register for 5 years or less. Between 2008 and 2019, the share of first-generation people as a whole has decreased for all origins except for people from an EU-13 country (+11.7 percentage points) and the Near/Middle East, which remains stable. For the latter two groups, this is due to the fact that their immigration is more recent. Indeed, there is a strong increase in the number of persons with a foreign nationality who have been registered in the National Register for 5 years or less by 21.8 percentage points for persons from an EU-13 country and by 27.0 percentage points for persons from the Near/Middle East.

GRAPH 4: **Distribution of the population by origin and migration background (18-64 years, 2019)**

EU-14	21.8%	25.0%	2.6% 2.5%	21.9%	26.2%
EU-13	9.8%		10.6%		70.7%
EU Candidate	30.9%	12.8%	18.2%	17.1%	6.0% 14.9%
Other European	11.4%	8.0%	39.5%	8.2%	29.1%
Maghreb	30.0%	12.2%	13.0%	21.7%	4.7% 18.5%
Sub-Saharan Africa	10.4%	12.0%	33.2%	4.5%	36.1%
Near/Middle East	9.7%	8.3%	23.0%		55.0%
Oceania/Far East	8.4%	18.4%	15.0%	5.0%	51.1%
Other Asian	12.4%	13.3%	28.0%		40.8%
North American	12.7%	11.9%	7.8%	9.8%	54.3%
South/Central American	10.4%	13.5%	26.3%		44.0%

0%   100%

- ■ Belgian born Belgian - Belgian parents born foreigner(s)
- ■ Belgian born Belgian - Parent(s) of foreign nationality
- ■ Belgian born foreigner - Nationality obtained > 5 years
- ■ Belgian born foreigner - Nationality obtained ≤ 5 years
- ■ Non-Belgians - Registration NR > 5 years
- ■ Non-Belgians - Registration NR ≤ 5 years

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The analysis of the data by entity leads to the same main findings[21]. Nevertheless, some particularities emerge. In Wallonia, contrary to what is observed for Belgium and for the three other entities, the share of second-generation persons as a whole originating from an EU-14 country is higher than that of the first generation as a whole[22]. Similarly, the share of second-generation people from an EU-13 country[23] is significantly higher in Belgium than in Brussels, Flanders, and the German-speaking Community. In Brussels, the share of second-generation people

from an EU-14 country is significantly lower than that observed in the other three entities. Between 2008 and 2019, it is especially important to note the significant increase in the share of the first generation who have remained foreigners in Belgium for five years or less of people from the Near/Middle East in the four entities (+38.9 percentage points in the German-speaking Community, +34.0 points in the Walloon Region, +27.5 points in Brussels and +23.1 in Flanders).

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21 Detailed data can be found in the annexes.

22 Italians represent, in 2016, 45.4% of the persons originating from an EU country in Wallonia with 66.5% of them belonging to the 2nd generation. See the chapter on people of EU origin in the 2019 Report for more details.

23 Mainly of Polish, Hungarian, and Czech origin. See the chapter on people from the EU in the 2019 Report.

3. Population by level of education and field of study

3.1. Methodology

To construct the 'level of education' variable, data from the LED (for Flanders), Saturn (for the Walloon-Brussels Federation) and CRef (for the Walloon-Brussels Federation) databases, from CENSUS 2011 and from the public employment services (VDAB, FOREM, Actiris, ADG) were used. For the details of the methodology, we refer to chapter 1 "Demography and education level" of the previous Socio-Economic Monitoring[24].

As a reminder, the level of education variable can take 4 values:

› "Low", which corresponds to ISCED[25] codes 0 to 2: no school education, primary education and lower secondary education (i.e. maximum lower secondary education). It is important to note that this level of degree includes, for persons who are or have been registered with a public employment service and for whom no information was available on the level of degree in the LED, Saturn and CRef and CENSUS databases, degrees obtained abroad but which were not recognised by the Belgian authorities. 4.3% of people aged 20-64 are in this category of foreign qualifications in 2018. People of Sub-Saharan Africa, the Near/Middle East, another European country, and another Asian country origin have the highest shares in this category with 28.8%, 27.6%, 23.9% and 21.5% of 20-64-year-olds respectively.
› "Medium", which corresponds to ISCED codes 3 to 4: upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (i.e. an upper secondary education qualification).
› "High", which corresponds to ISCED codes 5 to 6: First stage of tertiary education and second stage of tertiary education (i.e. a tertiary degree). This level of qualification will be disaggregated into bachelor, master, PhD, undefined (persons for whom the data do not allow a distinction between bachelor, master, and PhD) for some parts of the analysis.
› Unknown: degree level not indicated or missing.

The ISCED classification also contains a classification of fields of study[26]. This classification uses a three-digit code to classify fields of education and training into 'general fields' (1-digit code), 'specific fields' (2-digit code) and 'technical fields'. There are 9 general fields, 25 specific fields and 90 detailed fields. For the analysis, the general and specific fields are mainly used. The detailed domains are only used for the domains related to social and behavioural sciences (31) and health (72). The fields are as follows:

0 General programmes (basic programmes, literacy and numeracy, personal skills)
1 Education
14 Teacher training and education science
2 Humanities and Arts
21 Arts (Fine arts, performing arts, graphic and audio-visual arts, design, craft skills)
22 Humanities (Religion and theology, history and archeology, foreign languages and cultures, indigenous languages, other humanities)
3 Social sciences, Business and Law
31 Social and behavioural sciences
310 Social and Behavioural Science (general programme)
311 Psychology (psychology, conversation therapy, psychotherapy...)
312 Sociology (social geography, demography, social anthropology, ethnology, futurology...)
313 Political science (politics, political science, political history, peace and conflict studies, human rights...)
314 Economics (economics, economic history, econometrics...)

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24 For the details of the methodology, see chapter 1 Demography and education level of FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Unia (2020), "Socio-economic monitoring 2019. Labour market and origin".
25 ISCED classification 1997.
26 See for more information: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5092_fr.pdf.

32 Journalism and information (journalism, library science and technical training, archiving...)

34 Business and administration (retail, marketing, sales, public relations, secretarial and clerical work, accounting...)

38 Law (training of local magistrates, notaries, law, jurisprudence, history of law...)

4 Science

42 Life sciences (biology, botany, bacteriology, toxicology, microbiology, zoology...)

44 Physical sciences (astronomy and space sciences, physics, chemistry, geology, geophysics, mineralogy, physical geography...)

46 Mathematics and statistics (mathematics, actuarial sciences, statistics...)

48 Computer science (system design, computer programming, data processing, networks, systems...)

5 Engineering, Manufacturing and Production

52 Engineering and related techniques (industrial design, mechanics, metalworking, electronics, telecommunications, energy, and chemical engineering...)

54 Manufacturing and processing industries (food and beverage processing, textiles, clothing, mining, and extraction)

58 Architecture and building (structural architecture, landscape design, buildings, construction, civil engineering...)

6 Agriculture and Veterinary

62 Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries (agriculture, agricultural and animal production, agronomy, livestock, horticulture and gardening, forestry, flora and fauna, fisheries...)

64 Veterinary sciences (veterinary medicine, training of veterinary assistants...)

7 Health and Welfare

72 Health

720 Health (general programme)

721 Medicine (anatomy, epidemiology, paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology, internal medicine, surgery, neurology, psychiatry, radiology, ophthalmology...)

723 Nursing (basic nursing, midwifery training, etc.)

724 Dental studies (dentists, orthodontists, dental hygiene specialists, dental laboratory and dental technicians, etc.)

725 Medical diagnosis and treatment techniques (medical techniques, radiography, radiotherapy, prostheses, optical technology, etc.)

726 Therapy and rehabilitation (reeducation, optometry, nutrition/dietetics, physiotherapy, etc.)

727 Pharmacy

76 Social services (childcare, youth services, social work, vocational counselling...)

8 Services

81 Personal services (Hotel, restaurant, catering (Horeca), travel and tourism, sports and leisure, hairdressing, beauty care, cleaning, dry cleaning, home economics, etc.)

84 Transport services (training of seamen and naval officers, aircrew training, air traffic control, rail transport, road transport, etc.)

85 Environmental protection (environmental monitoring and protection, air and water pollution control, labour protection and personnel safety, etc.)

86 Security services (police and related law enforcement services, fire protection and firefighting, civil security, military security...)

The analysis of data on level of qualification and field of study has two limitations in this report. Firstly, due to how the variable "level of qualification" is constructed, these data do not allow for a complete understanding of the evolution of the level of qualification over time. The data from 2008 to 2018 included in the appendix to this report, only give an idea of the availability of the variable. Secondly, the analysis showed us that it is not possible to use this variable for people aged 18 to 19[27] for all the themes of the report.

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27 Data on educational attainment for 18–19-year-olds are too volatile.

3.2. **Level of qualification**[28]

In Belgium, in 2018[29], 23.6% of the 20–64 year-olds have at most a lower secondary education degree, 35.2% have an upper secondary education degree and 31.8% have a higher education degree. For 9.4% of the population aged 20-64, the level of education is not known.
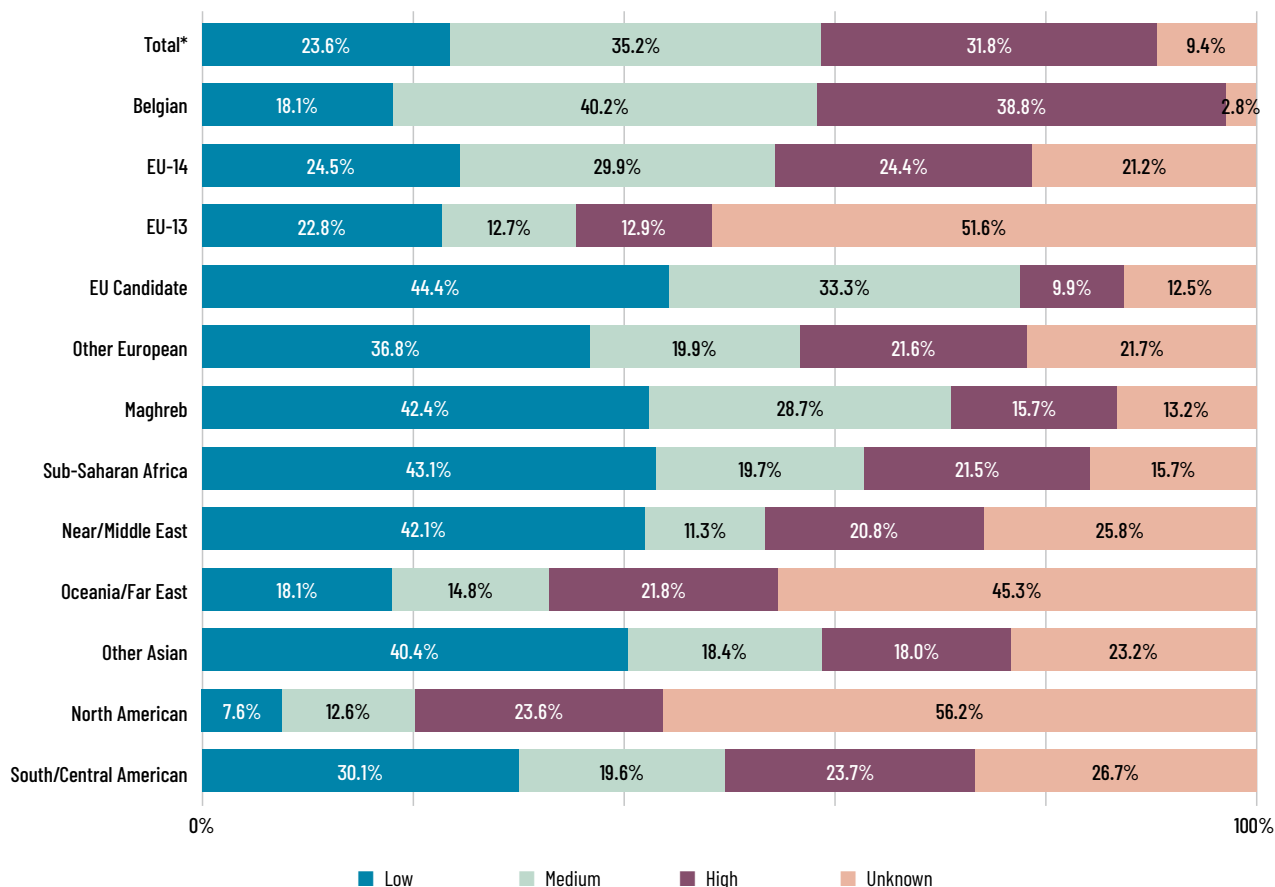
Except for people of Belgian origin, the share of people for whom the level of qualification is not known is much higher than the average observed for Belgium. It is interesting to note that this share is lowest for people of an EU candidate country (12.5%), the Maghreb (13.2%) and Sub-Saharan African (15.7%) origin. It is highest for people from an EU-13 country (51.6%) and North America (56.2%). Regardless of origin, the degree is not known mainly for foreigners who have been registered in the National Register for 5 years or less. For persons from EU-13 countries, 90.0% of the persons for whom the degree level is not known, have been registered in the National Register for 5 years or less; for persons from Oceania/Far East and North America, this percentage rises to almost 84%. It is also interesting to note that for certain origins (EU candidate, other European, Maghreb, Sub-Saharan African and other Asian), the share of persons who acquired Belgian nationality 5 years ago or less for whom the level of qualification is not known, is not negligible (between 20% and 25%).

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28   The detailed data for this entire analysis can be found in the annexes.
29   Data for 2019 are not available.

GRAPH 5: **Level of education of the population by origin (20-64 years, 2018)**

Origin	Low	Medium	High	Unknown
Total*	23.6%	35.2%	31.8%	9.4%
Belgian	18.1%	40.2%	38.8%	2.8%
EU-14	24.5%	29.9%	24.4%	21.2%
EU-13	22.8%	12.7%	12.9%	51.6%
EU Candidate	44.4%	33.3%	9.9%	12.5%
Other European	36.8%	19.9%	21.6%	21.7%
Maghreb	42.4%	28.7%	15.7%	13.2%
Sub-Saharan Africa	43.1%	19.7%	21.5%	15.7%
Near/Middle East	42.1%	11.3%	20.8%	25.8%
Oceania/Far East	18.1%	14.8%	21.8%	45.3%
Other Asian	40.4%	18.4%	18.0%	23.2%
North American	7.6%	12.6%	23.6%	56.2%
South/Central American	30.1%	19.6%	23.7%	26.7%

■ Low   ■ Medium   ■ High   ■ Unknown
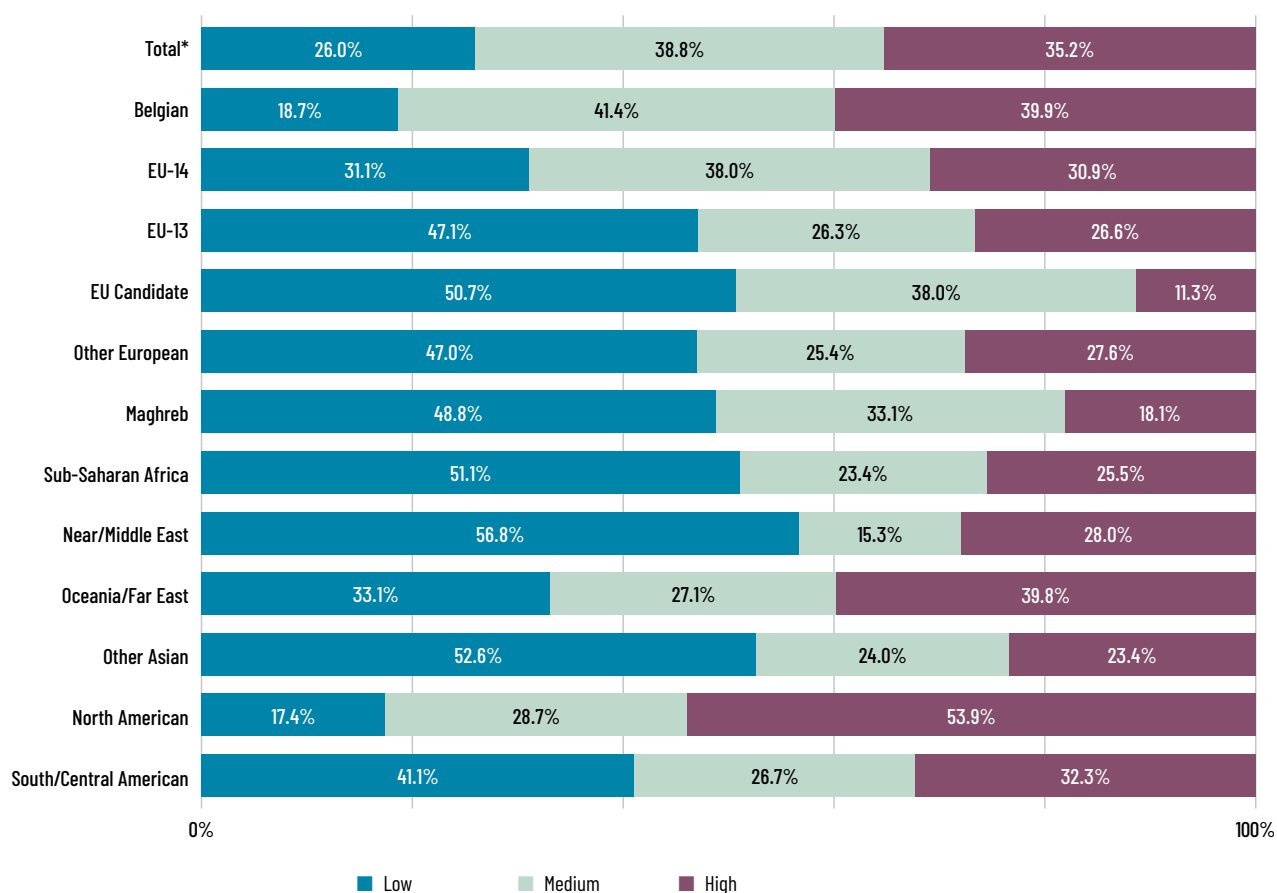
Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The analysis of persons for whom the level of education is known shows that in Belgium 26.0% of persons aged 20-64 have at most a lower secondary education degree, 38.8% have an upper secondary education degree and 35.2% have a higher education degree. There is a great diversity in the distribution of the population by level of qualification according to origin.

Thus, the share of graduates with a maximum of lower secondary education among people of Belgian origin amounts to 18.7% in 2018 and is lower than the Belgian average (26.0%). Only people of North American origin have a lower share than people of Belgian origin (17.4%). People of the Near/Middle East (56.8%), another Asian country (52.6%), Sub-Saharan Africa (51.1%) and an EU candidate country (50.7%) origin have the highest shares of people with at most a lower secondary education. For all origins, with the exception of people of Sub-Saharan African origin, the share of those with at most lower secondary education is lower for women.

GRAPH 6: **Level of education (excluding unknowns) of the population by origin (20-64 years, 2018)**

Origin	Low	Medium	High
Total*	26.0%	38.8%	35.2%
Belgian	18.7%	41.4%	39.9%
EU-14	31.1%	38.0%	30.9%
EU-13	47.1%	26.3%	26.6%
EU Candidate	50.7%	38.0%	11.3%
Other European	47.0%	25.4%	27.6%
Maghreb	48.8%	33.1%	18.1%
Sub-Saharan Africa	51.1%	23.4%	25.5%
Near/Middle East	56.8%	15.3%	28.0%
Oceania/Far East	33.1%	27.1%	39.8%
Other Asian	52.6%	24.0%	23.4%
North American	17.4%	28.7%	53.9%
South/Central American	41.1%	26.7%	32.3%

■ Low   ■ Medium   ■ High

* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The share of higher education graduates among people of Belgian origin amounts to 39.9% in 2018 and is higher than the Belgian average (35.2%). People of North America origin have a higher share of higher education graduates (53.9%) than people of Belgian origin. People of EU candidate (11.3%) and Maghreb (18.1%) origin have the lowest shares. In contrast to the situation for people with at most lower secondary education, the share of female higher education graduates is higher than the share of male higher education graduates for all origins, with the exception of people of Sub-Saharan African origin.

For upper secondary school graduates, the contrast between origins is less marked than for the other two categories of graduates. The share of upper secondary education graduates among people of Belgian origin in 2018 is 41.4% and is higher than the Belgian average (38.8%) and the share observed for other origins. The share of upper secondary school graduates is lowest for people from the Near/Middle East (15.3%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (23.4%). The analysis by gender for upper secondary graduates is also more contrasted than for the other two categories of graduates. The share of female graduates from upper secondary education is higher than the share of male graduates for people from an EU candidate country, Maghreb origin, Sub-Saharan African and Near/Middle East origin. The reverse is true for other origins. Similarly, the gender gaps by origin in the shares of tertiary graduates are generally smaller than those observed for the other two degree categories.

TABLE 1: **Level of education (excluding unknown) of the population by origin and entity (20-64 years, 2018)**

	Brussels			Flanders			Wallonia			German-speaking community		
	Low	**Medium**	**High**	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**
Total*	36.6%	23.2%	40.1%	21.8%	42.4%	35.8%	30.7%	36.5%	32.7%	38.3%	36.6%	25.0%
Belgian	15.8%	23.4%	60.8%	16.0%	44.1%	40.0%	24.9%	37.8%	37.3%	34.2%	37.9%	28.0%
EU-14	28.9%	20.1%	51.0%	26.3%	44.2%	29.5%	34.6%	38.8%	26.5%	40.6%	38.4%	20.9%
EU-13	56.5%	11.2%	32.3%	46.0%	31.2%	22.8%	40.5%	30.4%	29.1%	40.4%	35.1%	24.4%
EU Candidate	56.7%	29.7%	13.6%	46.9%	43.0%	10.1%	54.6%	33.1%	12.3%	72.3%	20.3%	7.3%
Other European	45.2%	19.3%	35.5%	45.7%	28.3%	26.0%	50.4%	23.0%	26.6%	56.9%	26.7%	16.5%
Maghreb	51.9%	28.9%	19.2%	44.4%	40.7%	15.0%	50.6%	28.2%	21.2%	44.7%	33.5%	21.8%
Sub-Saharan Africa	51.1%	20.3%	28.6%	53.6%	25.1%	21.3%	48.1%	24.3%	27.6%	52.3%	27.9%	19.8%
Near/Middle East	51.0%	14.1%	34.9%	59.4%	16.0%	24.6%	56.2%	13.8%	30.0%	47.3%	29.7%	23.0%
Oceania/Far East	30.4%	18.8%	50.8%	34.2%	28.3%	37.5%	32.2%	29.9%	37.9%	34.7%	37.6%	27.7%
Other Asian	47.9%	21.9%	30.2%	55.2%	24.6%	20.3%	47.2%	23.9%	28.8%	51.7%	27.1%	21.2%
North American	11.3%	14.4%	74.3%	17.1%	34.5%	48.4%	22.7%	28.9%	48.4%	:	:	:
South/Central American	45.6%	19.4%	35.0%	39.9%	30.9%	29.2%	36.6%	28.2%	35.3%	42.2%	26.5%	31.3%

Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The analysis of the data by entity shows that the share of higher education graduates in Brussels is higher than in the other three entities (Walloon Region, Flemish Region and German-speaking Community) for all origins, with the exception of people of Maghreb origin in the German-speaking Community and Wallonia, and people of South/Central American origin in Wallonia. In all three regions, people of Maghreb origin and an EU candidate country have particularly low shares of higher education graduates. In the German-speaking Community, people from an EU candidate country and from another European country have the lowest shares of higher education graduates. The low share of higher education graduates in the German-speaking Community should be seen in the light of the fact that a significant proportion of students go to university outside Belgium, mainly to Germany. Unfortunately, the degree(s) obtained by these people are not recorded in the databases used to determine the level of education.

The share of higher education graduates in Brussels is, in 2018, higher than that of the other two categories of diplomas. This is only the case for people of Belgian origin, from an EU-14 country, Oceania/Far East and North America. On the other hand, in Wallonia and Flanders, it is the share of graduates with upper secondary education that is higher than that of the other two categories of diplomas. This is only the case for people of Belgian origin and from an EU-14 country. In both regions, except for persons of Belgian origin, EU-14, Oceania/Far East and North America, the shares of persons with at most a lower secondary qualification are higher than those of the other two qualification categories. In the German-speaking Community, the share of people with at most a lower secondary degree is also the highest. This is true for all origins except for people of Belgian and Oceania/Far East origin (the share of higher education graduates is the highest).

In Belgium, the share of upper secondary school graduates is higher than the shares of other degree categories for 20–29-year-olds. While for the 30–54-year-olds, it is the share of people with a higher education degree that is the highest (but very close to the share of upper secondary graduates). For 20–29-year-olds, the share of upper secondary graduates is higher than the other two degree cat-

egories for all origins except EU-13, Sub-Saharan Africa, Near/Middle East, other Asian countries and North America. For the 30-54 age group, the share of tertiary education graduates is higher than for the other two-degree categories for people of Belgian origin (but this share is very close to that of upper secondary education graduates - 43.4% versus 41.5% - so there is a small share of people in this age group with at most lower secondary education), Oceania/Far East and North American origin. For the other origins in this age group, the share of those with a maximum of lower secondary education is the highest (except for people from EU-14 countries for whom the share of upper secondary education graduates is the highest). The share of tertiary graduates among 55–64-year-olds is higher than the other two education categories only for people of North America origin. For the other origins, the share of lower secondary graduates in this age group is the highest. For people from an EU candidate country and Maghreb origin, this phenomenon is particularly important.

The overall analysis according to migration background[30] shows that the more recent the generations, the higher the share of people with at most lower secondary education, while the share of upper secondary education graduates decreases. For higher education graduates, the picture is more contrasted.

GRAPH 7: **Level of education (excluding unknowns) of the population by origin and migration background (20-64 years, 2018)***

			EU-14	EU-13	EU Candidate	Other European	Maghreb	Sub-Saharan Africa	Near/Middle East	Oceania/Far East	Other Asian	North-American	South-/Central-American
2nd generation	Belgian parents born foreigner(s)	Low	21.3%	21.6%	24.2%	21.7%	24.8%	21.9%	15.5%	13.2%	13.9%	16.3%	13.5%
		Medium	45.1%	42.5%	60.4%	47.3%	53.1%	46.7%	39.1%	43.1%	46.2%	41.1%	44.5%
		High	33.7%	35.9%	15.4%	30.9%	22.1%	31.4%	45.4%	43.7%	39.9%	42.6%	42.0%
	Parent(s) of foreign nationality	Low	26.0%	39.3%	33.3%	30.1%	30.4%	27.4%	23.8%	15.4%	19.2%	16.9%	20.8%
		Medium	44.3%	41.2%	54.7%	42.4%	50.8%	43.9%	39.9%	42.8%	52.8%	42.0%	45.4%
		High	29.7%	19.5%	12.0%	27.5%	18.8%	28.7%	36.2%	41.8%	28.0%	41.1%	33.8%
1st generation	Nationality obtained > 5 years	Low	43.0%	23.3%	62.4%	36.7%	51.1%	28.3%	24.6%	18.5%	34.5%	11.7%	24.1%
		Medium	35.1%	36.5%	29.3%	37.0%	30.9%	35.1%	31.2%	42.3%	37.0%	31.9%	42.8%
		High	21.8%	40.2%	8.3%	26.2%	18.0%	36.6%	44.2%	39.3%	28.6%	56.4%	33.2%
	Nationality obtained ≤ 5 years	Low	40.2%	42.9%	70.0%	47.8%	64.7%	52.3%	55.1%	51.4%	56.8%	11.3%	45.0%
		Medium	33.2%	26.4%	20.6%	23.9%	17.4%	22.5%	16.6%	17.5%	21.7%	16.3%	22.9%
		High	26.6%	30.7%	9.4%	28.3%	17.9%	25.2%	28.2%	31.1%	21.5%	72.4%	32.1%
	Registration NR > 5 years	Low	38.3%	61.4%	78.2%	64.2%	69.7%	59.2%	61.5%	32.2%	58.2%	15.4%	49.1%
		Medium	35.1%	20.1%	18.5%	17.9%	23.0%	20.6%	18.0%	24.1%	23.7%	27.4%	25.2%
		High	26.6%	18.5%	3.3%	17.9%	7.3%	20.2%	20.4%	43.7%	18.1%	57.2%	25.8%
	Registration NR ≤ 5 years	Low	40.5%	60.4%	79.0%	59.4%	78.7%	70.1%	75.0%	49.5%	76.0%	25.5%	59.3%
		Medium	18.2%	18.0%	8.3%	10.5%	7.4%	10.8%	4.6%	5.9%	7.9%	6.9%	11.8%
		High	41.3%	21.7%	12.7%	30.2%	13.9%	19.1%	20.3%	44.6%	16.1%	67.5%	28.9%

* The length of the bars in the graph is calculated within each generation (2nd generation, 1st generation that obtained Belgian nationality, 1st generation that remained foreign) for all origins. The longest bar will correspond to the highest value of the whole selected generation, the size of the other bars of this selection will be proportional to the longest bar.

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

For the second generation, the share of upper secondary education graduates is higher than for the other two categories of qualifications. Second generation people whose parents became Belgian from the Near/Middle East, Oceania/Far East and North America are distinguished by a higher share of higher education graduates. Also noteworthy is the particularly low share of higher education

30 As a reminder, regardless of origin, the degree is not known mainly for foreigners registered in the National Register for 5 years or less.

graduates for the second generation from an EU candidate country and the Maghreb, as well as for the second generation with one or two foreign parents from an EU-13 country.

The first generation is characterised by a higher share of graduates with a maximum of lower secondary education than the other diploma categories. The first generation who obtained Belgian nationality more than 5 years ago from the EU-13, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Near/Middle East, and North America are characterised by higher shares of tertiary education than the other two degree levels; similarly, first generation persons from Oceania/Far East and South/Central America have higher shares of upper secondary education than the other two degree levels. The newly arrived foreign first generation (i.e. present in Belgium - registered in the National Register for 5 years or less) from North America stands out with a higher share of tertiary education graduates than the other two degree levels, and people of this generation from the EU-14 with almost identical shares of lower secondary and tertiary education graduates at most. Recent arrivals from an EU-14 country and from another European country[31] have higher shares of tertiary graduates than other migration backgrounds of the same origin.

3.3. **Field of study**[32]

For 22.9% of the population aged 20-64, it is not possible to assign a field of study. The main reasons are that this information is de facto not available for people for whom we do not have the degree level (see point 3.2) but also because our secondary education system is not qualifying or professionalising for a part of the students. Indeed, for 25.1% of the persons having at most a lower secondary educa-

tion degree, this information is not available. One of the explanations is that the first degree of general secondary education does not include a technical or vocational orientation (common first level). On the other hand, this data may be available for graduates of lower secondary social promotion education. The field of study is not available for 14.5% of the persons with an upper secondary education degree. Again, this is explained, among other things, by the fact that part of the second and third level of ordinary secondary education does not have a technical or vocational orientation (general education). On the other hand, this data may be available for vocational, technical, and artistic education as well as for upper secondary social promotion education. Finally, for 7.6% of the graduates of higher education the field of study is unknown.

The table below, showing the main fields of study (excluding unknowns), for all levels of qualification, shows that 23.3% of the population has a degree in 'engineering, manufacturing and production', 21.0% in 'social sciences, business and law' and 19.1% in 'general programmes'.

The data by degree level (see table below) indicate that 53.4% of the maximum lower secondary school graduates are in 'general programmes' and 24.9% in 'engineering, manufacturing and production'. For upper secondary school graduates, 33.5% are in the field of "engineering, manufacturing and production" and 18.0% in "social sciences, business and law". And finally, for higher education graduates, 32.9% are in 'engineering, manufacturing industries and production' and 18.0% in "social sciences, business and law" (of which 19.4% in 'business/economics and administration') and 19.6% in "health and welfare" (of which 5.9% in nursing and 5.1% in 'social services').

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31   For people from another European country this share is almost identical to that of the second generation of parents who became Belgian and much higher than that of the other generation sub-categories.

32   The detailed data for this entire analysis can be found in the annexes.

TABLE 2: **Major fields of study (excluding unknowns) of the population by level of education (20-64 years, 2018)**

	Total	Low	Medium	High
General programmes	19.1%	**53.4%**	17.6%	0.0%
Education	5.9%	0.1%	0.2%	15.1%
Humanities and Arts	6.5%	5.4%	4.8%	8.8%
Social sciences, Business and Law	**21.0%**	6.0%	**18.0%**	**32.9%**
Science, Mathematics and Computing	3.8%	1.6%	1.6%	7.4%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Production	**23.3%**	**24.9%**	**33.5%**	12.0%
Agriculture and Veterinary	1.9%	1.0%	2.1%	2.1%
Health and Welfare	11.7%	2.1%	9.5%	**19.6%**
Services	7.0%	5.4%	12.7%	2.2%

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The fields of study in which the share of men is higher than that of women are "sciences" (66.3% men), "engineering, manufacturing and production" (82.4% men), "agriculture and veterinary sciences" (73.5% men) and "general programmes" (52.0% men). For the other fields, the share of women is higher than that of men. "Education" and "Health and welfare" stand out with 76.2% and 79.4% women respectively. The gender analysis (see table below) shows that men are mainly graduates in the field of "engineering, manufacturing and production" (34.1% for lower secondary school graduates, 53.7% for upper secondary school graduates and 22.8% for higher education graduates) and also in "general programmes", but only for lower secondary school graduates (51.6%) and in "social sciences, business and law" (33.0%) for higher education graduates.

Women are mainly graduates in "social sciences, business and law" (25.7%) and in "health and welfare" (18.5%). But clearer differences than those observed for men exist according to their level of qualification. Thus, women with at most a lower secondary education degree are mainly in "general programmes" (55.8%) and in the field of "engineering, manufacturing and production" (13.6%), women with an upper secondary education degree are mainly in "social sciences, business and law" (26.4%), in "general programmes" (19.0%) and in the field of "services" (18.8%). Finally, women graduating from higher education are mainly in "social sciences, business and law" (32.9%), in the field of "health and welfare" (26.1%), but also in "education" (20.3%).

TABLE 3: **Distribution over fields of study (excluding unknowns) by gender and level of education (20-64 years, 2018)**

	Men				Women			
	Low	**Medium**	**High**	**Total**	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Total**
General programmes	**51.6%**	16.3%	0.0%	**19.9%**	55.8%	19.0%	0.0%	**18.3%**
Education	0.1%	0.1%	8.3%	2.8%	0.2%	0.3%	20.3%	8.9%
Humanities and Arts	4.7%	4.1%	8.2%	5.6%	6.4%	5.5%	9.2%	7.3%
Social sciences, Business and Law	3.2%	10.7%	**33.0%**	16.2%	9.4%	**26.4%**	32.9%	25.7%
Science, Mathematics and Computing	1.5%	1.9%	11.7%	5.0%	1.7%	1.2%	4.1%	2.5%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Production	**34.1%**	**53.7%**	**22.8%**	**38.5%**	13.6%	10.5%	3.7%	8.2%
Agriculture and Veterinary	1.7%	3.2%	2.9%	2.7%	0.2%	0.8%	1.5%	1.0%
Health and Welfare	0.6%	2.5%	10.9%	4.8%	3.9%	17.5%	**26.1%**	**18.5%**
Services	2.6%	7.3%	2.1%	4.4%	8.7%	**18.8%**	2.2%	9.6%

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

In all four entities, the two main fields of study for lower secondary school graduates are "general programmes" and "engineering, manufacturing and production". For upper secondary graduates in Brussels, Wallonia, and the German-speaking Community, the two main fields of study are again "general programmes" and "engineering, manufac-turing and production". In Flanders, on the other hand, it is "engineering, manufacturing and production" and "social sciences, business and law". And for higher education graduates, "social sciences, business and law" and "health and welfare" are the two most important fields in the four entities.

GRAPH 8: **Distribution over broad fields of study (excluding unknown) by level of education and entity (20-64 years, 2018)**
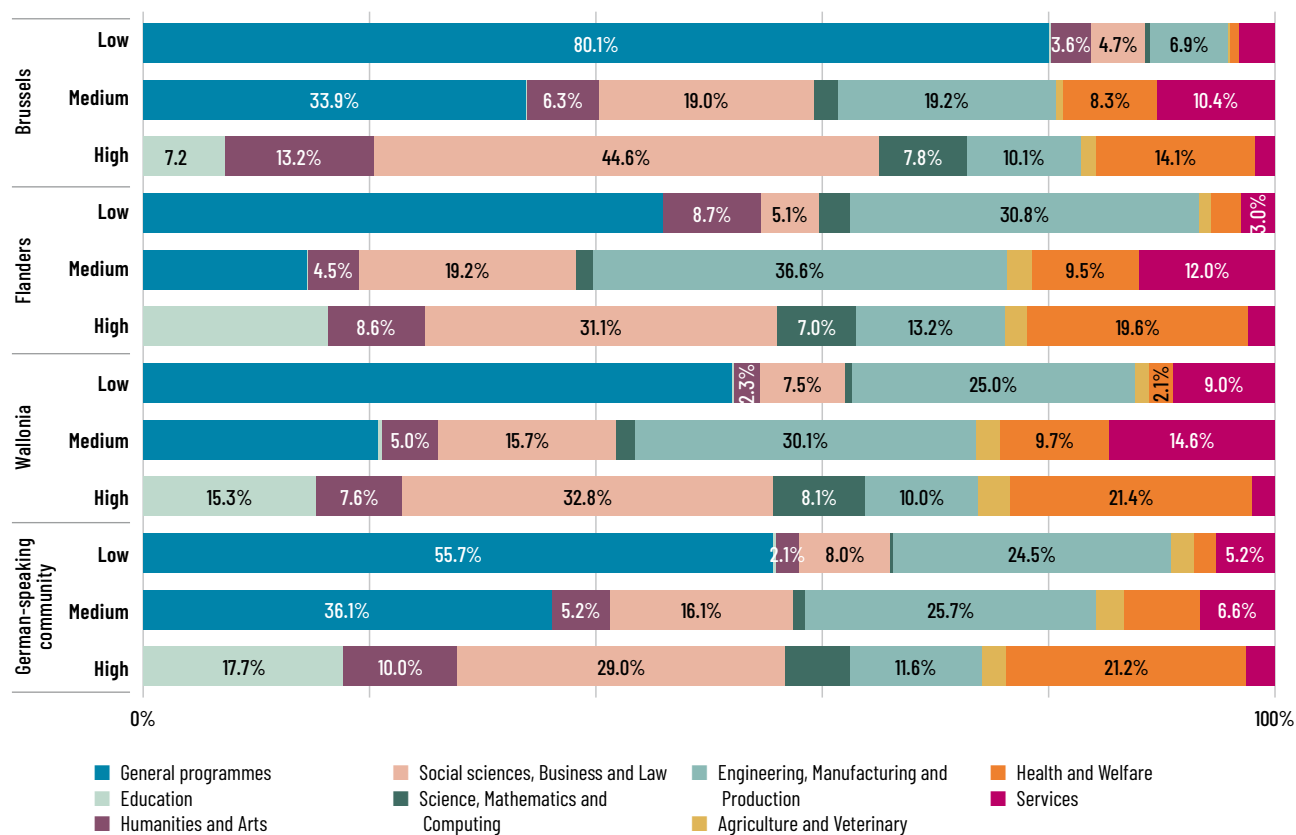
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

For most of the origins, the two main fields are "general programmes" and "social sciences, business and law". However, for people of Belgian origin, the two main fields are "social sciences, business and law" and "engineering, manufacturing and production". For people from an EU-13 or an EU candidate origin, the main field is indeed the "general programmes". but the second field is "engineering, manufacturing and production". For those from the Near/Middle East and other Asian countries, while the main field is again "general programmes", "humanities and arts" is the second field.

GRAPH 9: **Distribution over broad fields of study (excluding unknown) by origin (20-64 years, 2018)**
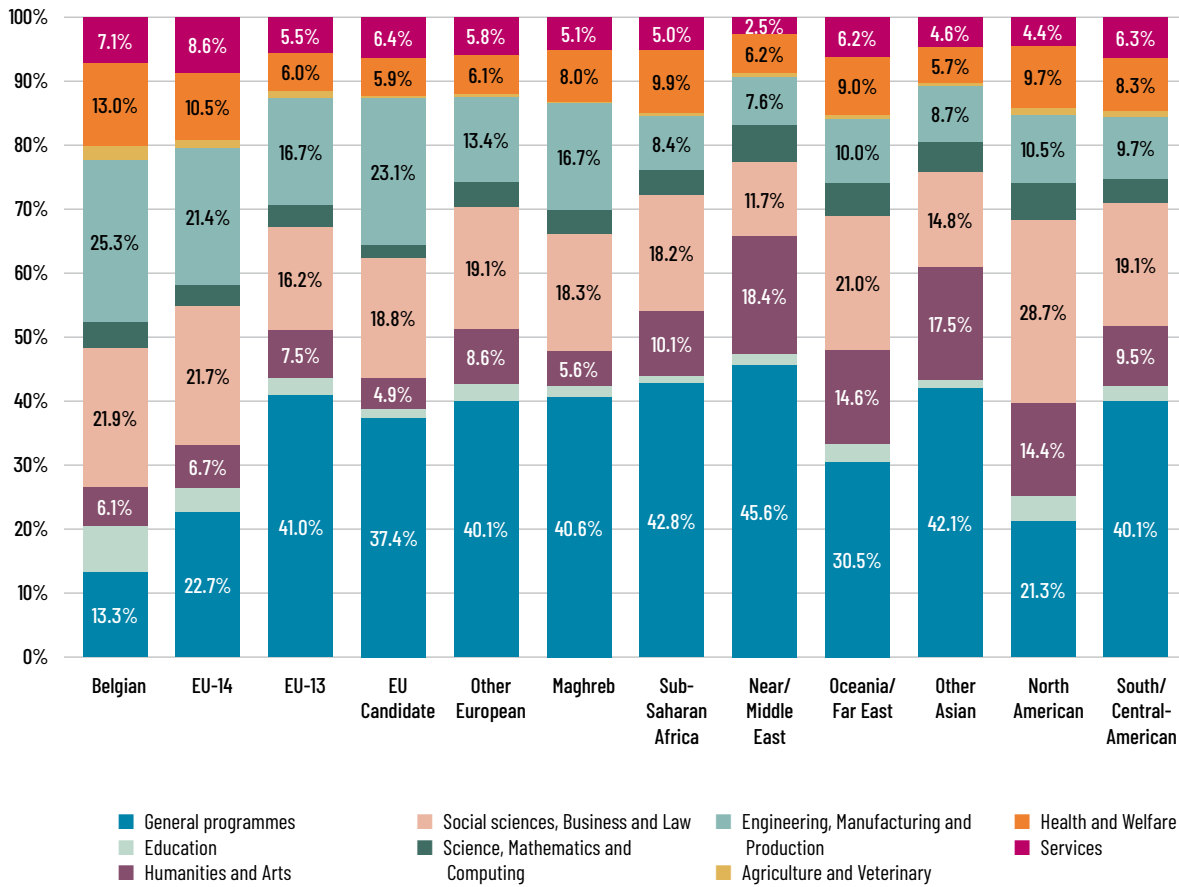
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The main field of study (see table below) for graduates of lower secondary education, for all origins, is "general programmes". The second most important field of study is "engineering, manufacturing and production" for those of Belgian, EU-14, EU-13, EU candidate, Maghreb, and North American origin, and "humanities and arts" for the other origins.

For upper secondary school graduates, the fields of "engineering, manufacturing and production" and "social sciences, business and law" are the most important. However, for those from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Near/Middle East, Oceania/Far East, other Asian countries, and South/Central America, the two main fields of study are "general programmes" and "social sciences, business and law". For those of EU-13 and North American origin, it is "general programmes" and "engineering, manufacturing and production".

TABLE 4: **Distribution over broad fields of study (excluding unknowns) by origin and level of qualification (20-64 years, 2018)**

	Belgian	EU-14	EU-13	EU Candidate	Other European	Maghreb	Sub-Saharan Africa	Near/Middle East	Oceania/Far East	Other Asian	North American	South/Central American
Low												
General programmes	**41.5%**	**56.3%**	**75.8%**	67.9%	74.6%	71.4%	71.6%	66.7%	67.5%	64.7%	72.4%	78.8%
Education	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	:	:	:	:	0.1%
Humanities and Arts	2.8%	3.3%	6.7%	6.4%	**8.0%**	7.4%	15.1%	25.1%	20.6%	25.8%	4.1%	**8.1%**
Social sciences, Business and Law	7.0%	7.3%	2.5%	4.5%	3.5%	5.1%	3.0%	1.1%	2.2%	1.5%	7.0%	2.9%
Science, Mathematics and Computing	1.5%	0.9%	1.3%	1.3%	1.9%	1.7%	2.7%	4.0%	1.8%	3.6%	:	1.8%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Production	**36.0%**	**22.1%**	**9.5%**	**15.2%**	7.2%	**9.9%**	3.7%	1.8%	3.2%	2.3%	**10.1%**	4.0%
Agriculture and Veterinary	1.8%	0.7%	0.5%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	:	0.3%	0.1%	:	0.2%
Health and Welfare	2.7%	2.4%	0.8%	1.2%	1.1%	1.4%	1.2%	0.2%	1.2%	0.4%	:	1.4%
Services	6.7%	6.9%	2.9%	3.3%	3.3%	3.0%	2.3%	0.9%	3.2%	1.5%	3.7%	2.7%
Medium												
General programmes	16.7%	17.5%	**21.3%**	13.0%	16.7%	19.9%	**26.0%**	33.6%	29.7%	26.0%	36.4%	26.0%
Education	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	:	0.4%	0.1%	:	0.2%
Humanities and Arts	4.8%	5.5%	5.8%	2.7%	5.4%	3.2%	4.3%	5.0%	7.3%	6.0%	9.2%	7.8%
Social sciences, Business and Law	**17.1%**	**19.0%**	15.5%	27.9%	26.8%	25.3%	21.2%	20.4%	19.0%	21.9%	15.2%	**19.7%**
Science, Mathematics and Computing	1.6%	1.5%	1.8%	1.3%	2.0%	2.1%	1.6%	2.5%	1.6%	2.2%	2.1%	1.6%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Production	**35.0%**	**30.3%**	**33.2%**	**35.5%**	25.9%	28.3%	17.5%	19.8%	14.1%	20.6%	**16.5%**	17.7%
Agriculture and Veterinary	2.5%	1.3%	1.8%	0.2%	0.6%	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%	1.0%	0.6%	1.5%	0.9%
Health and Welfare	9.6%	9.6%	7.4%	8.2%	8.6%	11.1%	14.7%	7.7%	12.0%	9.1%	7.9%	11.1%
Services	12.6%	15.0%	13.1%	11.1%	13.8%	9.7%	14.0%	10.4%	15.0%	13.5%	10.9%	15.1%
High												
Education	16.2%	11.1%	9.7%	11.0%	9.7%	8.7%	3.7%	6.9%	7.0%	6.1%	6.8%	7.0%
Humanities and Arts	8.5%	11.1%	10.5%	6.3%	13.2%	5.5%	5.2%	9.9%	14.5%	8.2%	19.8%	12.9%
Social sciences, Business and Law	**31.7%**	**37.3%**	**40.7%**	**44.2%**	40.1%	39.3%	46.4%	33.0%	38.1%	42.1%	41.1%	**40.8%**
Science, Mathematics and Computing	7.1%	7.6%	8.8%	7.0%	9.0%	11.3%	8.3%	11.7%	10.2%	10.8%	8.9%	8.4%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Production	12.3%	10.2%	12.5%	12.0%	11.9%	13.0%	9.6%	14.7%	12.9%	12.6%	7.7%	10.4%
Agriculture and Veterinary	2.3%	1.7%	1.4%	0.7%	1.0%	1.0%	1.6%	1.8%	1.0%	1.2%	1.3%	1.8%
Health and Welfare	**19.8%**	**18.6%**	13.8%	16.5%	12.9%	19.1%	23.1%	20.3%	13.6%	15.8%	12.9%	15.2%
Services	2.1%	2.5%	2.5%	2.4%	2.1%	2.0%	2.0%	1.7%	2.7%	3.1%	1.5%	3.4%

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

And finally, for higher education graduates, the two main fields of study are "social sciences, business and law" and "health and welfare". People of Other European countries, Oceania/Far East and North America origin stand out by a higher share in "humanities and arts" at the expense of "health and welfare". Although for the first two origins, the shares of graduates in "humanities and arts" and "health and welfare" are very similar.

Still for higher education graduates[33], people of Sub-Saharan African origin also stand out for having a lower share in the subfield of 'nursing' than that observed for other origins (8.4% compared to 6.0% for native Belgians and between 1.7% and 4.9% for other origins) and by an extremely low share in teacher training (3.7% compared to 16.2% for native Belgians and between 6.1% and 11.1% for other origins). All origins have a higher share of law graduates than Belgians of origin (3.5%). People of Sub-Saharan African origin but also from an EU-13 country stand out with the highest shares of law graduates (9.0% and 9.8% respectively). People of an EU candidate country origin have a much higher share of graduates in business and administration (28.6%) than Belgians of origin (19.2%) and other origins (between 15.1% and 23.9%). People of the Near/Middle East origin have much higher shares of graduates in physical sciences (5.3%), engineering and related techniques (10.9%), medicine (5.5%) and dental studies (2.9%) than Belgians of origin (1.9%, 8.8%, 2.1% and 0.4% respectively) and other origins. Finally, people of other Asian countries origin have a higher share of computer science graduates (5.6%) than Belgians of origin (3.5%) and other origins (between 2.7% and 5.0%).

The analysis of higher education graduates indicates that, irrespective of origin and gender, the most important field of study is "social sciences, business and law". Except for people of Belgian origin, the share of women in this field of study is higher than for men. The second most important field of study is "engineering, manufacturing and production" for men of all origins (except for persons of North American origin who are found in "arts and humanities") and "health and welfare" for women of all origins (except for persons of Oceania/Far East and North American origin who are found in "arts and humanities"). It is also interesting to note that the share of women in teacher education is much higher than that of men. The opposite is observed in the field of "engineering, manufacturing and production". Although women have a higher share than men in the field of "social sciences, business and law", it is interesting to note that in the subfield of "business and administration" for people of Belgian, EU-14 and other European origin, the share of men is higher than that of women. While women of all origins clearly have higher shares than men in the subfield of "nursing", this share is particularly high for women of Belgian, EU-14 and Sub-Saharan origin.

3.4. Focus on people with a higher education degree[34]

For a large proportion of higher education graduates, it is possible to distinguish between bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees. To capture as much as possible the attainment of degrees requiring 5 years or more of study, the analysis will be based on the population aged 25-64.

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33 As upper secondary graduates are, irrespective of origin, mostly concentrated in the subfields of engineering and related techniques and business and administration, the detailed analysis by subfield by gender and region will only focus on tertiary education.

34 The detailed data for this entire analysis can be found in the annexes.

GRAPH 10: **Level of tertiary education attainment of the population by origin (25-64 years, 2018)**
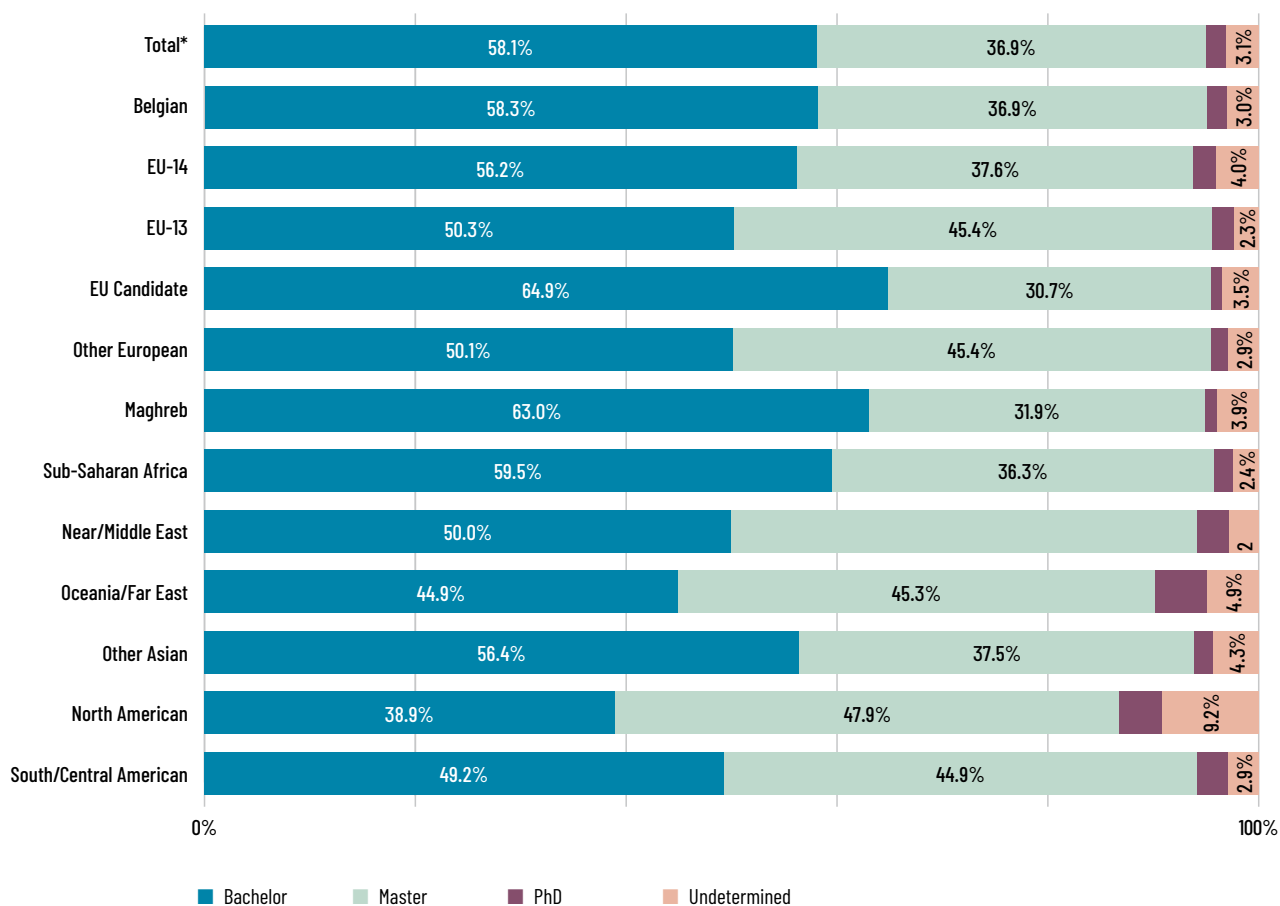
Origin	Bachelor	Master	PhD / Undetermined
Total*	58.1%	36.9%	3.1%
Belgian	58.3%	36.9%	3.0%
EU-14	56.2%	37.6%	4.0%
EU-13	50.3%	45.4%	2.3%
EU Candidate	64.9%	30.7%	3.5%
Other European	50.1%	45.4%	2.9%
Maghreb	63.0%	31.9%	3.9%
Sub-Saharan Africa	59.5%	36.3%	2.4%
Near/Middle East	50.0%		2
Oceania/Far East	44.9%	45.3%	4.9%
Other Asian	56.4%	37.5%	4.3%
North American	38.9%	47.9%	9.2%
South/Central American	49.2%	44.9%	2.9%

■ Bachelor ■ Master ■ PhD ■ Undetermined

* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

In Belgium, 58.1% of the higher education graduates have a bachelor's degree, 36.9% a master's degree, 1.9% a PhD and 3.1% an unknown degree. People of Belgian, EU-14, Sub-Saharan and other Asian origin have a relatively similar distribution to the Belgian average. People of an EU candidate country and Maghreb origin stand out with an above-average share of bachelor's degrees and a below-average share of master's degrees. The latter two origin groups, together with people of Sub-Saharan African origin, are also the only ones with a lower share of master's degrees than the Belgians of origin. People of Oceania/Far Eastern origin have a more balanced distribution between bachelor and master shares than the other origins. Graduates from North America are the only ones

to have a higher share of master's than bachelor's degrees. And finally, people of Oceania/Far East and North American origin have significantly higher shares of PhD degrees than other origins.

The breakdown by gender shows that the share of men with a master's degree is higher than that of women (42.8% against 32.3%) and the share of men with a bachelor's degree is lower than that of women (51.6% against 63.1%). This is true for all origins, except for women from an EU-13 country and another European country, who have a higher share of master's level graduates than men. Similarly, whatever the origin, the share of men with a PhD is higher than that of women.

TABLE 5: **Level of tertiary education of the population by origin and region (25-64 years, 2018)**

	Brussels				Flanders				Wallonia			
	Bachelor	Master	PhD	Undetermined	Bachelor	Master	PhD	Undetermined	Bachelor	Master	PhD	Undetermined
Total*	**41.7%**	**53.0%**	**2.3%**	**3.0%**	**58.2%**	**36.0%**	**2.0%**	**3.7%**	**63.7%**	**32.8%**	**1.5%**	**2.0%**
Belgian	37.8%	57.7%	2.6%	1.9%	58.3%	36.1%	2.0%	3.6%	62.4%	34.4%	1.5%	1.7%
EU-14	36.5%	55.9%	2.9%	4.7%	55.1%	36.4%	3.0%	5.5%	67.9%	28.5%	1.3%	2.4%
EU-13	36.3%	60.0%	1.9%	1.8%	51.3%	43.6%	2.5%	2.5%	63.9%	32.2%	1.6%	2.3%
EU Candidate	56.2%	39.3%	1.2%	3.3%	65.1%	29.8%	1.2%	3.9%	73.4%	23.4%	0.5%	2.7%
Other European	38.3%	57.4%	1.6%	2.7%	46.8%	48.1%	2.0%	3.2%	70.0%	26.5%	1.0%	2.5%
Maghreb	59.3%	35.6%	1.1%	4.0%	64.9%	29.7%	1.0%	4.3%	67.2%	28.1%	1.4%	3.3%
Sub-Saharan Africa	56.4%	40.2%	1.3%	2.1%	59.2%	35.7%	1.9%	3.1%	63.0%	32.8%	2.3%	1.9%
Near/Middle East	39.3%	55.4%	2.6%	2.7%	54.0%	40.0%	3.1%	2.9%	57.7%	36.6%	3.3%	2.3%
Oceania/Far East	36.2%	55.8%	3.1%	5.0%	42.1%	45.7%	6.5%	5.7%	60.4%	33.9%	2.6%	3.1%
Other Asian	47.7%	46.5%	1.5%	4.3%	59.0%	34.5%	1.8%	4.7%	60.9%	33.9%	2.4%	2.9%
North American	29.3%	56.0%	5.4%	9.3%	40.8%	45.7%	3.7%	9.8%	47.6%	41.9%	3.0%	7.5%
South/Central American	43.5%	51.8%	2.2%	2.5%	49.0%	43.7%	3.7%	3.7%	59.5%	35.8%	2.4%	2.3%

Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The analysis by region[35], see table above, shows that in Brussels the share of graduates with a master's degree is higher than that of graduates with a bachelor's degree (53.0% compared to 41.7%), unlike what is observed for the two other entities (36.0% compared to 58.2% in Flanders and 32.8% compared to 63.7% in Wallonia). In Brussels, people from an EU candidate country, the Maghreb, Sub-Saharan Africa, and another Asian country stand out by having a higher share of bachelor's degrees than master's degrees. The share of PhDs in Brussels (2.3%) is higher than the Belgian average (1.9%) as well as that observed in the other entities.

In Flanders, people from another European country, from Oceania/Far East and North American origin have a higher share of master's degrees than bachelor's degrees. People from an EU candidate country as well as from Maghreb origin also stand out with a significantly higher share of bachelor's degrees than the other origins. In Wallonia, people from an EU candidate country as well as from another European country, have a significantly higher share of bachelor's degrees than other origins. People of Near/Middle East and North American origin have much higher shares of master's degrees than other origins.

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35 The situation in the German-speaking Community is not analysed due to the underestimated share of higher education in the data.

TABLE 6: **Broad fields of study (excluding unknowns) for the population by origin and level of qualification (bachelor or master)(25-64 years, 2018)**

	Education	Humanities and Arts	Social sciences, Business and Law	Science, Mathematics and Computing	Engineering, Manufacturing and Production	Agriculture and Veterinary	Health and Welfare	Services
Bachelor								
Total*	**22.8%**	**5.4%**	**28.4%**	**7.1%**	**8.5%**	**1.6%**	**23.7%**	**2.6%**
Belgian	24.5%	5.2%	27.0%	7.0%	8.4%	1.7%	23.9%	2.4%
EU-14	17.1%	7.3%	32.7%	6.9%	7.9%	1.2%	23.0%	3.8%
EU-13	14.4%	7.3%	35.0%	7.2%	12.1%	1.3%	18.9%	3.8%
EU Candidate	14.9%	3.7%	41.7%	7.1%	10.4%	0.5%	18.1%	3.5%
Other European	14.4%	8.7%	38.2%	7.1%	10.1%	0.9%	17.5%	3.1%
Maghreb	11.9%	3.7%	36.4%	10.2%	12.2%	0.5%	22.1%	2.9%
Sub-Saharan Africa	5.2%	3.6%	42.4%	7.2%	9.3%	0.8%	28.6%	2.7%
Near/Middle East	12.0%	9.7%	31.4%	10.2%	14.7%	1.3%	17.6%	3.1%
Oceania/Far East	12.3%	11.2%	36.5%	7.2%	7.3%	0.8%	19.4%	5.3%
Other Asian	9.5%	6.9%	41.4%	10.1%	8.8%	0.7%	17.8%	4.7%
North American	12.7%	15.1%	35.8%	8.2%	7.0%	:	17.2%	:
South/Central American	11.0%	10.6%	36.0%	5.8%	8.6%	1.4%	20.9%	5.7%
Master								
Total*	**3.5%**	**14.2%**	**41.2%**	**7.4%**	**17.1%**	**2.6%**	**12.4%**	**1.7%**
Belgian	3.6%	14.0%	40.2%	6.9%	18.0%	2.8%	12.6%	1.9%
EU-14	2.7%	16.9%	44.9%	8.0%	13.6%	2.1%	11.0%	0.8%
EU-13	5.4%	13.8%	48.0%	9.7%	12.8%	1.4%	7.8%	1.3%
EU Candidate	3.2%	11.5%	49.0%	6.9%	16.4%	1.1%	11.5%	0.5%
Other European	5.6%	18.2%	41.8%	10.6%	13.9%	1.1%	7.7%	1.2%
Maghreb	2.9%	9.0%	45.4%	13.1%	15.2%	1.8%	12.0%	0.6%
Sub-Saharan Africa	1.7%	7.0%	52.8%	9.8%	10.1%	2.5%	15.3%	0.9%
Near/Middle East	3.3%	10.4%	35.3%	13.0%	14.1%	2.0%	21.3%	0.7%
Oceania/Far East	2.6%	18.4%	42.7%	12.4%	14.5%	1.1%	7.5%	0.7%
Other Asian	2.7%	9.3%	44.5%	11.5%	16.8%	1.7%	12.2%	1.4%
North American	2.8%	22.5%	46.6%	8.7%	8.4%	1.2%	8.9%	0.9%
South/Central American	3.3%	15.1%	46.7%	10.5%	11.6%	2.2%	9.2%	1.4%

Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

In Belgium, **<u>bachelor</u>** graduates are almost equally divided between three main fields of study: "education" (22.8%), "social sciences, business and law" (28.4%) and "health and welfare" (23.7%). While this distribution is almost identical for people of Belgian origin, this is not the case for the other origins, for which the field of "social sciences, business and law" is much more dominant (from 31.4% for people of Near/Middle East origin to 42.4% for people of Sub-Saharan African origin). Those with a bachelor's degree in the field of "social sciences, business and law" are predominantly in the sub-field of "business and administration", irrespective of their origin. The second most important sub-field is "law"; but while this field concerns only 1.0% of graduates of Belgian origin, this percentage is much higher for other origins (from 2.7% for people from an EU-14 country to 7.1% for those of Sub-Saharan origin). People of Sub-Saharan African origin also differ in having a higher share of graduates in the field of "health and welfare" (mainly in 'nursing') and Belgian origin in the field of "education". Apart from people of Belgian origin, the two fields of study for **women** remain, regardless of origin, "social sciences, business and law" (especially in the subfield "business and administration") and 'health and welfare' (especially in the subfield 'nursing'). Women from Sub-Saharan Africa are clearly over-represented in these two fields - especially in the subfields of 'Business and administration', 'law' and 'nursing'. For women of Belgian origin, it is "health and welfare' and 'education'. While for **men** the main field of study is still "social sciences, business and law", the second most important field is "engineering, manufacturing and production", except for men from Oceania/Far East and other Asian countries, for whom it is "sciences", and for men from North and South/Central America, for whom it is "arts and humanities".

<u>Master</u> graduates are mostly in the field of "social sciences, business and law" (41.2%), the second most important field being "engineering, manufacturing and production" with a share of graduates of 17.1%. This is true for people of Belgian, EU candidate, Maghreb, and other Asian origin. For graduates from Sub-Saharan Africa and the Near/Middle East, the second most important field is "health and welfare". For the other origins, the second most important field is "humanities and arts". Those with a master's degree in "social sciences, business and law" are mainly in the sub-field 'business and administration'; this is true for all origins except for those of EU-13 origin for whom the main sub-field is 'law' - almost equally with 'business and administration'. The share of master's level graduates in the sub-field of "business and administration" is significantly lower than that observed for bachelor's level graduates. The second most important subfield is 'law', whose share is significantly higher than that of bachelor graduates. For both **men** and **women**, the main field remains "social sciences, business and law" - especially in the subfields 'business and administration' and 'law'. The second main field for **men** is "engineering, manufacturing and production" for all origins, except for men from the Near/Middle East for whom it is "health and welfare" and men from North America for whom it is "humanities and arts". For **women**, regardless of origin, the second main field is "humanities and arts" (especially in the subfield of 'humanities') except for female graduates from EU countries, the Maghreb, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Near/Middle East, and other Asian countries for whom it is "health and welfare".
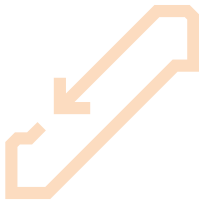
02
Labour Market

02
Key elements

Labour market developments by national origin

This chapter shows that there are **large differences** between the positions of different groups on the Belgian labour market. Although positive trends can be observed for all origin groups in 2017-2019, people of foreign origin are still less likely to be employed and, if they are, it is often in less sustainable and less qualitative positions.

The **employment and activity rates** have been **corrected** for **cross-border employment**. The correction increases the employment rate significantly, especially for the Belgian origin (difference of 1.0 percentage point) and even more so for the EU-14 origin (+3.5 percentage points).

The **differences in employment and unemployment rates** relative to people of Belgian origin have narrowed for all national origins compared to 2016 (the previous edition).

The **inactivity rate** decreases for **all groups**, but people of Belgian origin are less often inactive than other origins. When inactive, the over-55s of Belgian origin are most often retired, while those of other origins are most often unable to work.

The **differences** between people of **Belgian and foreign origin** are significant, even when the degree level and field of study are identical. For example, for master's degrees in 'health care and social protection' of Belgian origin, the employment rate is still 12.2 percentage points higher than for people of non-EU origin (94.4% versus 82.2%), although they have the highest employment rate.

There is a **wage gap** between people of Belgian and foreign origin, even with the same degree level and a similar field of study. Each additional year of study is therefore less rewarding for people of foreign origin.

The wage gap between national origins has indeed narrowed between 2016 and 2019, while the **gap between degree levels** has widened. This may be due to the increased tightness in the labour market, which has mainly increased the demand for people with higher education.

Workers of foreign origin are more likely than those of Belgian origin to be employed as blue-collar or temporary workers, and their average employment duration is shorter.

Women of foreign origin are strongly overrepresented in the service voucher system, especially those from the EU-13 origin group. Most of them have been registered in the National Register for 5 years or less, including those with higher education.

People of foreign origin who simultaneously belong to the group of people with at most a lower secondary education certificate, who are older than 55, or who are women/mothers and/or recent migrants, have even more difficulties to **participate in the labour market in a sustainable and qualitative way**. Therefore, they deserve special attention in policies.

In this chapter, we examine the main labour market developments for the Belgian working age population (18-64 years)[1], broken down by national origin and migration history, since the previous edition[2]. We will specifically analyse the distribution of the different origin groups that are employed, unemployed, or inactive, the mobility between these different positions and the various characteristics of the workers (such as wage level, the economic sector in which they work[3], their professional status, and work regime). In addition, the impact of variables such as gender, region, age, level of education, field of study, and family situation will also be systematically considered.

The figures available to us at the time of writing this chapter run until the end of 2019. Overall, 2018 and 2019 were particularly favourable years for the Belgian labour market - which is also reflected in most of the trends described in this chapter - but, as the reader knows, in 2020 the whole world was confronted with an unforeseen shock that brought most activities to an abrupt halt. In a separate chapter we will therefore examine, based on partial data for 2020 and 2021, the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the socio-economic situation of different origin groups.

1. Employment, unemployment, and inactivity

As in the previous edition of this report, people of Belgian origin still have the highest **employment rate** in 2019: it has increased from 72.2% in 2016 to 75.5% in 2019. After adjusting the 2019 rate for cross-border workers[4], it even rises to 76.3%. For the total population, the employment rate rose from 64.7% to 67.1% (69.2% including frontier work). Adjusting for frontier work only increases the employment rate for most origin groups by 0.6 percentage points or less. The difference is only large for the origin group (a difference of 1.0 percentage point) and for the EU-14 origin group (+3.5 percent-

age points). In the remainder of this chapter, we will always give the employment or activity rate corrected for frontier work, except when we explicitly state that this is not the case. Note that these figures cannot be compared with those of previous editions, as we could not make this correction at the time[5].

People from the Near/Middle East still have the lowest employment rate in 2019 (40.6%) despite an increase of more than 6 percentage points since 2016[6]. Over the period 2011-2019, the em-

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1   As 18–19-year-olds are still very often students - and therefore inactive - they have not been included in the calculation of the employment rate. The employment rate therefore expresses the number of people aged 20-64 in paid employment - whether as employees, self-employed, self-employed helpers or a combination of these - as a percentage of the population aged 20-64. Inactivity figures cover 25-64 year olds, as the inactive between 18 and 24 years of age are mainly in the category "children receiving child benefit". The inactivity rate represents the number of people who are neither employed nor unemployed as a percentage of the population in the same age category. Finally, the unemployment rate is defined as the number of unemployed persons (registered as jobseekers with the employment services) aged 18-64 expressed as a percentage of the active population (workers and unemployed) aged 18-64.

2   FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Unia (2020), "Socio-economic monitoring. Labour market and origin-2019".

3   Data by Joint Committee can be found in the statistical annexes. Fact sheets on the Joint Committees are also available in French and Dutch in the Annex, see https://emploi.belgique.be/fr/statistiques.

4   In previous editions, frontier workers (who do not have to pay Belgian social security contributions) were not included in workers because they were not registered as such. For this edition, we have included them in the population of workers.

5   In the statistical annexes on employment and inactivity, the figures since 2011 are adapted following the correction made for frontier work.

6   However, it should be borne in mind that the share of newcomers (registered for 5 years or less in the National Register) within this origin has increased dramatically between 2008 and 2019 (from 28% to 55.0%). See chapter "Demography". A large proportion of these are therefore people who still face specific barriers (such as language, unrecognised qualifications, finding accommodation, etc.).

ployment rate increased for all origins, with the largest increases for people of Other European origin, followed by people of Sub-Saharan Africa, South/Central America origin, and from EU-13 origin. The increase was most limited for people from the Near/Middle East, for whom the trend was still negative in the years preceding 2016. Both Near/Middle East and EU-13 origins have a high proportion of people who have been in the National Register for 5 years or less, but the EU membership of the latter group likely makes labour market integration somewhat easier than for non-EU newcomers.

The **unemployment rate** continues to fall without exception for all origin groups. It remains lowest for people of Belgian origin (falling from 4.8% in 2016 to 3.6% in 2019) and highest for people of Maghreb origin (falling from 19.4% to 15.6%). As a result, the unemployment rate gap with respect to people of Belgian origin in 2019 remains most pronounced

for people of Maghreb origin, followed by people of Sub-Saharan African origin - two groups where the share of people with Belgian nationality (1st and 2nd generations combined) has nevertheless increased significantly since 2008[7].

The graph below gives an overview of the differences in employment and unemployment rates between people of foreign origin and people of Belgian origin. In all cases, the gap has narrowed compared to 2016, which can be attributed to the growing labour shortage on our labour market and the positive economic climate. Nevertheless, people in Belgium born outside the EU still have the lowest employment rate of all EU Member States in 2019. In addition, the gap between people of Belgian origin and people with a migration history is significantly larger in Belgium than the average for EU countries[8].

GRAPH 11: **Difference in employment rate (20–64 years) and unemployment rate (18-64 years) by origin compared to people of Belgian origin, in percentage points (2016/2019)**
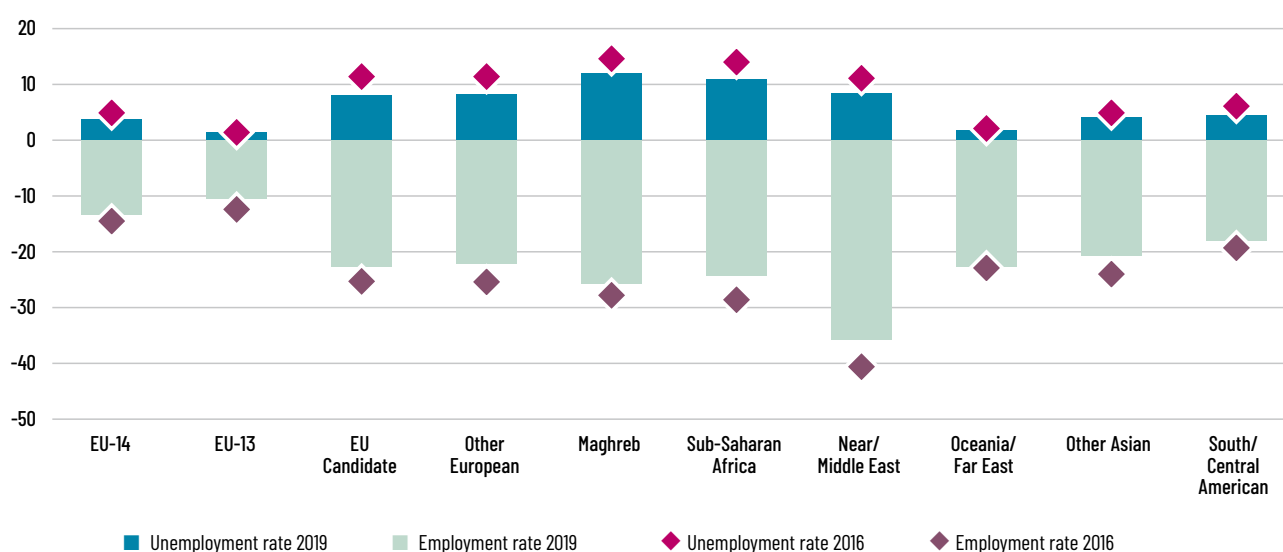
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The **inactivity rate** decreases for all origin groups but remains lowest for people of Belgian origin (17.6% in 2019) and highest for people of Near/

Middle Eastern origin (50.6%), which is not surprising given their low employment rate. In the case of people of North American origin, it should be

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7   See chapter "Demography".

8   Exactly comparable administrative data for the whole of the EU are not available. This comparison is therefore based on the employment rate and the unemployment rate according to the Labour Force Survey (Statbel and Eurostat). Figures available at https://emploi.belgique.be/fr/statistiques.

taken into account that a large proportion of the so-called inactive group is presumably employed at international organisations such as NATO, which incorrectly registers them as inactive given that they do not have to pay social security contributions in Belgium.

The largest decreases in the inactivity rate since the previous edition were recorded for people of Sub-Saharan Africa, the Near/Middle East, and the EU-13 origin.
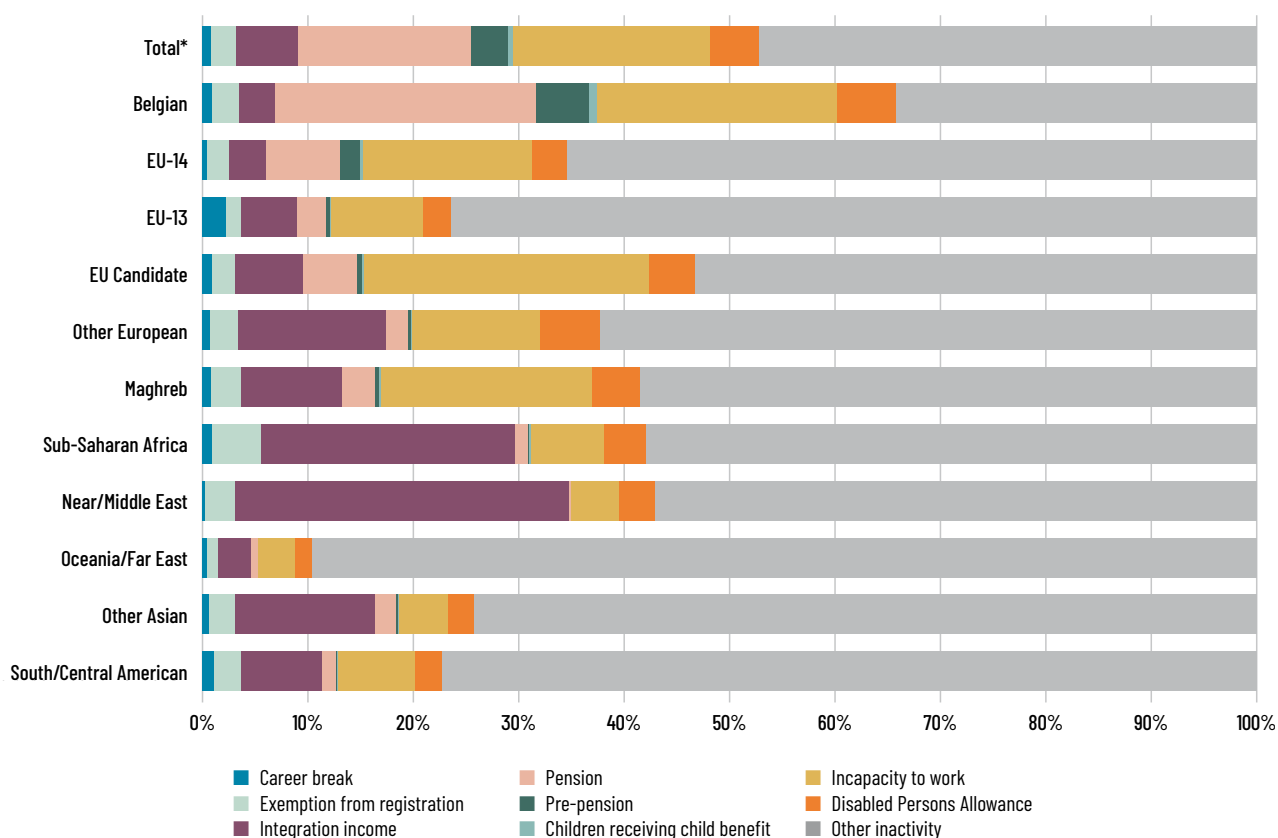
GRAPH 12: **Inactivity rate by origin (25-64 years, 2017-2019)**
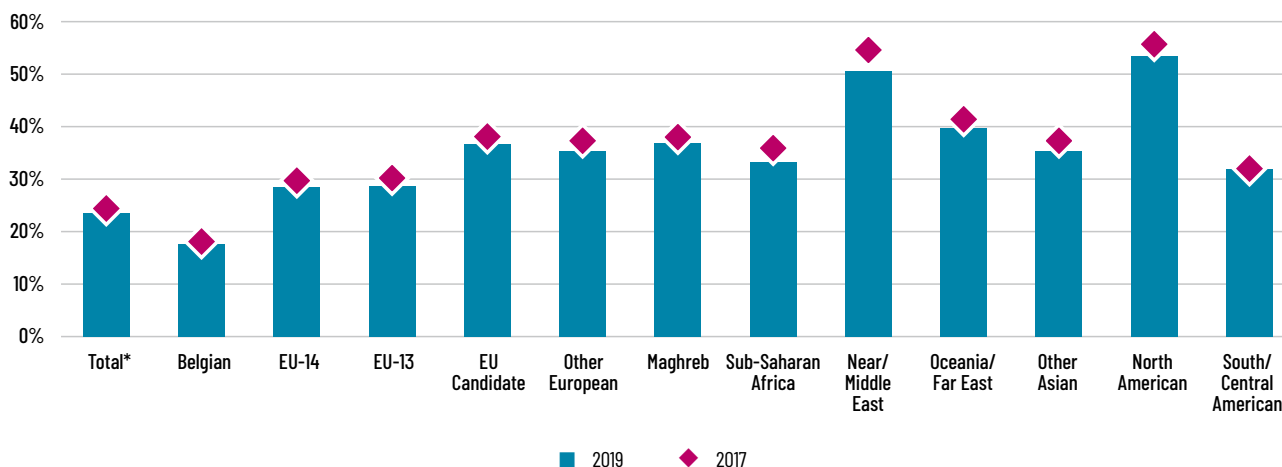
Legend: ■ 2019 ◆ 2017

* Including unknown
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The composition of the inactive group has also changed. The increase in the share of **Integration income recipients** that was already observed two years ago has continued, albeit more slowly (from a share of 5.4% of total inactivity in 2016 to 5.9% in 2019). It is striking that the share of Integration income has solely increased for people of Belgian, EU, and Other Asian origin. On the other hand, in groups with the structurally highest proportion of Integration income recipients (Near/Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa), the share has decreased. The proportion of 'other' inactivity has continued to decline. These are people who are not identified as having paid work or who are not registered as jobseekers, but who also do not have a statute that gives them access to an allowance, such as Integration income. Despite the decrease, this group continues to account for more than half of the inactivity among all persons of non-Belgian origin.

While the share of 'pre-pensioners'[9] also continues to decrease, under the influence of stricter admission conditions, and the share of pensioners increases slightly – which is only due to an increase for people of Belgian, EU-14, and North American origin – it is mainly the increase in **work incapacity** that attracts attention, rising from 15.9% of inactivity in 2016 to 18.7% in 2019. The increase occurs for all origin groups (and both for man and women), but the share remains by far the highest among people from an EU candidate country and of Belgian origin (27.1% and 22.7% respectively). This is because those are the two origin groups with the highest age distribution (with the highest proportion of over-55s in the 25-64 age group). The share of people entitled to a benefit due to disability increases too, yet it remains a much smaller group (from 3.9% to 4.6%).

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9   Persons in unemployment system with company top-up ('bridging pension'), https://www.onem.be/citoyens/chomage-avec-complement-d-entreprise-prepension.

GRAPH 13: **Distribution of inactive people by type of inactivity by origin (25–64 years, 2019)**

Legend:
- Career break
- Exemption from registration
- Integration income
- Pension
- Pre-pension
- Children receiving child benefit
- Incapacity to work
- Disabled Persons Allowance
- Other inactivity

Categories shown (top to bottom in chart): Total*, Belgian, EU-14, EU-13, EU Candidate, Other European, Maghreb, Sub-Saharan Africa, Near/Middle East, Oceania/Far East, Other Asian, South/Central American
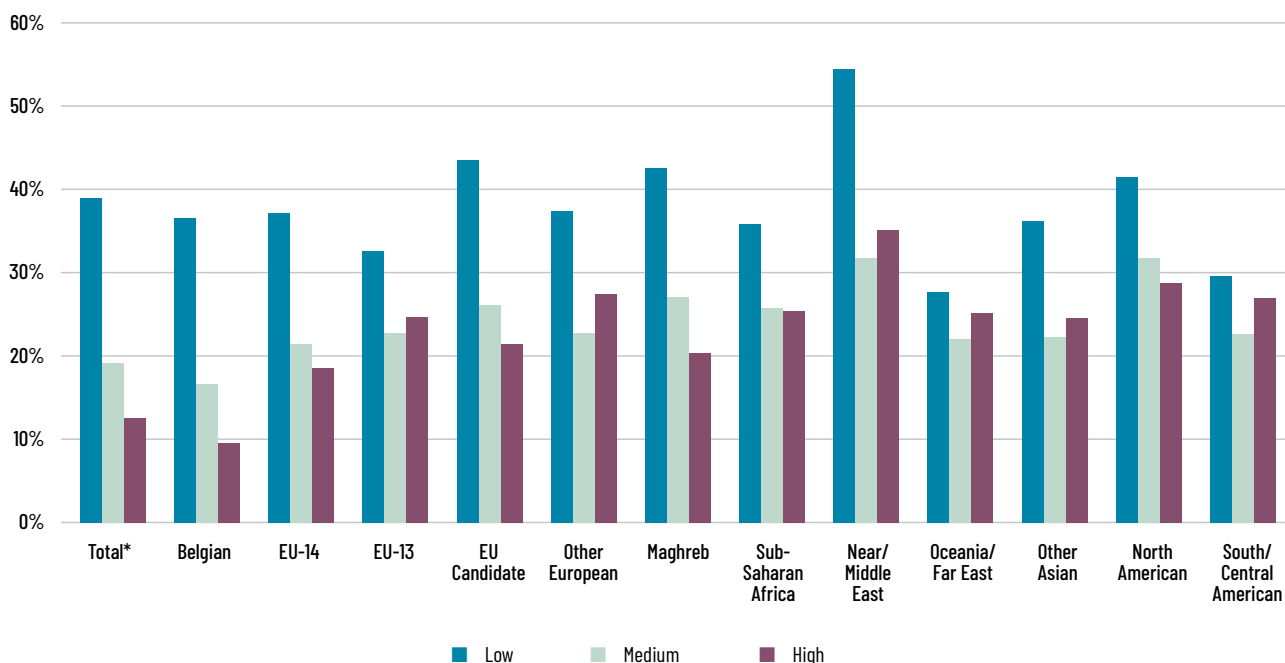
* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

1.1. Degree level

In recent years, research has time and again illustrated the importance of education for a person's chances on the Belgian labour market[10]. And like the gap between people of Belgian origin and people of foreign origin, the gap between people who have completed at most lower secondary education and those with a tertiary education degree is very large from an international perspective[11]. Since the last edition, we have been able to identify the variable denoting one's **level of education** for most of the population. As this variable is based on different

databases, data are only available up to and including the year 2018[12].

For all origins, it can be observed that the employment rate is higher and the unemployment rate is lower as the level of education increases. The gap in employment rates compared to people of Belgian origin has narrowed for each level of qualification, but it remains most pronounced for people with a higher education qualification. This difference is striking because it implies that a higher education degree is more profitable for people of Belgian origin than for people of foreign origin. People with a maximum

10   For an overview, see: OECD (2020), *The Future for Low-Educated Workers in Belgium*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/0140a728-en; CSE (2020), Quelle place pour les personnes peu diplômées sur le marché du travail en Belgique?, https://cse.belgique.be/fr/accueil/rapports-avis/tous-les-rapports/rapports-2020.

11   Comparison with EU Member States based on the Labour Force Survey (Statbel and Eurostat, https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=lfsi_educ_a&lang=fr).

12   The methodology used for this is described in the Demography chapter. The three levels are: persons who have completed at most lower secondary education, upper secondary education graduates and higher education graduates. Higher education can be further subdivided into bachelor, master and doctorate.

lower secondary education from Oceania/Far East and South/Central America are the only group with a higher employment rate than people of Belgian origin with the same level of education (a difference of 5.2 percentage points in 2018 for this first group). Among people with a higher education degree, the gap remains very pronounced for people from the Near/Middle East and Other European origin, with employment rates of 57.0% and 63.2%, respectively. These large differences - which indicate that it is not straightforward for people of foreign origin to fully capitalize on their degree in our labour market - may help to explain why our country is not very attractive for migrants with higher education[13].

The **gap between people with a maximum lower secondary education and people with a higher education qualification** has widened again for people of Belgian origin over the last two years, but it has narrowed slightly for all other origins due to the employment rate having risen relatively more strongly for people with a maximum lower secondary education. The largest increase was observed among people of Sub-Saharan Africa and Near/Middle East origin.

GRAPH 14: **Employment rate by origin and level of qualification (20-64 years, 2018)**
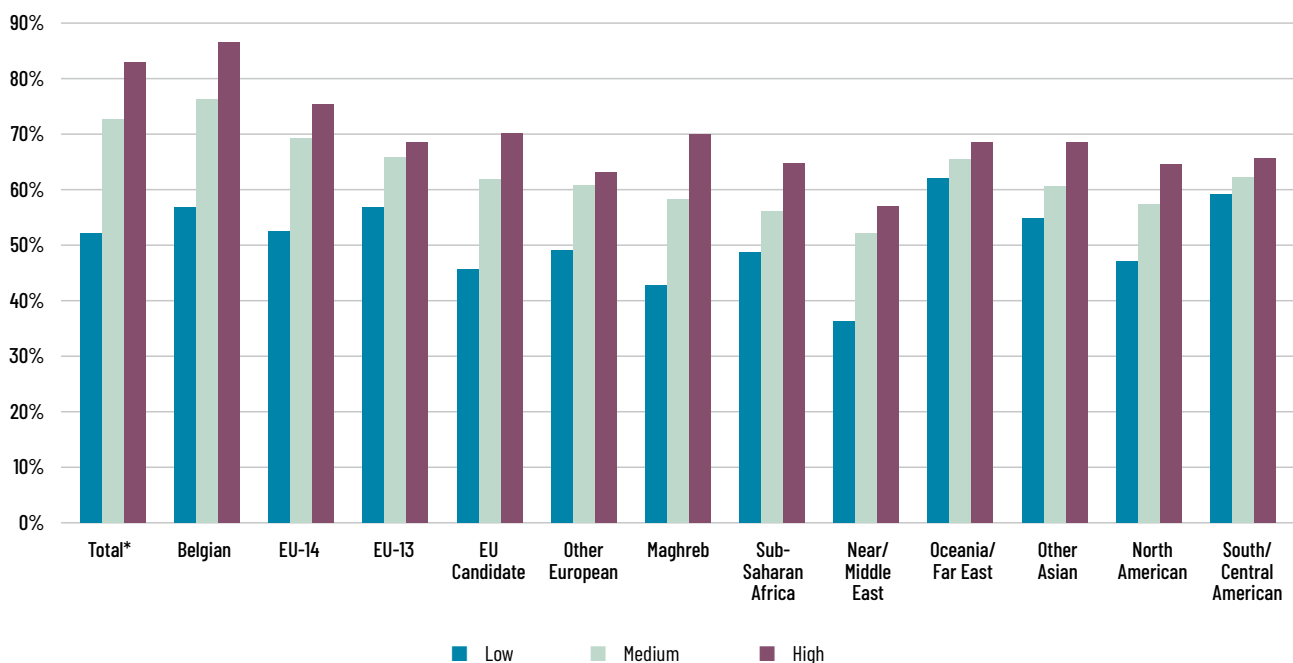
Low *Medium* *High*

* Including unknown

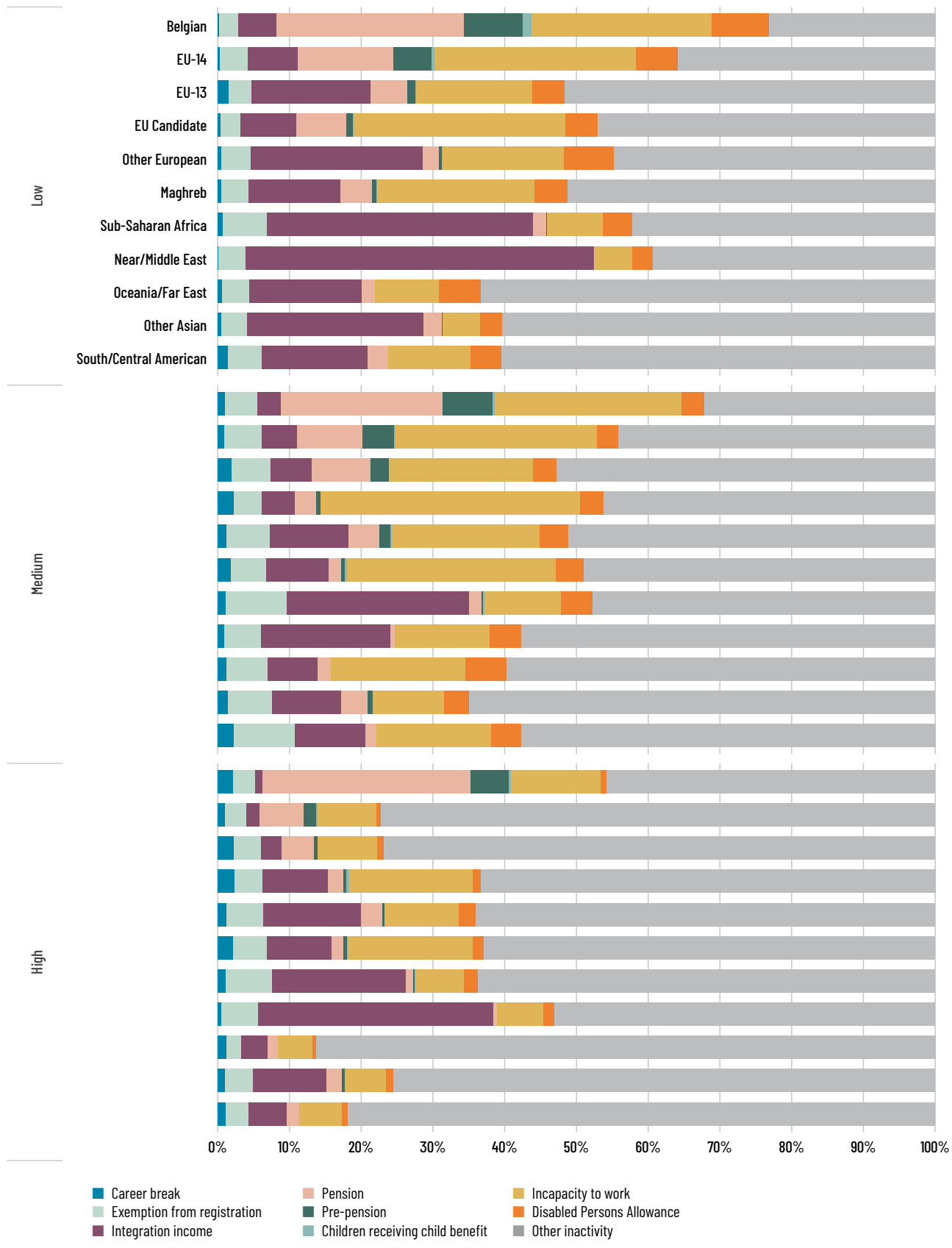*Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.*

Despite decreases in the **unemployment rate** for all levels of education (and for all origins), the unemployment rate gap between those who have completed lower secondary education or less and those who have completed higher education remains very large. The gap is again largest for people of Belgian origin: the unemployment rate of people with at most a lower secondary education degree is more than four times as large as is the case for tertiary education graduates. For all other origins, the unemployment rate of those with at most a lower secondary education degree is about twice as high (three times higher for people of EU-14 origin). Less schooling is consequently a disadvantage for all origins; yet the benefit one can derive from tertiary education is smaller for people of foreign origin and is by far the largest for people of Belgian origin.

13   https://www.oecd.org/migration/talent-attractiveness.

GRAPH 15: **Unemployment rate by origin and level of education (20–64 years, 2018)**
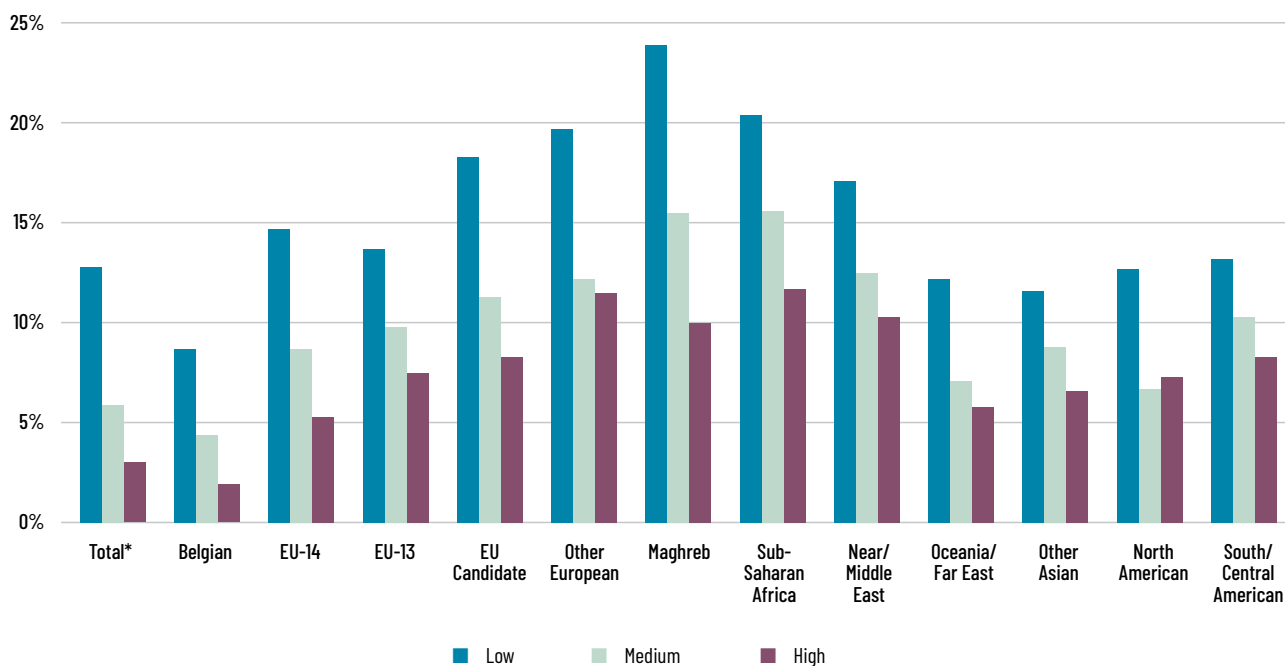
* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The **inactivity rate** decreases sharply for people of Belgian origin as the level of education increases, but this is not the case for all origin groups. It is the case, however, that people with at most a lower secondary education have by far the highest inactivity rate regardless of origin. However, for people of EU-13, Other European, Near/Middle East, Oceania/Far East, Other Asian, and South/Central American origin, the inactivity rate of tertiary graduates is higher than that of upper secondary graduates. This is explained by the relatively higher proportion of women among tertiary graduates than among the middle-educated of these origins (except for the Near/Middle East). The difference between levels of education is small-est for people from Oceania/Far East, where people with a maximum lower secondary education have a relatively low inactivity rate. The rate has fallen for all degree levels since 2016, but the drop has been smallest for those with at most lower secondary education and largest for those with tertiary education. The gap between education levels has thus widened further. The only group for which the inactivity rate stagnated (an increase of 0.1 percentage points since 2016) was people with a maximum lower secondary education qualification of Belgian origin. People of Near/Middle East origin have the highest inactivity rate for each degree level.

GRAPH 16: **Inactivity rate by origin and level of education (25–64 years, 2018)**

* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

There are again notable differences in the distribution of inactive people between the **types of inactivity** when broken down by level of education. Higher education graduates have the highest proportions of career breaks/time credits (especially people of Belgian origin, EU candidate country and EU-13 origin) and pensions (mainly of Belgian origin). It should be noted that for these graduates, the share of "other inactivity" is also much higher than for the other degree levels, especially for people of foreign origin. However, a part of these inactive persons is in fact active but employed for example by a foreign employer[14] or hold a research grant.

The highest share of incapacity to work and early retirement is found for people with a higher secondary education certificate. Finally, the categories "disability allowance" and "Integration income" are more important for people with at most a lower secondary education certificate than for the other levels of education. The proportion of Integration income recipients is particularly high for people with at most lower secondary education from the Near/Middle East (48.5% of the inactive). In summary, we see that with a higher level of education, the types of inactivity that are closer to the labour market are more frequently observed.

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14   For an estimate of the magnitude of this phenomenon, see: Desiere, S., Struyven, L., Cuyvers, D., & Gangji, A. (2018), 'International employment, finally present in labour market statistics', IBSA Focus No. 24, Brussels: IBSA.

GRAPH 17: **Distribution of inactive people by type of inactivity, origin, and level of education (25-64 years, 2018)**

Legend:
- Career break
- Exemption from registration
- Integration income
- Pension
- Pre-pension
- Children receiving child benefit
- Incapacity to work
- Disabled Persons Allowance
- Other inactivity

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

FOCUS **Higher education**

We can further disaggregate higher education degrees by the type of degree: bachelor, master, or doctorate[15]. We will only consider here the population aged 25-64, as the degree level of the under-25s may still change.

In general, we have seen above that the higher the level of education of a person, the better his or her prospects on the labour market. However, we note that the situation is somewhat more complex among higher education graduates. Longer studies (i.e. after a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or a doctorate) do not have the same added value for all groups regarding employment, unemployment, or inactivity rates.

In the case of the unemployment rate, we observe similar trends among the various origin groups, although the gap remains considerable between people of Belgian and non-Belgian origin. For all origins, master's degree holders have a slightly lower unemployment rate than baccalaureate holders (except for people of North American origin for whom these rates are identical). Doctorate holders also have, in most cases, a clearly lower unemployment rate than masters, except in the case of people of Maghreb and Sub-Saharan African origin. However, the unemployment rate of PhDs of all foreign origins remains higher than that of Bachelors of Belgian origin.

GRAPH 18: **Unemployment rate of tertiary graduates by degree type and origin (25-64 years, 2018)**[16]
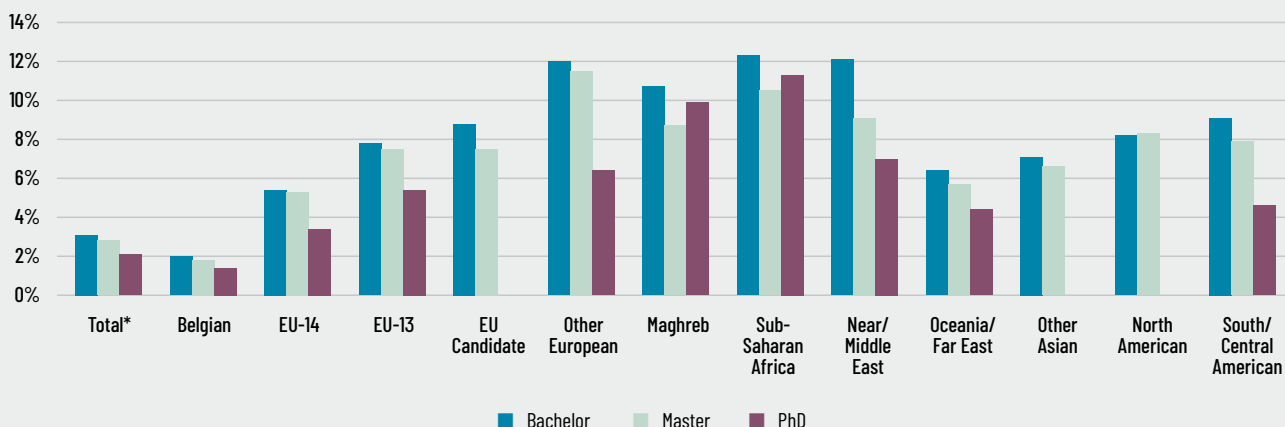
* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

Regarding the employment rate, we find even more significant differences between the origin groups. On average, longer education goes hand in hand with a higher employment rate, but this does not apply in all cases. In the case of people with EU-14 background, the opposite is observed. However, this may also be related to a higher proportion of graduates with a master's degree or a PhD being falsely registered as inactive and instead work, for

example, for European institutions. As in the previous edition, Master's degree holders from an EU13 country, an EU candidate country, Oceania/Far East and South/Central America have lower rates of employment than graduates with a bachelor's degree. PhDs from Sub-Saharan African origin appear to be the least employed from all the higher educated, apart from bachelors of Near/Middle Eastern origin.

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15 For a part of the higher education graduates, we do not have the exact type of degree. Therefore, they have not been included in this analysis. See chapter Demography and the statistical annexes for details on this variable.

16 The population includes too small numbers of PhDs from EU candidate, North American and Other Asian backgrounds, so they are not included in this graph.

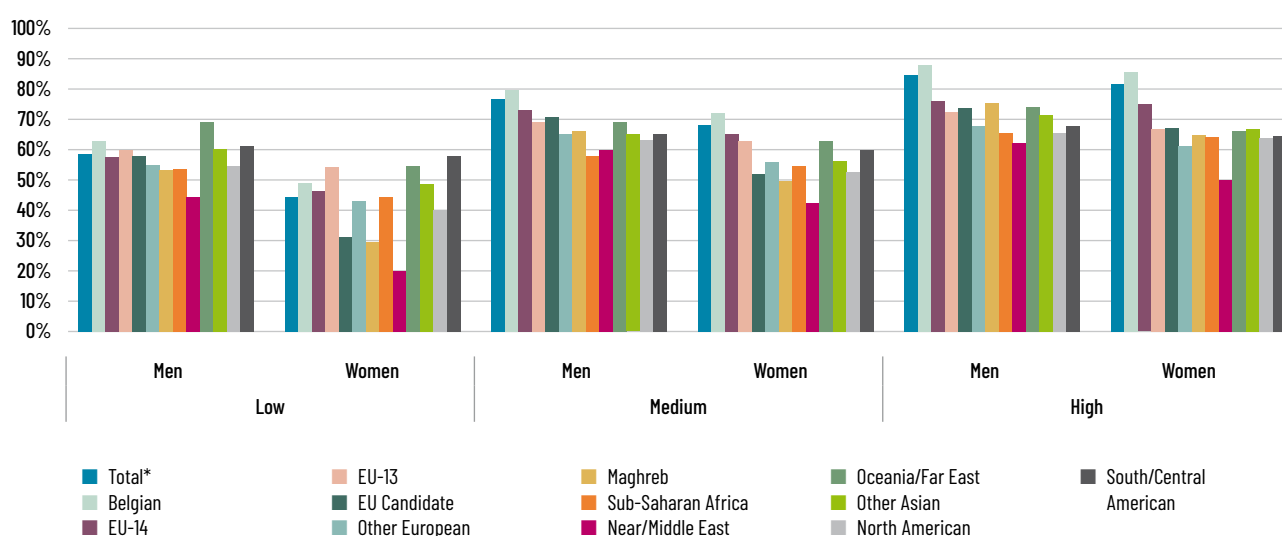GRAPH 19: **Employment rate of tertiary graduates by degree type and origin (25–64 years, 2018)**
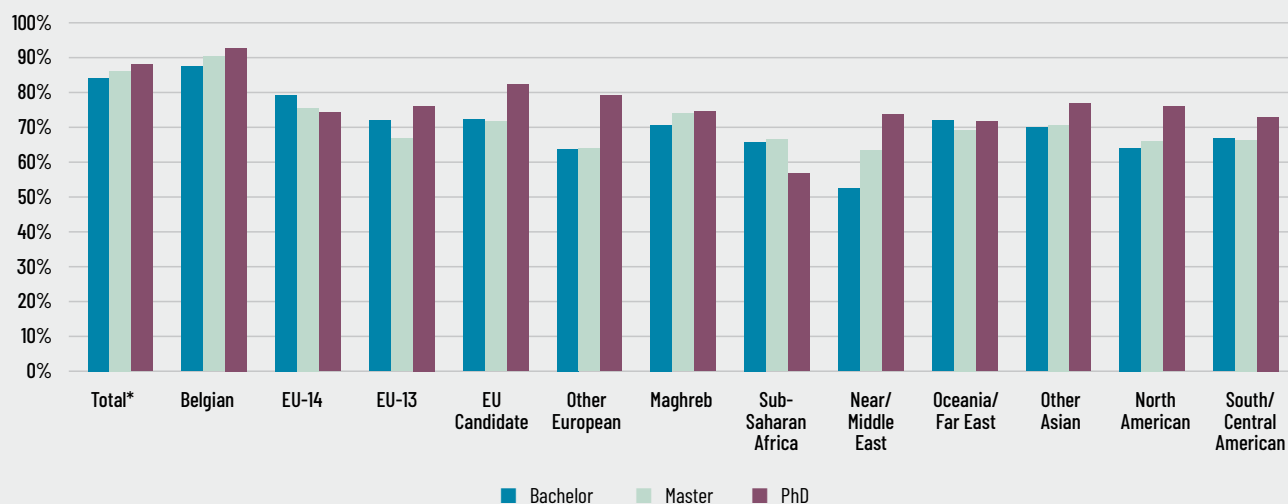
* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The inactivity rates logically reflect the above-mentioned differences. For people of Belgian, Maghreb, Near/Middle Eastern, Other Asian, and North American origin, the share of inactivity decreases in the case of longer education; for some origins, the opposite is true: for higher education graduates from the EU-14 and Sub-Saharan African origin, inactivity increases in the case of longer education.

For people of the EU-14, it is likely that the underestimation related to international jobs again plays a role. The high inactivity rate of doctorate holders from Sub-Saharan Africa is striking, but the very high inactivity of bachelor (and master) degree holders from the Near/Middle East also underlines that access to higher education will not be sufficient to bring these groups closer to the labour market.

GRAPH 20: **Inactivity rate of tertiary graduates by degree type and origin (25–64 years, 2018)**
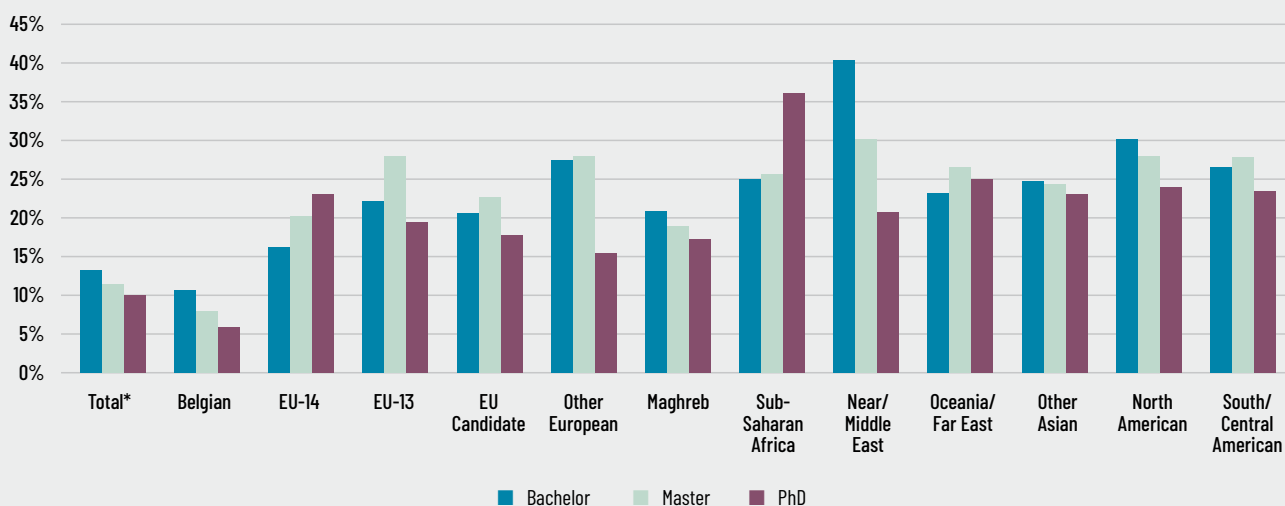
* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

1.2. **Gender**

When we look at **the gender gap** in the labour market, we see that the positive trend observed until 2016 has more or less stopped in recent years. The total employment rate gap between men and women remains almost as large (from 7.1 to 6.9 percentage points), but women still have a slightly lower unemployment rate overall (5.3%) than men (5.6%). On the other hand, the employment rate of women is, for all origins, still lower than that of men and the gap is particularly large in the case of people of an EU candidate country, the Maghreb, and the Near/Middle

East origin. For men, we see the largest increases in the employment rate for people from the Near/Middle East and Other Asian countries (+6.3 and +4.5 percentage points between 2017 and 2019). For women, the increase is highest for people of Sub-Saharan African origin (+3.8 percentage points). Men and women of EU-13 origin have the highest employment rate after Belgian origin. The highest unemployment rates for both men and women are found among people of Maghreb origin, followed by people of Sub-Saharan African origin.

GRAPH 21: **Employment rate by origin and gender (20-64 years, 2019) and gender gap in percentage points (2017/2019)**
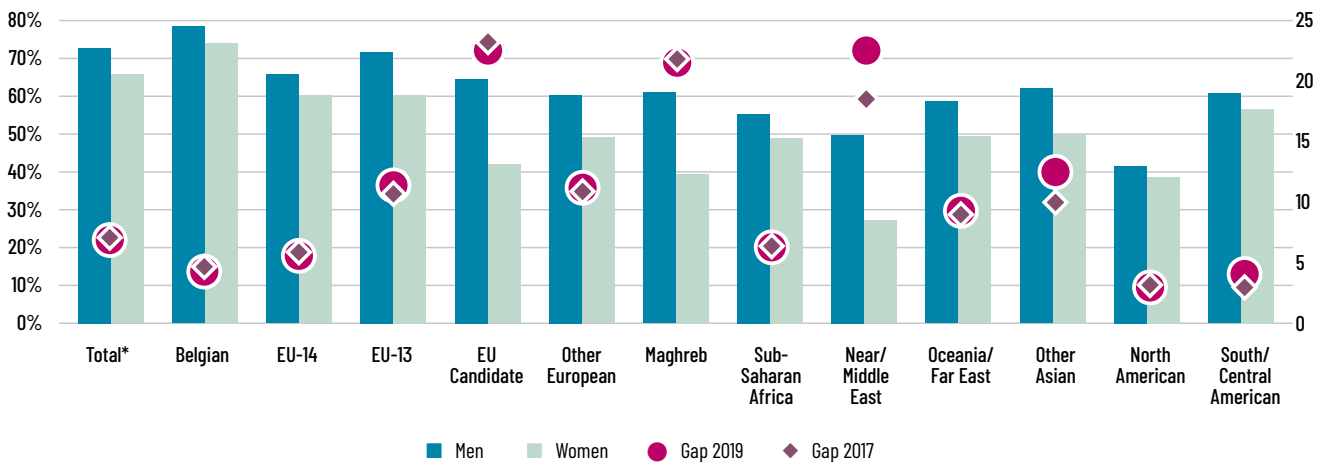
* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

GRAPH 22: **Unemployment rate by origin and gender (18–64 years, 2019)**
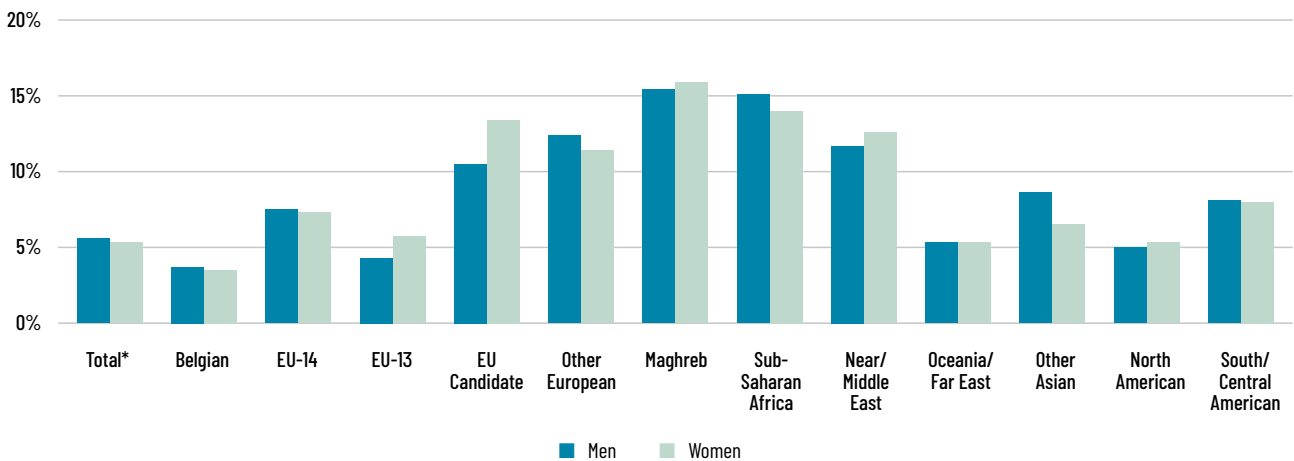
* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The fact that a higher degree level is associated with a higher employment rate applies to both women and men in 2018 and for all origins. The employment rate of women remains lower than that of men at all levels of education, but the gender gap is by far the largest among those with a lower secondary certificate or less. In some cases, the employment rate of men with lower secondary education or less is even twice as high as that of women. This is the case for people of Near/Middle East, Maghreb, and an EU-candidate country origin. Only 19.8% of women from the Near/Middle East who have completed lower secondary education or less are employed. On the other hand, women with a maximum of lower secondary education from South/Central American and EU-13 backgrounds are almost as often in employment as their male counterparts. The gender gap is narrowest among those with a tertiary education degree, especially for people of Sub-Saharan African origin, followed by those from North American and Belgian backgrounds.

GRAPH 23: **Employment rates by origin, level of education and gender (20-64 years, 2018)**

Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

For both men and women, the **inactivity rate** has been falling since 2016. For women, this decrease has been going on for some time, while for men, it is more a question of stagnation over the last decade. Overall, women of all origins have a higher inactivity rate than men. The gender gap in terms of inactivity is smallest for people of Belgian and EU-14 origin (and also for people of North American origin, but for them the inactivity data is not reliable, as mentioned above). The gender gap remains particularly large for people of Maghreb origin or from an EU candidate country. In these groups, about half of the women (50.9% and 49.5% respectively) were inactive, more than the double the rates we observe for men. The gender gap is somewhat narrower for people from the Near/Middle East, but both men and women from this background have the highest inactivity rates (39.8% and 66.6% respectively) of all origins.

With regard to the types of inactivity, men and women also differ in some respects. Women have a much higher share of inactive people who do not receive benefits (the 'other' inactivity category) and a slightly higher share in the 'career break/time credit' category (this is, to a large extent, parental leave predominantly used by women, which is not covered by the "career break/time credit" scheme). Conversely, men have larger shares in other categories, particularly pensioners and people on pre-pension. The career break or time credit is used more often by women of Belgian and EU-13 origin.

1.3. **Region**

Typically, the labour market indicators show quite large differences in the different regions of Belgium (and even larger differences when we focus on the level of the cities)[17], and there have been no notable shifts in the situation per **region** in recent years. In all regions, the decline in unemployment that we had already seen in the previous edition has continued unabated in the period 2017-2019. For all origins, the unemployment rates in 2019 are still the lowest in Flanders. Moreover, people of Belgian origin in Flanders still have the lowest unemployment rate of all origins, while this is not the case in Brussels and Wallonia. In Wallonia, people of Oceania/Far East origin have a slightly lower unemployment rate. In Brussels, both people of EU-13 origin and those from Oceania/Far East or North America have lower unemployment rates.

In 2019, employment rates have increased in all three regions but are still highest in Flanders. This is true for all origins, except for people of Oceania/Far East origin, for whom we find the highest employment rate in Wallonia (and especially in the German-speaking Community). In all three regions, people of Near/Middle East origin have the lowest employment rate. After people of Belgian origin, we find the highest employment rates for people of EU-13 origin in Flanders and the Brussels-Capital Region and for people of EU-14 origin in Wallonia[18]. Network effects may play a role: in Brussels and Flanders, the EU-13 origin group is larger, and they can obtain opportunities through contacts with the same origin. The employment rate gap between people of Belgian origin and other origins is most pronounced in Brussels.

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17   The previous edition (Socio-Economic Monitoring 2019) included a chapter dedicated to cities. This chapter revealed that there are large differences between the cities and that the situation in some cities is sometimes very different from that of the region as a whole. In the current edition, we no longer review the cities in detail, but the statistical appendices on them have been completed for the new years available.

18   The employment rate of people of EU-14 and EU-13 origin is underestimated. According to estimates, in the Brussels Region as a whole, 30,800 workers are wrongly counted as inactive. This correction increases the activity and employment rates for Brussels residents of EU Member State origin by 10 percentage points. Desiere, S., Struyven, L., Cuyvers, D., & Gangji, A. (2018), 'International employment, finally present in labour market statistics', IBSA Focus No. 24, Brussels: IBSA.

GRAPH 24: **(left) Unemployment rate (18-64 years) and (right) employment rate (20-64 years) by origin and region (2017-2019)**

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

Like the total employment rate per degree level, the employment rate of graduates of higher and lower secondary education is highest for people of Belgian origin in all three regions. However, among those who have completed lower secondary education or less, it is the people of Oceania/Far Eastern origin who have the highest employment rate. Furthermore, in Brussels and Flanders, people with a maximum of lower secondary education of EU and South/Central American origin have a higher employment rate than people of Belgian origin with the same level of education.

Among those who have completed at most lower secondary education, the gap between people of foreign and Belgian origin is smallest in Brussels (except for people of Near/Middle East origin, for whom the gap is very large). Amongst higher education graduates, the gap relative to people of Belgian origin is greatest in Brussels. In all three regions, the employment rate increases considerably with a higher level of education. In Brussels, only upper secondary graduates of EU-13 and Other European origin have a slightly higher employment rate than higher education graduates. This last point, as well as the low employment rate of higher education graduates of EU-14 origin in Brussels, is explained by the fact that a large proportion of them work for the EU institutions and are wrongly considered to be inactive.[19]

The gap in terms of employment rate between people who have completed lower secondary education or less and those with a higher education degree is the largest in Wallonia, especially for people of Near/Middle Eastern origin. For people of Belgian and Maghreb origin, the gap is considerable in all three regions as well. Conversely, the gap is relatively small for people of EU-13, South/Central American and Oceania/Far East origin.

GRAPH 25: **Employment rate by origin, level of education and region (20-64 years, 2018)**
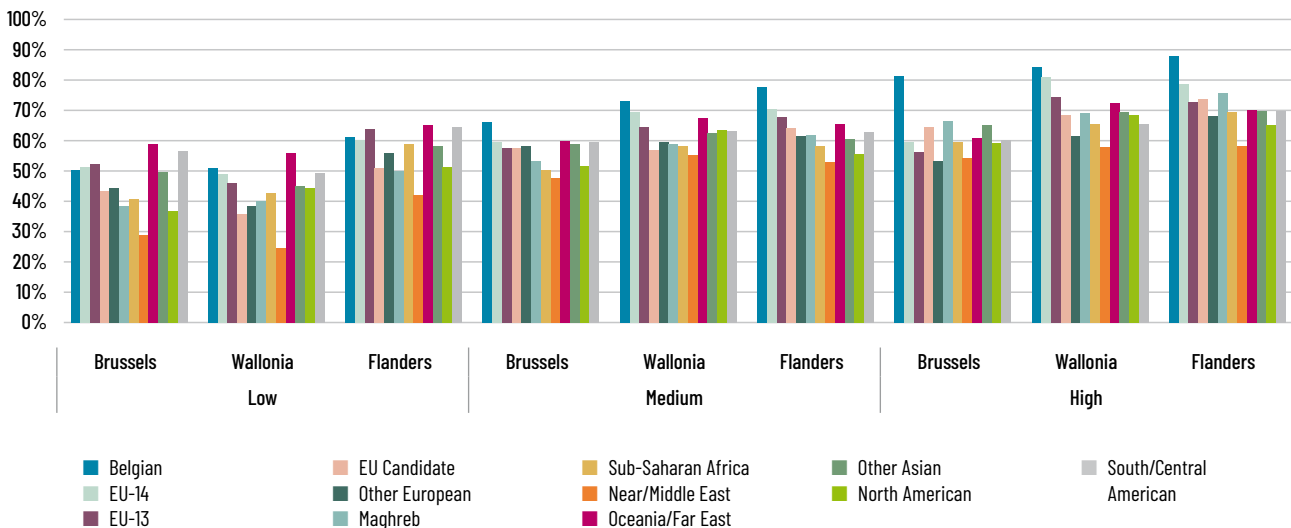
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

At 34.1%, Brussels also has the highest inactivity rate (compared to 26.5% in Wallonia and 19.8% in Flanders), but people of Belgian origin have a lower inactivity rate (18.6%) than in Wallonia (21.9%). The inactivity rate in Brussels is highest among people of Oceania/Far East origin, followed by those of Near/Middle East origin. In Flanders and Wallonia, people of Near/Middle East origin have by far the highest inactivity rate, although the situation has improved significantly since 2014. The high share of the 'other' category among inactives of EU origin in Brussels (see graph below), confirms the hypothesis that a large proportion of Brussels' inactive people from EU countries actually work for the European institutions. Among the types of inactivity giving entitlement to an allowance, incapacity to work had, on average, the largest share in all three regions in 2019. Only for people of Belgian origin in Flanders is the proportion of pensioners higher than the proportion of people on incapacity benefit among 25-64-year-olds. Finally, among inactives of non-EU origin in Brussels and Wallonia, the proportion with 'social welfare benefit' is slightly larger than 'incapacity to work'.

19   Ibid.

GRAPH 26: **Distribution of inactive people by type of inactivity, origin, and region (25–64 years, 2019)**
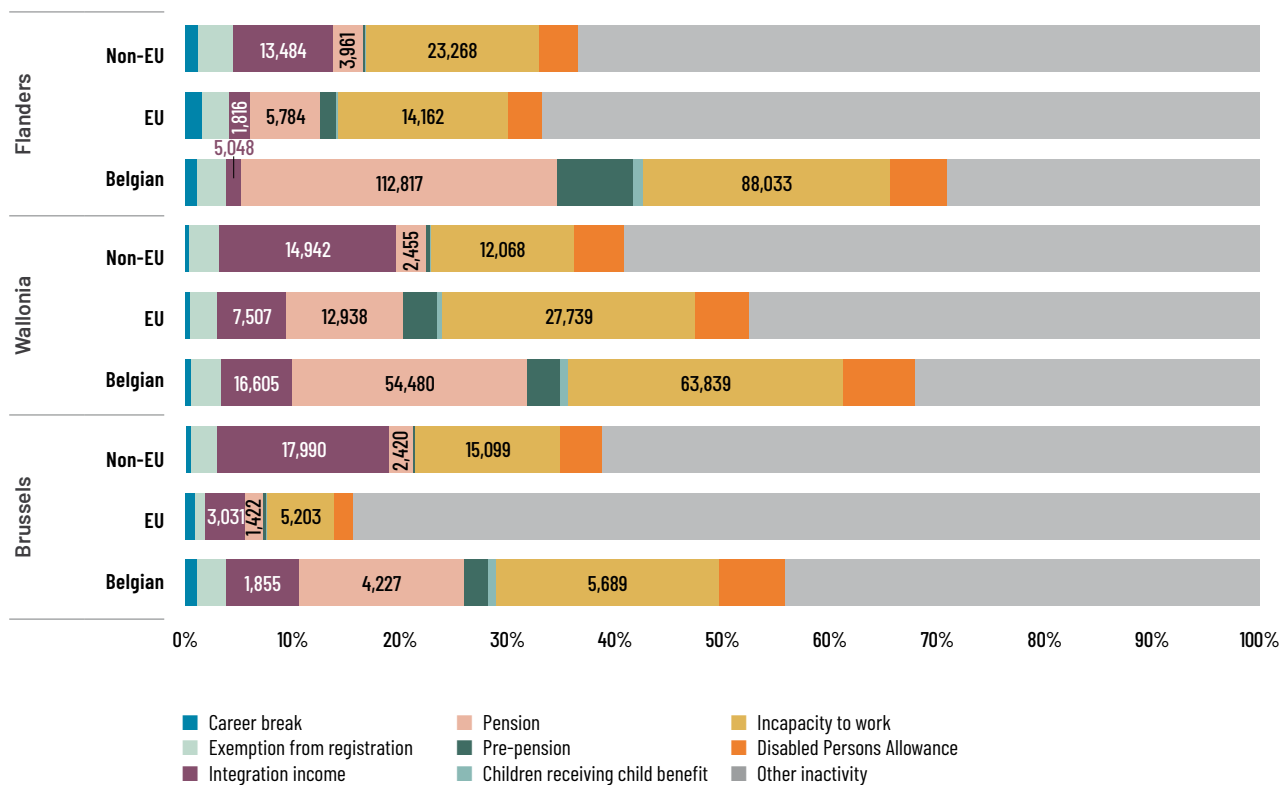
Source: *Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.*

1.4. Migration background

To better identify the challenges in terms of labour market participation, it is obviously very important to also take into account the **migration background** of the population[20]. One might assume that people who have grown up in our country, or even who belong to the second or third generation of Belgians, have easier access to the labour market. However, the very first edition of the Socio-Economic Monitoring already observed that the economic crisis of 2008 had particularly affected employment of the second generation[21]. It also took a much longer time (until after 2014) for this group to recover from the crisis. It was only in 2016 that the negative effects finally seemed to end. In 2019, people who had not yet obtained the Belgian nationality had the lowest employment rates for almost all origins. Obtaining

nationality thus seems to be closely related to higher labour market participation, although we do not know the exact reasons for this (network building, better language skills...). Newcomers from the Near/Middle East again have the lowest employment rate (28.0%)[22], those of EU-13 origin the highest (65.5%). In the case of people from the EU-14 and EU candidate countries, those with at least one Belgian-born parent have the highest employment rate. Among other origins, either Belgians with parents born abroad (only in the case of people of Maghreb origin), or those who have themselves acquired Belgian nationality (first generation Belgians), have the highest employment rate, a rate that is still higher than that of the second generation. The highest employment rate of all people of foreign origin is found among people of EU-13 origin who have obtained the Belgian nationality in the last five years or less (77% in 2019).

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20   See the Demography chapter for a description of the variable and the methodology used to construct it.

21   Federal Public Service Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism (2013), Socio-economic Monitoring 2013. See also the chapter on the second generation in the 2019 edition.

22   In addition, the proportion of people recently registered in the National Register is relatively high in this group, and it is therefore mainly newcomers who explain the low employment rate of this origin.

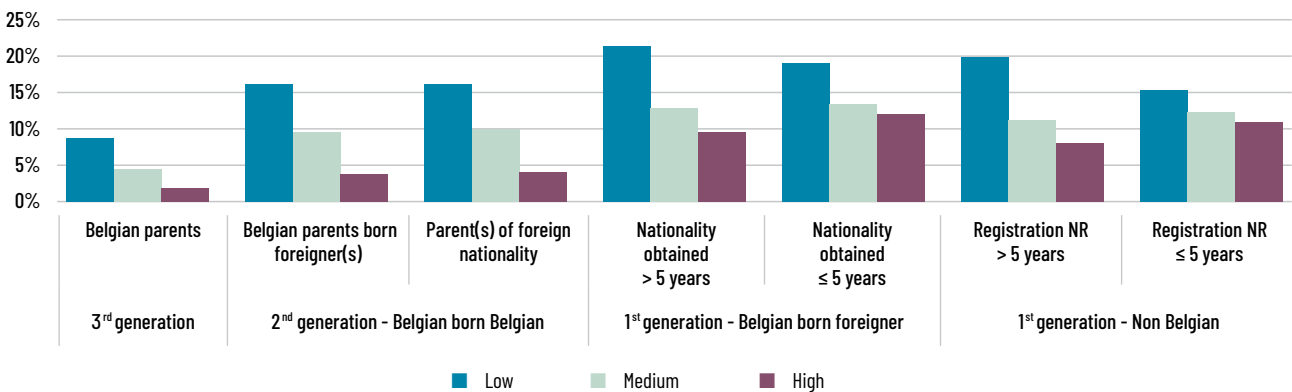GRAPH 27: **Employment rate by migration background and origin (20–64 years, 2019)**
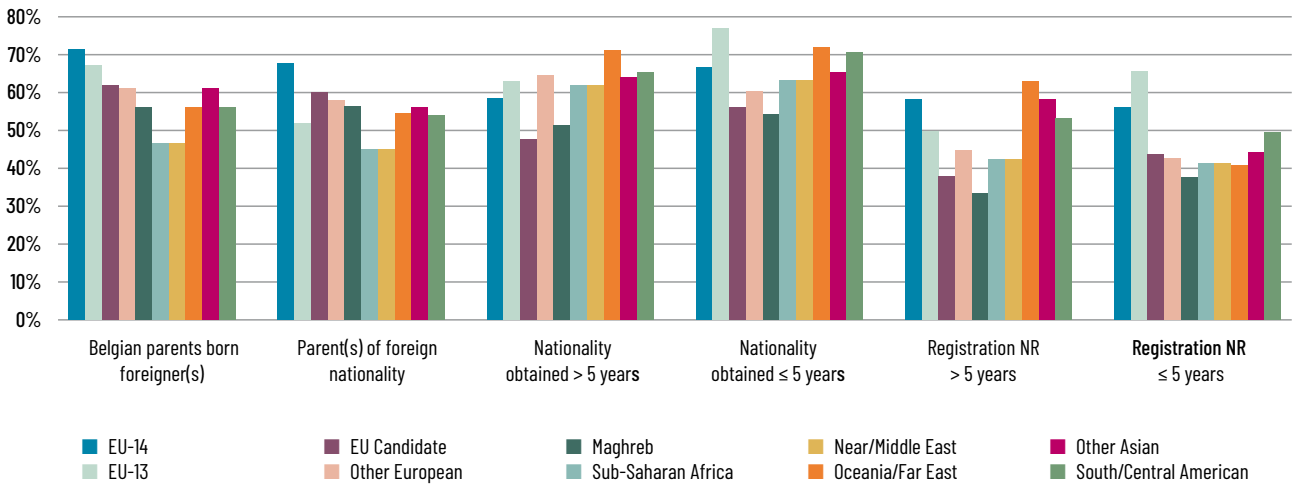
Legend:
- EU-14
- EU-13
- EU Candidate
- Other European
- Maghreb
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Near/Middle East
- Oceania/Far East
- Other Asian
- South/Central American

X-axis categories: Belgian parents born foreigner(s) | Parent(s) of foreign nationality | Nationality obtained > 5 years | Nationality obtained ≤ 5 years | Registration NR > 5 years | Registration NR ≤ 5 years

* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The **unemployment rate** has decreased for all migratory histories since the previous edition, although the differences between generations and between different origin groups within a generation remain very large. This last point is especially true for the second generation. It should be noted, however, that people who have recently been registered in the National Register (for 5 years or less) do not generally fare worse in terms of unemployment than those who have been registered for more than 5 years.

The differences between degree levels are smallest among newly registered non-Belgians, as people with all degree levels in this category have a relatively high unemployment rate. It is therefore not true that newcomers with a diploma can immediately find a job, not even after acquiring Belgian nationality. It is within the second generation that the differences in unemployment rates are the most significant: people with at most a lower secondary education degree who have at least one foreign-born parent have an unemployment rate more than three times higher than people with a higher education degree.

GRAPH 28: **Unemployment rate by migration background and level of education (25–64 years, 2018)**

X-axis categories:
- Belgian parents — 3rd generation
- Belgian parents born foreigner(s) | Parent(s) of foreign nationality — 2nd generation - Belgian born Belgian
- Nationality obtained > 5 years | Nationality obtained ≤ 5 years — 1st generation - Belgian born foreigner
- Registration NR > 5 years | Registration NR ≤ 5 years — 1st generation - Non Belgian

Legend:
- Low
- Medium
- High

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

1.5. Age

A person's position in the labour market is of course also related to the **age group** to which they belong. The employment rate increased for all age groups in the period 2017-2019, with the largest increase for the over-55s, and in particular for people from an EU candidate country, Another European origin, Maghreb and Sub-Saharan African origin. This development is partly due to the adjustment of the (early) retirement age[23], but can likely also be attributed to the tertiarisation of the economy and the increase in the level of education of the population, as people with a higher education tend to stay in employment longer[24]. Additionally, the employment rate of 20–29-year-olds from the Near/Middle East and, to a lesser extent, from Sub-Saharan Africa, has increased significantly.

In contrast to previous years, the unemployment rate of 55–64-year-olds decreased between 2016 and 2019, except for people from the Near/Middle East, Oceania/Far East and North America. Only Brussels experienced a slight increase in the unemployment rate of the over-55s age group. The largest decrease in the unemployment rate is observed among 20–29-year-olds of Maghreb origin, followed by people from an EU candidate country, and 30-54-year-olds of the same two origins.

We find striking differences in the distribution of the different types of inactivity among 55–64-year-olds. The 55–64-year-olds of Belgian origin have the lowest inactivity rate (35.8%), closely followed by those from Sub-Saharan Africa and South/Central America (36.3% and 36.1%). The 55–64-year-olds from the EU candidate countries are by far the most inactive (65.2%), which is probably related, among other things, to the heavy professional careers that older people from this background often have behind them and to the fact that women from

this background are still relatively often inactive. However, this does not mean that they are mostly retired. If we look at the composition of the group of compensated inactive people of 55–64-year-olds, we see that 55-64-year-olds of Belgian origin are the most often retired, and the most often 'pre-retired' (always followed by people from the EU-14). This may be related to their higher wages during their career and their greater seniority, which allows them to reach an acceptable pension level more quickly[25].

The strong increase in work incapacity in recent years seems, however, relatively limited for people of Belgian origin over 55 years of age (only for people from the Near/Middle East is the increase even smaller). For all other origins, the share of work incapacity in the oldest age group has increased considerably (both for men and women, but the share of women remains almost four percentage points higher than that of men). For a large proportion of foreign origins, this is even the most important type of inactivity in 2019 (disregarding 'other', non-compensated inactivity). This is the case for people of EU-13 origin, EU candidate, Other European, Maghreb, Other Asian and South/Central American. For 55–64-year-olds from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Near/Middle East and Oceania/Far East, the share of Integration income recipients is higher, but the Incapacity to work is in second place. The hypothesis that these differences can be partly explained by the relatively lower wages of people of foreign origin is supported by data on exits from work to incapacity according to wage level: people with low wages have the highest proportion that flow to incapacity, and those with high wages the lowest (and the highest proportion of exits to retirement)[26].

23 For an overview of the changes, see: https://www.sfpd.fgov.be/fr/age-de-la-pension/quand.
24 For a detailed analysis of the situation of people over 55 in the labour market, see: https://emploi.belgique.be/fr/actualites/evaluation-continue-de-la-politique-relative-la-fin-de-carriere-mise-jour-2022.
25 H. Peeters, K. Neels and N. Havermans (2017), *De kleur van vergrijzing. Over de pensioenen van migranten*.
26 Unfortunately, data on outflows by detailed type of inactivity and by wage level are only available until 2016.

GRAPH 29: **Shares of incapacity for work, pension and bridging pension in compensated types of inactivity by origin (55–64 years, 2017–2019)**
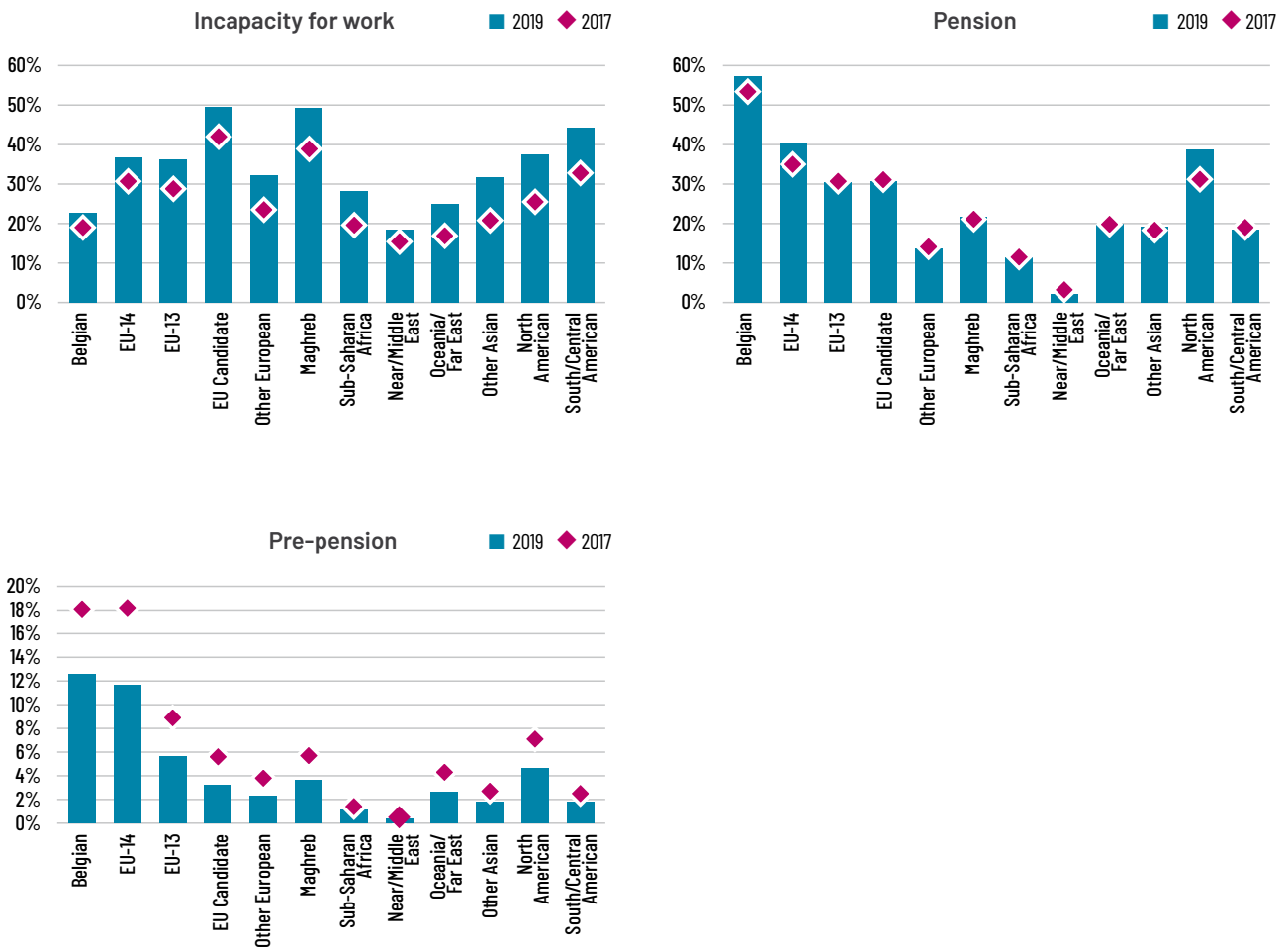
Incapacity for work ■ 2019 ◆ 2017

Pension ■ 2019 ◆ 2017

Pre-pension ■ 2019 ◆ 2017

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

1.6. **Family situation**

Regarding differences by **type of employment,** the main lines of the previous edition remain unchanged[27]. People in couples with children have, overall, both the highest employment rate and the lowest unemployment and inactivity rates. The only exceptions are people of Maghreb origin, Near/ Middle East, Other Asian country and Oceania/Far East origin. In the first three cases, couples without children have the highest employment rate, in the latter case, single parents are at the top.

The unemployment rate of single parents, especially those from EU candidate countries and the Maghreb, has decreased the most in recent years, although they remain groups with relatively high unemployment rates, which also holds for single people. Single persons and single parents from Sub-Saharan Africa and Other European countries also continue to have much higher unemployment rates than other groups.

That is the general overview. However, strong differences emerge when we look separately at women and men in different types of households. The employment rate of men in a couple with children has still increased relative to the previous edition and amounted to 86.1% in 2019 (and even 91.9% for men in a couple of Belgian origin).

For mothers (in a couple), the employment rate has also increased (to 75.1%), and this is also particularly true for mothers of Belgian origin (86.2%). **The gender gap** has increased slightly for all household types since 2016. The employment rate of women is never higher than that of men, regardless of origin and household type. The gap is particularly striking for couples with children. While, overall, people in couples with children have the highest employment rate for both men and women, it is observed that for women from the Maghreb, from an EU-13 country and from another Asian country, people in couples without children have a higher employment rate. In the case of women from the EU-13, the Maghreb, the Near/Middle East and Other Asian countries, women in a couple without children and single women (the latter only in the case of the Maghreb and the Near/ Middle East) have a higher employment rate than women with children. Among women from Oceania/ Far East, single parents have the highest employment rate of all household types. Furthermore, the employment rate gap between men and women of all origins increases significantly when men and women cohabit and even more so when children are added (apart from Belgian origin for the latter).

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27 We use the variable 'LIPRO position', which was determined on the basis of the LIPRO household typology (Lifestyle Projections, developed by the Interdisciplinair Demografisch Instituut of the Netherlands). The variable was developed by the Datawarehouse in cooperation with the 'Centrum voor Bevolkings- en Gezinsstudie' (CBGS). More information on this variable can be found on the website of the CBSS: https://www.ksz-CBSS.fgov.be/fr/dwh/variabledetail/register-national-and-registre-CBSS/Variables/position-lipro.

GRAPH 30: **Gender gap in employment rate by household type and origin, in percentage points (20-64 years, 2019)**
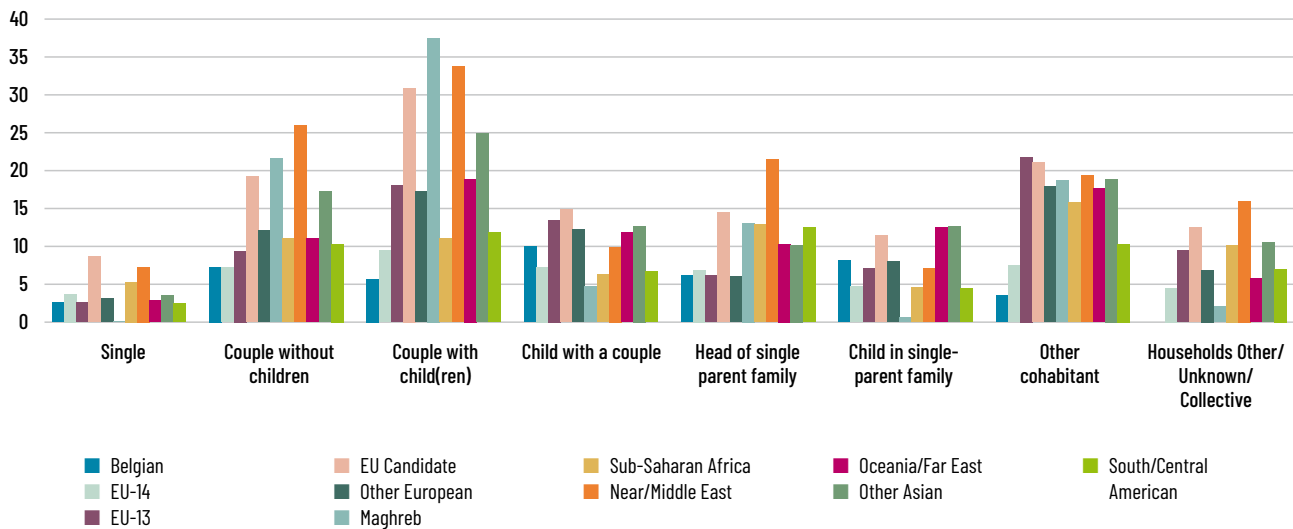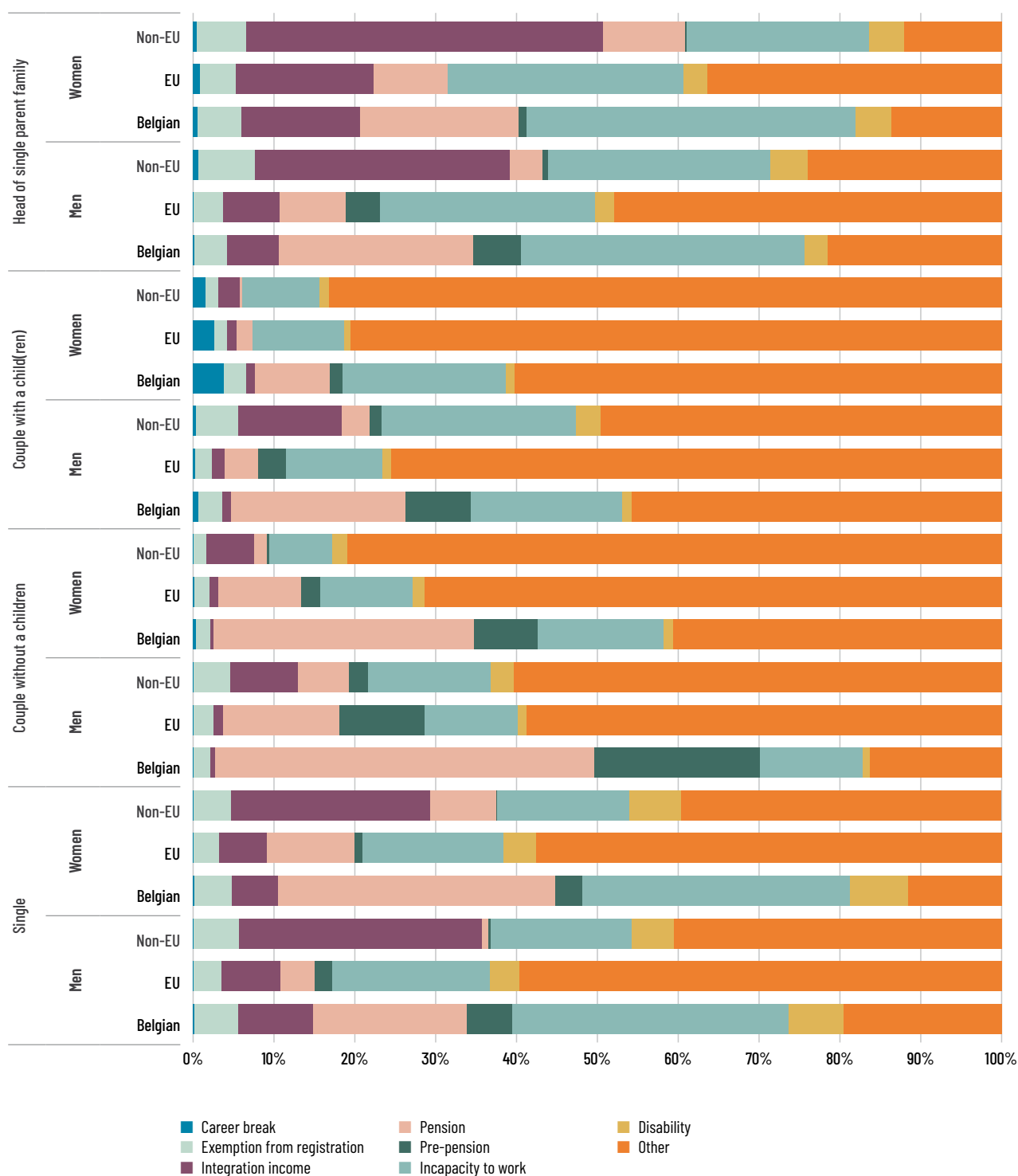

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The distribution of inactive people between the different types of inactivity also differs greatly according to family situation. Thus, not surprisingly, we observe fairly large shares of people receiving family allowances in all the 'children' categories (within a couple or in a single-parent family), but also among the 'other inhabitants' and 'other' categories. This is because these are relatively younger groups and therefore often still in education. Unsurprisingly, of all household types, people in couples with children are the most likely to take career breaks or time credits.

However, the distribution of inactivity status also sheds a light on the vulnerability of certain types of households. Heads of single-parent families are the most likely to benefit from the integration ben-

efit, regardless of their origin. But this tendency is most pronounced among people from Other European countries and Sub-Saharan African origin; and among the latter, this is truer for women than men. For all people of non-EU origin, the 'social welfare benefit' is even the most frequent status within inactivity. For single parents of Belgian and EU-14 origin, on the other hand, 'incapacity to work' and 'pension' represent larger shares. Single people of non-EU origin also have a higher-than-average share of "Integration income" and "incapacity to work". The increase in the share of incapacity to work compared to 2016 is particularly noticeable for single parents (especially of Belgian and EU candidate origin). These are therefore relatively often people who are difficult to mobilise and who, moreover, are the sole breadwinner of the household.

GRAPH 31: **Distribution of inactive people by type of inactivity, origin, gender, and family situation (25-64 years, 2019)**

Legend:
- Career break
- Exemption from registration
- Integration income
- Pension
- Pre-pension
- Incapacity to work
- Disability
- Other

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

1.7. **Field of study**

Finally, we already know from the previous edition that not all **fields of study**[28] guarantee easy access to the labour market. Some degrees are more sought after by employers than others. Before discussing the situation of graduates by origin, we will look at the employment rate for the whole Belgian population by field of study. These figures will probably not surprise anyone who is familiar with the Belgian labour market and its shortage occupations. We observe the highest employment rate (as in 2016) for people with a diploma in 'dental studies' (86.9% in 2018), followed by the field of 'therapy and revalidation' (85.2%). In addition, we find employment rates of more than 83% for those with a degree in 'science (unspecified)', 'education', 'medicine' and 'environmental protection'.

We find the second highest employment rate for graduates in the field of 'engineering, manufacturing, and construction' (65.2% in 2018). This is also, with one exception, the field of study with the highest number of people with a maximum of lower secondary education; after the category 'general programmes', where we find by definition only lower and upper secondary education degree, and which

has by far the lowest employment rate (55.5%). Other fields of study with low employment rates (and at the same time the highest unemployment and inactivity rates) are 'humanities', 'arts', 'mathematics and statistics'[29] and 'personal services'.

Unsurprisingly, the higher the degree, the higher the employment rate and this is true for all fields of study. This applies to people of Belgian origin, EU origin and non-EU origin (due to small numbers, the detailed origins have been grouped here into three categories). However, the difference between people of Belgian and non-EU origin is not of the same magnitude for each level of qualification. On average, the employment rate gap is smallest for people who have completed at most lower secondary education. It is widest in the field of study "humanities and arts". For those who have completed upper secondary education or who have graduated from tertiary education, the gap is largest in the field of 'agriculture and veterinary science'. Since the previous edition, the employment rate of persons of Belgian origin with at most lower secondary education in 'general programmes' has decreased, while it has remained stable or increased for the other fields of study. It has also increased quite strongly for their counterparts from EU and non-EU countries.

GRAPH 32: **Employment rates by origin, field of study and level of qualification (20-64 years, 2018)**
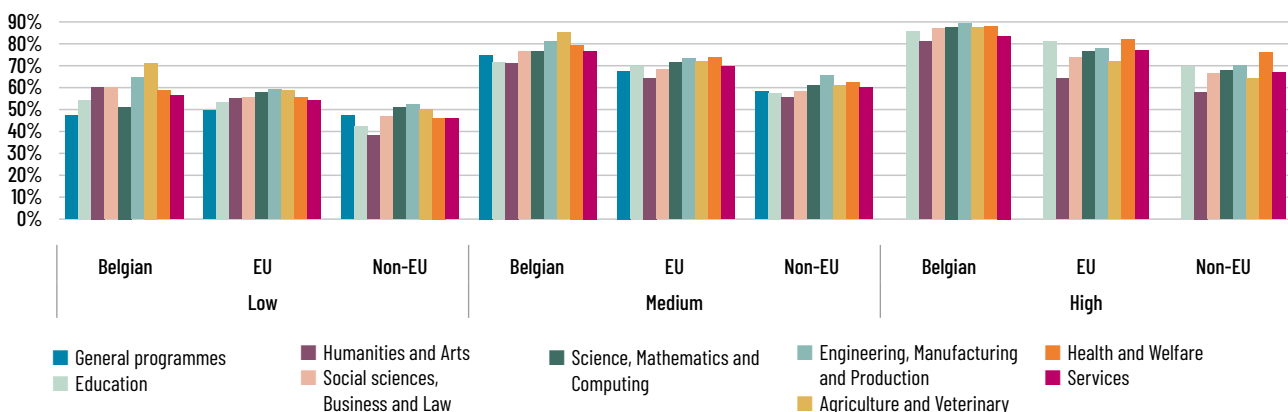
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

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28   The development of this variable has not been straightforward given the diversity of educational structures in our country. The methodology and composition of the different fields of study were described in the first chapter of the previous edition (2019).

29   Please note that the number of workers is small for this field.

Similarly, if we consider only persons with a master's degree (see graph below), it appears that the gap in employment rates between persons of Belgian and foreign origin remains very marked, certainly in the fields of study "education", "science" and "services". For the latter field, however, the gap has narrowed significantly since the last edition, which can be explained by the growing shortage in the service sectors. In the sectors to which the above-mentioned fields give access (in particular the education sector), language skills are probably more important, which means that recent immigrants will have a harder time.

Master's degrees in 'health and social protection' show the highest employment rate in all origin groups and the lowest employment rate gap between the different origins. However, also for this field of study, the employment rate of master's degree holders of Belgian origin remains 12.2 percentage points higher than that of master's degree holders of non-EU origin (94.4% against 82.2%). Master's degrees in "education" have the lowest employment rates, except for persons of Belgian origin, for whom master's degrees in the field of study "services" show an even lower employment rate.

GRAPH 33: **Employment rate of persons with a master's degree by origin and field of study (25–64 years, 2018)**
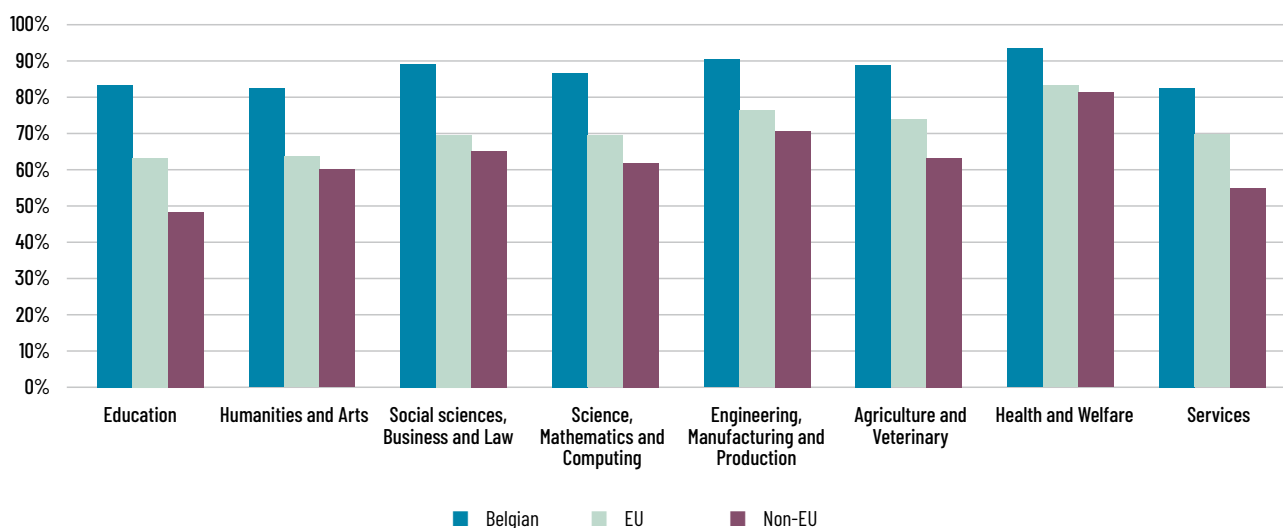
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The **unemployment rate** is highest among people with a degree in 'general programmes', but again, one has to take into account that there are no higher education degrees in this field of study. If we break down the unemployment rate by degree level, the picture is different. Both for those with a lower secondary certificate or less and for those with an upper secondary certificate, the field of study 'education' has the highest unemployment rate. Among higher education graduates, this is the case for 'humanities and arts' degrees. The unemployment rate of this group (6.1%) is higher than the unemployment rate of upper secondary education graduates in 'science', 'engineering, manufacturing, and construction', 'agriculture and veterinary sciences', and 'Health and welfare'. However, it is still lower than

the unemployment rate of those with a maximum of lower secondary education, regardless of their field of study. Although the unemployment rate of higher education graduates with a degree in 'humanities and arts' is the highest of all origins, it is still three times higher for people of non-EU origin (13.7%) than for people of Belgian origin (4.6%).

The inactivity rate is also highest for the field of study 'arts and humanities', both for upper secondary and higher education graduates of all origins and for those with at most lower secondary education of non-EU origin. People of Belgian origin are the least likely to be inactive when they have a degree in 'Agriculture and Veterinary' (or 'engineering' in the case of the higher educated, although the dif-

ferences are small). The same is true for those with the lowest level of education of EU-origin. For higher education graduates of foreign origin (both EU and non-EU), only 'arts and humanities' precede the field of study of 'Agriculture and Veterinary' in terms of the

share of inactives. It is possible that the sectors to which one can turn with this type of degree are less accessible without a network of people already working in them, or that it is more difficult to start with a foreign degree in this field of study.

GRAPH 34: **Inactivity rate by origin, level of education and field of study (20-64 years, 2018)**
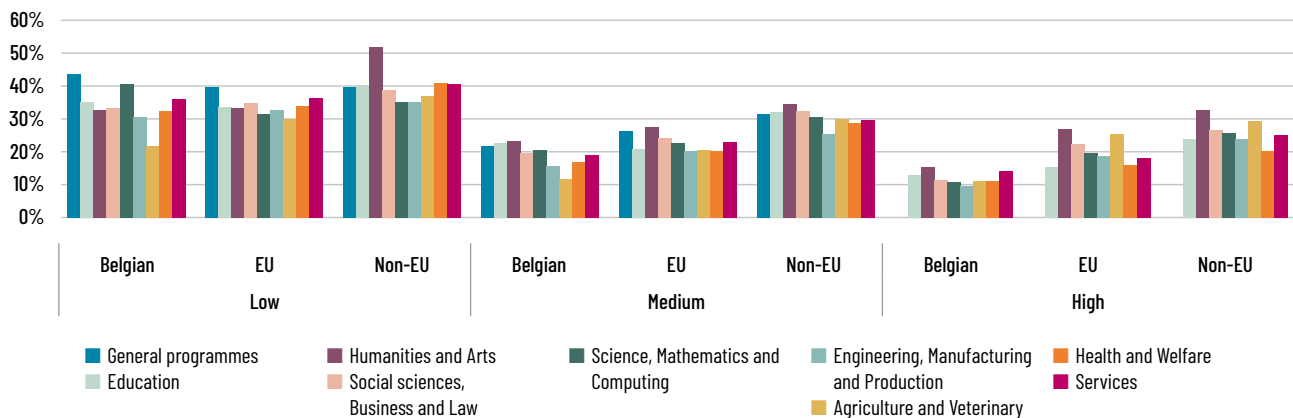
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

2. Job quality

The fact that our labour market - despite favourable overall developments - remains highly segmented has already been demonstrated by the overall labour market indicators above. In this section we will look in detail at a number of work and career characteristics and see how they differ according to people's personal characteristics. In doing so, we will first look at their origin, of course, but also at other variables.

2.1. Salary

We will start by examining the distribution of workers across the different **wage levels**. The methodological points of attention described in previous editions still apply[30]. In 2019, people of Belgian origin continue to be the most strongly over-represented in the three highest wage deciles of the total

wage distribution (preceded only by people of North American origin, but for this group we have little data which makes the figures quite volatile) and they have the smallest share of workers in the lowest wage deciles. The rest of the ranking has also remained fairly stable for years, but we see some shifts in the most recent figures. The table below shows which origin groups have the largest shares of employees in the three lowest wage deciles of the total wage distribution, and which groups have the smallest shares in the higher wages. The following table illustrates in particular the recent deterioration of the situation of employees from the Near/ Middle East, and those from the EU-13 since 2012, as well as the disappearance of Other European and Maghreb origins from the top 5. The Other Asian origin remains the most strongly represented in low wages and the least represented in high wages. The

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30 The term 'wage' here refers to the daily wage (full-time equivalent). If part-time work were taken into account, the differences would therefore be greater. For a detailed description of the methodology, see chapter 2.7 of the Socio-economic Monitoring 2015.

Near/Middle East is the only group for which the share of low wages has increased (+0,3 percentage points since 2016) and for which the gap with the Belgian origin has therefore increased further, while it has decreased for the other origins.

TABLE 7: **The 5 most strongly represented origins in the three lowest wage deciles and the least represented in the three highest wage deciles (18–64 years, 2008–2019)**

	More strongly represented in low wages					
	2008	**2012**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
1	Other Asian	Other Asian	Other Asian	Other Asian	Other Asian	Other Asian
2	South/Central American	South/Central American	South/Central American	EU-13	Near/Middle East	Near/Middle East
3	Sub-Saharan Africa	EU-13	EU-13	South/Central American	EU-13	EU-13
4	Other European	Sub-Saharan Africa	Near/Middle East	Near/Middle East	South/Central American	South/Central American
5	Near/Middle East	Other European	Sub-Saharan Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa
	Weaker representation in high wages					
	2008	**2012**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**
1	EU Candidate	EU Candidate	Other Asian	Other Asian	Other Asian	Other Asian
2	Sub-Saharan Africa	Other Asian	Sub-Saharan Africa	EU Candidate	Sub-Saharan Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa
3	Other Asian	Sub-Saharan Africa	EU Candidate	Sub-Saharan Africa	EU Candidate	EU Candidate
4	Maghreb	Maghreb	EU-13	EU-13	EU-13	EU-13
5	South/Central American	South/Central American	South/Central American	South/Central American	Near/Middle East	Near/Middle East

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The **gender pay gap** (being in this case the difference between the shares of man and women in the lowest deciles or between the shares of men and women in the highest deciles) has continued to decrease until 2018. In 2019, however, there is an increase for all origins, and in some cases quite a large one. Women from the Near/Middle East are the only ones with a lower share of low wages (a difference of -0,3 percentage points) relative to men,

and they also have a higher share of high wages (3,6 percentage points), but here too their advantage has diminished. The gender pay gap is largest for people of EU-13 or EU-candidate country origin.

In addition to the distribution of the different origin groups between wage levels at different points in time, it is also possible to map the extent to which employees experience positive, neutral, or nega-

tive **wage transitions** between two points in time in their career (i.e., Q4 2014 and Q4 2019)[31].

The share of positive transitions has increased since the last edition (from 42.4% in 2011-2016 to 44.4% in 2014-2019). This increase applies to almost all origins, with the exception of people of Sub-Saharan African and Other Asian origin. The improvement is most striking for people of North American (+4.5 percentage points) and EU-13 (+3.4) origin. Although people of EU-13 origin still experience the lowest proportion of positive transitions, the gap has thus narrowed over the past three years.

It is not people of Belgian origin who most often experience positive wage transitions, but rather people from the Near/Middle East, although, as we have seen above, remain over-represented in the lower wage deciles. This can be explained by the fact that people of Belgian origin enter a relatively high wage decile at the beginning of their career, which leaves less room for further development. People of Maghreb origin also have a high share of positive transitions. People of EU-13, Belgian and North American origin have the highest share of neutral **wage transitions**. This may indicate that they start at a wage level corresponding to their qualifications, while the others more often start below their level[32].

TABLE 8: **Distribution by type of transition and origin (20-64 years, 2014-2019)**

	Positive	**Neutral**	**Negative**
Total*	44.4%	44.8%	10.7%
Belgian	44.4%	45.1%	10.5%
EU-14	47.2%	41.8%	10.9%
EU-13	42.7%	**47.5%**	9.8%
EU Candidate	45.7%	41.1%	**13.2%**
Other European	46.3%	42.5%	11.2%
Maghreb	**49.1%**	39.1%	11.8%
Sub-Saharan Africa	48.2%	39.7%	**12.1%**
Near/Middle East	**51.5%**	37.8%	10.7%
Oceania/Far East	48.5%	40.3%	11.2%
Other Asian	43.9%	44.4%	11.8%
North American	44.7%	**46.0%**	9.3%
South/Central American	43.5%	45.7%	10.8%

* Including unknown
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS.
Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The findings on **wages and degree level** have been very stable for the past ten years. Working people with a tertiary education degree of any origin have lower shares of low wages and higher shares of high wages than any other degree levels. But within each level of qualification, people of Belgian origin have the lowest share of low wages and the highest share of high wages. People from Other Asian backgrounds have the highest proportion of low earners and the lowest proportion of high earners in each degree level. Therefore, even with the same level of education, wage differences between the origins continue to exist.

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31 A positive wage transition is defined as moving from any decile to a higher decile. A negative transition is a move to a lower decile. A neutral situation is when a person remains in the same decile, which may nevertheless represent a slight increase or decrease within the same decile. The methodology of this analysis was explained in chapter 5.2 of the Socio-Economic Monitoring 2015.

32 The descriptive analysis of educational level and field of study presented later in this chapter already gives strong indications of a higher degree of overqualification (i.e. a higher degree than required for the job) among people of foreign origin than among those of Belgian origin. This point is confirmed by the study of V. Jacobs, F. Rycx, B. Mahy & M. Volral (2021), 'Over-education Among Immigrants: The Role of Demographics, Time, and Firm Characteristics' in: Applied Economics, 53 (1), 61-78.

GRAPH 35: **Share of the three lowest and the three highest wage deciles per level of education and origin (18-64 years, 2018)**
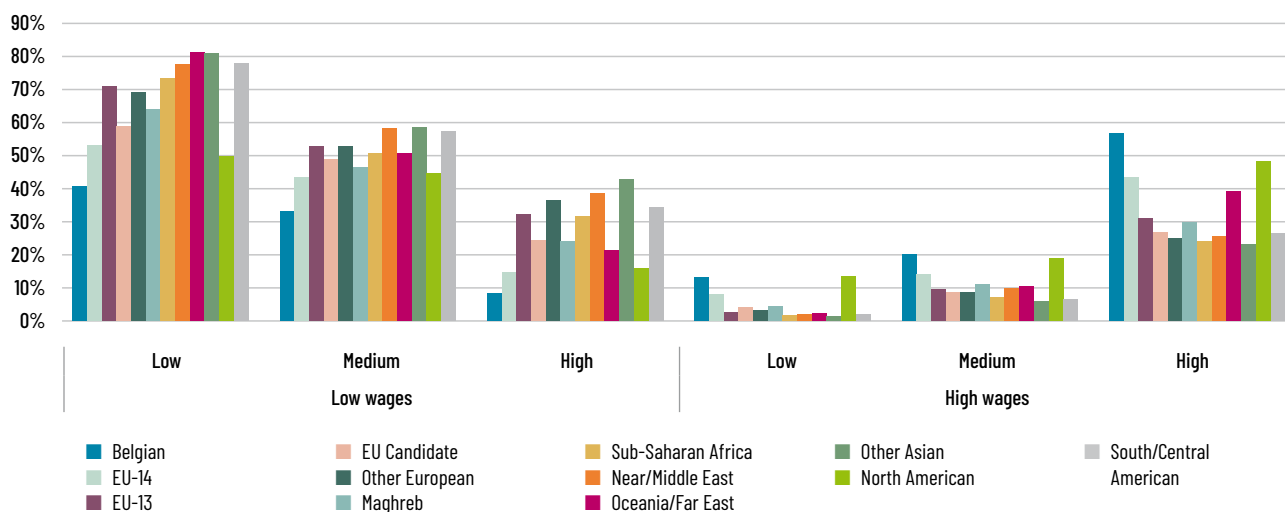
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

Similarly, if we look only at the distribution of bachelor, master, and doctoral graduates across the wage decile, we find large disparities between the origins. Only among PhDs do we find a very high proportion of workers (over 80%) in the three highest wage deciles for almost all origins in 2018. Only PhDs of Maghreb and Sub-Saharan origin have a significantly lower share (72.8% and 63.4%). For all origins, master's degree holders have a higher share of high wages and a lower share of low wages than bachelor's degree holders; but only for master's degree holders of Belgian, North American, and EU-14 origin do we find that more than half of the workers are in the highest wage deciles.

When salary levels are combined with **fields of study**, workers with a degree in 'general programmes' have the lowest median salary[33] in 2018, followed by those with a degree in 'services'. This was already the case in 2016, but there is a limited increase in the salary level for degrees in 'services'. The highest level is observed among workers with a degree in 'science', followed by 'education', and the difference between the two has narrowed considerably. However, we have to take the level of education into account again here, because we know that people with higher education earn on average much higher wages than

those who have completed upper secondary education at most and much higher than those who have completed lower secondary education at most. Regardless of the field of study, the wage level is on average significantly higher for workers with a higher education qualification. For some fields of study, however, the differences between the shares are greater than others, particularly for 'health and social work', 'education', and 'engineering, manufacturing, and construction'. In these areas, the wage differentials between education levels are the most pronounced.

To check how wage levels vary by origin according to field of study (and degree level), we look at the median wage deciles per group (provided the numbers are large enough, see table below). Workers of Belgian origin have the highest median wage for almost all fields of study and degree levels, especially when they have a higher education degree. Longer studies (certainly in 'science' or 'social sciences, business and law') seem to lead to higher wages, in particular for those of Belgian origin (followed by those from the EU-14 and North America). People of Other Asian origin seem to have the most difficulty in earning a high median salary, except for those with a higher education in the field of 'engineering,

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33 The median wage decile is the wage decile in which the median wage lies: it is the value above and below which 50% of the employees lie. This makes it possible to determine which type of worker receives the highest wage. The median wage of all employees is decile 5, i.e. the middle point between the 5th and 6th wage brackets.

manufacturing, and construction'. The wage data also suggest that there has been a shift in the distribution of wages by degree level. Indeed, the median income of higher education graduates has been in a higher decile in the case of the 'services' field of study since 2015, and in a higher decile for the 'education' field since 2006.

The higher educated have consequently moved up in the wage distribution, on average. Put differently, higher education graduates earn more relative to the entire wage distribution. In contrast, the median income of those with a maximum of lower secondary education is two deciles lower since 2017 (the third instead of the fifth decile) for the field of study 'general programmes'. This decrease is true for all origins, so that people of Belgian origin always remain two deciles above the other groups. In the case of 'humanities and arts' and 'sciences',

the median income of those with a maximum lower secondary education fell from the fourth to the third decile in 2013 and in 2016 it fell further for 'humanities and arts' to the second decile. For these fields of study, however, the median income of people with a Belgian background remained in decile 4 throughout the period, but decreased for almost all other backgrounds compared to the total distribution (from 3 to 2, or from 2 to 1). In summary, the wage gap between people with a maximum lower secondary education qualification and people with a higher education qualification has increased, while the wage gap between origins has also increased for people with a maximum lower secondary education qualification, but seems to have decreased for the other educational attainment (at least on the basis of the median income analysis available to us).

TABLE 9: **Median wage decile of workers by origin, field of study and degree level (18-64 years, 2018)**

	Belgian			EU-14			EU-13			EU Candidate		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
General programmes	4	7	/	3	5	/	2	3	/	3	4	/
Education	2	4	8	3	3	7	:	2	5	:	:	5
Humanities and Arts	4	4	7	3	3	6	2	3	5	2	4	6
Social sciences, Business and Law	4	4	8	3	3	7	2	3	5	3	3	5
Science, Mathematics and Computing	4	6	9	3	5	8	3	3	7	3	4	6
Engineering, Manufacturing and Production	5	5	9	4	5	8	4	4	6	4	4	7
Agriculture and Veterinary	4	4	8	3	3	7	:	2	5	:	3	4
Health and Welfare	2	4	8	2	3	7	2	4	7	2	3	6
Services	3	3	7	3	3	5	2	2	4	3	3	4
Unknown	5	5	8	4	4	7	3	3	4	4	4	4

	Other European			Maghreb			Sub-Saharan Africa			Near/Middle East		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
General programmes	2	4	/	2	4	/	2	4	/	2	3	/
Education	:	:	5	2	4	5	3	3	5	:	:	5
Humanities and Arts	2	3	5	2	4	6	2	3	4	1	3	5
Social sciences, Business and Law	3	3	5	3	3	6	2	3	5	2	3	6
Science, Mathematics and Computing	2	4	7	3	4	7	2	4	6	2	4	6
Engineering, Manufacturing and Production	4	4	6	4	4	7	3	4	6	3	3	6
Agriculture and Veterinary	:	3	6	2	3	6	2	3	6	:	:	6
Health and Welfare	2	3	6	2	3	6	2	4	7	1	3	7
Services	2	3	4	2	3	5	2	3	4	2	2	4
Unknown	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	2	3	3

	Oceania/Far East			Other Asian			North American			South/Central American		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
General programmes	2	4	/	2	3	/	3	5	/	2	3	/
Education	:	:	6	:	:	4	:	:	6	:	:	5
Humanities and Arts	2	4	6	2	3	4	:	3	7	2	3	5
Social sciences, Business and Law	2	3	7	2	3	5	:	3	7	2	3	6
Science, Mathematics and Computing	2	3	7	2	4	6	:	:	8	2	3	6
Engineering, Manufacturing and Production	3	4	7	3	4	7	5	5	9	3	4	6
Agriculture and Veterinary	:	3	7	:	2	6	:	:	:	:	2	7
Health and Welfare	3	4	7	2	3	6	4	4	7	2	3	6
Services	2	3	5	2	3	4	3	3	6	2	3	4
Unknown	2	3	5	2	3	3	3	3	8	2	3	3

2.2. Economic sector

It has been established that there is a wage gap between people of Belgian and foreign origin, even with the same level of education and field of study. To partially explain this gap, we can examine the sectors in which people with a certain education are found. Based on the administrative data, we cannot map the skill mismatch exactly, as we have no information on the occupation of the individuals. However, the table below shows the extent to which people find a job in the sector theoretically closest to their choice of study, and thus the extent to which they can make use of their qualifications.

In 2018, within the total population, lower secondary school graduates mainly obtained degrees in 'engineering, manufacturing, and construction', and 'general programmes'. However, the share of the latter field of study is still much higher among those with EU and especially non-EU origins (71.5% of those graduating from lower secondary education with a non-EU origin). Higher education graduates have the highest share of workers with a degree in 'social sciences, business and law', and this proportion is also higher for people of non-EU origin (40.0%) than for those of EU and Belgian origin (36.6% and 31.6%). Among workers with upper secondary education, the field of study 'engineering, manufacturing, and construction' is the best represented for all origins.

TABLE 10: **Distribution of workers in fields of study by origin and level of education (20-64 years, 2018)**

	Belgian			EU			Non-EU		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
General programmes	34.9%	16.0%	/	56.8%	16.9%	/	71.5%	19.4%	/
Education	0.1%	0.2%	16.2%	0.1%	0.3%	11.9%	0.1%	0.1%	7.7%
Humanities and Arts	3.0%	4.4%	7.9%	4.2%	5.1%	9.4%	9.6%	3.6%	6.9%
Social sciences, Business and Law	7.5%	16.7%	31.6%	6.6%	18.1%	36.6%	3.8%	23.7%	40.0%
Science, Mathematics and Computing	1.3%	1.5%	7.1%	1.1%	1.5%	7.7%	2.4%	1.8%	9.6%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Production	41.4%	36.3%	12.5%	22.0%	32.0%	10.6%	8.7%	28.7%	12.1%
Agriculture and Veterinary	2.3%	2.7%	2.3%	0.7%	1.3%	1.6%	0.1%	0.4%	1.2%
Health and Welfare	2.9%	9.8%	20.2%	2.2%	9.9%	19.7%	1.1%	10.9%	20.4%
Services	6.7%	12.4%	2.1%	6.3%	14.8%	2.5%	2.6%	11.4%	2.2%

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

If we combine the training history of workers by NACE sector[34] with the variable 'origin' (grouped into 'Belgian', 'EU' and 'Non-EU' as the numbers would otherwise be too small), we find that the proportion of graduates in the 'general programmes' is fairly large overall in the case of 'Non-EU' origin, but particularly in the accommodation and food service activities (I), information and communication (J), and financial and insurance activities as well as real estate activities (K and L). In industrial sectors (B, C, D and

E) and construction (F), 'engineering, manufacturing, and construction' is, not surprisingly, the most important field of study for all levels of education. 'Health and social care' is by far the most important field of study for those working in the human health and social work activities sector (Q), and this is true for all origins. In the public administration and defense sector (O), workers from all backgrounds were most likely to have degrees in 'social sciences, business, and law' in 2018, but among those with at

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34 «NACE» stands for «Nomenclature statistique des activités économiques dans la Communauté européenne». The full list of 86 sectors can be found here: https://statbel.fgov.be/fr/propos-de-statbel/methodologie/classifications/nace-bel-2008.

most lower secondary education, people of Belgian and EU origin more often have a degree in 'engineering, manufacturing, and construction' and those of non-EU origin more often have a degree in 'humanities and arts'[35]. Workers in the wholesale and retail trade sector (G) of Belgian origin are most often educated in 'engineering, manufacturing, and construction', while for the other origin groups active in this sector 'social sciences, business, and law' are most strongly represented.

The table below shows a number of sectors for which there are relatively large differences in the presence of certain fields of study in the three main aggregate origin groups (Belgian, EU, non-EU). In some sectors, people of Belgian origin are, relatively speaking, the ones who most often have the degree most in line with the sector (e.g. in the industry sector (B, C, D, E) and in transport (H), they most often have a degree in 'engineering, manufacturing, and production'; in the education sector (P), they most often have a degree in 'education'). The other (mainly non-EU) origins show a more diversified distribution across fields of study. In other sectors, we observe the opposite trend: people of Belgian origin are fairly diversified across fields of study and people of foreign origin more often have

the most relevant diplomas. This is most noticeable in sectors J, K and L (respectively information and communication, financial and insurance activities, and real estate activities). It thus seems that there is a kind of reverse mismatch of skills, where people of Belgian origin with various diplomas are found in relatively high wage sectors. Conversely, people of non-EU origin only make it to the relatively high wage sectors when they have a specific degree. At the same time, people of foreign origin with various trainings are more often found in sectors with relatively low wages.

However, this is much less pronounced in 2018 than in 2016, which may have something to do with a growing shortage on the labour market. As a result, for those sectors where there are many vacancies, there is somewhat less emphasis on specific degree requirements. In a few sectors, the distribution has changed significantly, especially in the accommodation and food (I) and information and communication (J) sectors, mainly due to a strong increase in the share of workers with a degree in 'general programmes', especially at the expense of 'engineering, manufacturing, and construction' and, more pronouncedly, among those with a maximum of lower secondary education (of all origins).

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35 At least among workers with a degree other than "general programmes", as this share is by far the highest among all persons with at most a lower secondary school certificate.

TABLE 11: **Distribution of workers in 6 sectors in fields of study by origin and level of education (20-64 years, 2018)**[36]

INDUSTRY (BCDE)	Belgian			EU			Non-EU		
	Low	**Medium**	**High**	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**
General programmes	25.5%	10.2%	/	45.6%	11.8%	/	69.7%	15.9%	/
Education	0.1%	0.0%	3.3%	0.1%	0.1%	2.5%	:	:	3.4%
Humanities and Arts	2.4%	3.8%	6.7%	3.5%	4.4%	7.4%	6.6%	3.5%	5.3%
Social sciences, Business and Law	4.3%	10.6%	29.9%	4.9%	11.4%	34.3%	3.2%	15.5%	31.7%
Science, Mathematics and Computing	1.0%	2.1%	11.9%	1.2%	2.3%	14.6%	2.6%	2.5%	16.8%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Production	61.3%	63.5%	37.6%	39.8%	59.5%	31.0%	15.6%	55.2%	32.3%
Agriculture and Veterinary	1.4%	1.7%	3.7%	0.5%	1.0%	3.3%	:	:	2.8%
Health and Welfare	1.1%	2.4%	4.9%	1.0%	2.9%	4.8%	0.5%	2.6%	5.8%
Services	2.9%	5.7%	1.9%	3.3%	6.7%	2.1%	1.6%	4.4%	1.8%

TRANSPORT AND STORAGE (H)	Belgian			EU			Non-EU		
	Low	**Medium**	**High**	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**
General programmes	35.0%	19.4%	/	56.2%	18.1%	/	70.5%	21.6%	/
Education	0.0%	0.1%	6.1%	:	:	4.5%	:	:	4.5%
Humanities and Arts	2.7%	3.8%	7.5%	2.9%	4.4%	8.5%	4.5%	3.1%	5.4%
Social sciences, Business and Law	5.8%	17.4%	47.9%	5.8%	19.0%	46.8%	5.1%	25.9%	48.4%
Science, Mathematics and Computing	1.0%	1.5%	6.9%	1.2%	1.6%	7.9%	2.8%	2.2%	11.0%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Production	49.0%	43.1%	18.4%	28.6%	41.5%	18.0%	13.9%	37.4%	20.1%
Agriculture and Veterinary	1.7%	2.3%	1.4%	:	:	1.0%	:	:	1.3%
Health and Welfare	1.2%	3.1%	5.4%	1.1%	3.5%	4.7%	0.8%	3.1%	4.4%
Services	3.6%	9.4%	6.2%	3.3%	10.4%	8.7%	2.2%	6.3%	4.8%

ACCOMMODATION AND CATERING (I)	Belgian			EU			Non-EU		
	Low	**Medium**	**High**	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**
General programmes	43.2%	14.4%	/	64.7%	18.1%	/	74.0%	24.8%	/
Education	0.2%	0.1%	11.1%	0.2%	0.2%	6.8%	:	:	6.2%
Humanities and Arts	3.4%	5.5%	10.6%	4.3%	6.1%	12.9%	11.4%	4.6%	7.7%
Social sciences, Business and Law	8.3%	15.4%	39.0%	5.7%	17.0%	43.3%	3.3%	22.3%	45.2%
Science, Mathematics and Computing	1.1%	0.9%	4.8%	0.7%	1.1%	4.7%	1.3%	1.3%	10.5%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Production	25.0%	21.7%	8.9%	11.9%	18.6%	8.5%	5.7%	21.6%	12.2%
Agriculture and Veterinary	0.8%	1.2%	1.7%	0.3%	0.9%	0.9%	:	:	1.1%
Health and Welfare	3.4%	5.9%	11.8%	2.1%	5.8%	9.5%	0.6%	4.7%	7.3%
Services	14.6%	34.9%	11.9%	10.0%	32.3%	13.5%	3.6%	20.3%	9.8%

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36 The origins have been grouped into three groups because of the small numbers.

EDUCATION (P)	Belgian			EU			Non-EU		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
General programmes	37.9%	17.8%	/	55.1%	19.9%	/	71.4%	23.2%	/
Education	:	:	59.6%	:	:	50.0%	:	:	37.0%
Humanities and Arts	3.9%	5.6%	10.2%	4.2%	5.7%	13.9%	9.4%	3.8%	11.6%
Social sciences, Business and Law	9.5%	19.4%	11.0%	7.6%	18.5%	15.9%	4.3%	27.1%	22.3%
Science, Mathematics and Computing	1.4%	1.4%	4.3%	1.4%	1.4%	5.3%	2.5%	2.0%	9.3%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Production	32.9%	25.1%	3.8%	20.0%	22.3%	3.5%	7.0%	18.1%	6.7%
Agriculture and Veterinary	:	:	1.0%	:	:	0.9%	:	:	1.0%
Health and Welfare	4.6%	15.3%	9.0%	2.3%	17.3%	9.5%	1.5%	16.2%	11.2%
Services	8.7%	13.3%	1.1%	8.4%	13.6%	0.9%	3.4%	8.9%	0.9%

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION (J)	Belgian			EU			Non-EU		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
General programmes	40.5%	27.8%	/	55.8%	33.6%	/	75.0%	27.2%	/
Education	:	:	3.0%	:	:	2.2%	:	:	1.3%
Humanities and Arts	3.9%	7.5%	13.9%	4.4%	7.9%	13.8%	4.0%	6.1%	7.8%
Social sciences, Business and Law	9.4%	22.2%	34.4%	9.5%	21.5%	39.6%	9.4%	32.4%	42.3%
Science, Mathematics and Computing	0.8%	7.2%	27.1%	:	:	26.5%	2.4%	8.2%	27.4%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Production	39.3%	26.5%	17.5%	21.0%	21.2%	13.8%	6.1%	16.3%	17.2%
Agriculture and Veterinary	:	:	0.6%	:	:	0.5%	:	:	:
Health and Welfare	1.2%	2.4%	2.4%	2.1%	3.1%	2.0%	:	:	2.3%
Services	4.1%	5.8%	1.1%	4.9%	5.9%	1.6%	:	6.3%	:

FINANCIAL AND INSURANCE ACTIVITIES AND REAL ESTATE ACTIVITIES (KL)	Belgian			EU			Non-EU		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
General programmes	47.5%	41.2%	/	63.7%	35.4%	/	74.4%	31.0%	/
Education	:	:	6.9%	:	:	3.0%	:	:	1.8%
Humanities and Arts	3.5%	4.7%	5.9%	3.2%	5.3%	6.2%	4.9%	3.7%	4.6%
Social sciences, Business and Law	14.5%	29.3%	67.4%	10.8%	32.2%	70.6%	6.9%	40.9%	73.8%
Science, Mathematics and Computing	1.0%	1.5%	7.7%	:	:	7.5%	1.3%	2.3%	8.2%
Engineering, Manufacturing and Production	25.3%	12.7%	5.9%	14.8%	13.9%	6.0%	7.4%	9.8%	5.6%
Agriculture and Veterinary	:	:	0.7%	0.7%	0.4%	0.6%	:	:	0.5%
Health and Welfare	1.8%	3.1%	3.7%	1.8%	3.3%	3.2%	1.2%	4.0%	2.9%
Services	5.0%	6.6%	1.9%	4.6%	7.9%	2.8%	3.4%	7.9%	2.6%

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

Workers of different origins are therefore not equally distributed (read: proportionally to their demographic weight) between the different sectors of activity (NACE). In 2019, the 10 sectors with the largest number of workers are the same as in previous years, albeit with a slight change in the or-dering. The top five sectors in the following list have remained in the same order between 2011 and 2019. For the last five, small shifts have been observed. These are – in descending order of magnitude – the listed sectors in table 12.

TABLE 12: **Sectors with the largest number of workers in Belgium (20-64 years, 2019)**

O84	Public administration and defence; compulsory social security
P85	Education
G47	Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorbikes
Q86	Activities for human health
G46	Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorbikes
N81	Building services; landscaping
F43	Specialised construction work
N78	Employment-related activities
I56	Restoration
Q88	Social work without accommodation
Q87	Medical and social activities with accommodation
H49	Land and pipeline transport

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

In 2019, the public administration and defence sector (O84) is no longer the sector with the most employees in all regions. In Flanders, the education sector (P85) is more important. For the self-employed, the largest group is active in trade, and specifically retail (G47). In all regions, men are most often employed in public administration and defence, while for women, the education sector (P85) is by far the most important in 2019.

However, the ranking of sectors is not the same for the different origins, as the table below shows. In the case of workers of Belgian origin, the largest share of women is in education and of men in public administration and defence. This is also true for women from the EU-14 and North America. In contrast, women of other origins are most often employed in building services and landscaping (N81)[37]. Men of foreign origin are slightly more likely than in 2016 to be found in construction-related sectors, as well as in transport and accommodation.

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37 With the exception of women from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Near/Middle East and Oceania/Far East, who are most often employed in public administration, retail and hospitality respectively.

TABLE 13: **Most strongly represented sectors by gender and origin (20–64 years, 2019)**

	Men	Women
Belgian	O84 (Public administration)	P85 (Education)
EU-14	G47 (Retail trade)	P85 (Education)
EU-13	F41 (Construction)	N81 (Services to buildings)
EU Candidate	F43 (Specialist work)	N81 (Services to buildings)
Other European	H49 (Transport)	N81 (Services to buildings)
Maghreb	H49 (Transport)	N81 (Services to buildings)
Sub-Saharan Africa	N78 (Employment activities)	O84 (Public administration)
Near/Middle East	I56 (Food and beverage service)	G47 (Retail trade)
Oceania/Far East	I56 (Food and beverage service)	I56 (Food and beverage service)
Other Asian	I56 (Food and beverage service)	N81 (Services to buildings)
North American	P85 (Education)	P85 (Education)
South/Central American	F43 (Specialist construction)	N81 (Services to buildings)

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The distribution between sectors helps to explain the wage gap in relation to workers of Belgian origin, as trade, hotels and restaurants, building services and transport are sectors in which wages are relatively low, and where non-standard jobs are also more prevalent (short-term contracts, part-time jobs, atypical working hours). Workers who are over-represented in the lowest wage brackets, such as those of Other Asian, EU-13 and South/Central American origin, or under-represented in the higher deciles (people from an EU candidate country) are to a large extent active in the sectors N81 (services to buildings) and I56 (food and beverage service), followed by G47 (retail trade). All three sectors are characterised by high to very high shares of low wages.

Unsurprisingly, degree levels are not evenly distributed across the detailed sectors (2-digit NACE codes). In 2018 we most often find both people who have completed lower and upper secondary education in the public administration sector. This is to be expected given the preponderance of this sector in the total employed population. It is also the most important sector for people of Belgian origin with at most lower secondary education. Higher education graduates are, for most origins, most often employed in education (P85). There are limited differences between those who have completed lower and upper secondary education, although the share of those working in services to buildings and landscaping (N81) is higher among those who have completed lower secondary education or less, and the share of those working in retail trade (G47) is higher among those who have completed upper secondary education or less. Higher education graduates from the Near/Middle East are the only ones with that level of education for whom the health sector (Q86) is the most important.

TABLE 14: **Sectors most strongly represented among employees by level of education and origin (20-64 years, 2019)**

	Low	**Medium**	**High**
Belgian	O84 (Public administration)	O84 (Public administration)	P85 (Education)
EU-14	G47 (Retail trade)	G47 (Retail trade)	P85 (Education)
EU-13	N81 (Services to buildings)	N81 (Services to buildings)	P85 (Education)
EU Candidate	N81 (Services to buildings)	G47 (Retail trade)	P85 (Education)
Other European	N81 (Services to buildings)	G47 (Retail trade)	P85 (Education)
Maghreb	N81 (Services to buildings)	O84 (Public administration)	P85 (Education)
Sub-Saharan Africa	O84 (Public administration)	O84 (Public administration)	O84 (Public administration)
Near/Middle East	O84 (Public administration)	G47 (Retail trade)	Q86 (Human health activity)
Oceania/Far East	I56 (Food and beverage service)	I56 (Food and beverage service)	P85 (Education)
Other Asian	I56 (Food and beverage service)	I56 (Food and beverage service)	G47 (Retail trade)
North American	G47 (Retail trade)	G47 (Retail trade)	P85 (Education)
South/Central American	N81 (Services to buildings)	G47 (Retail trade)	P85 (Education)

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

Moreover, the volume of employment in the different sectors has not remained static over time. And the different origins have not been influenced to the same extent by developments in employment in each sector (see graph below). Total employment increased for all origins between 2011 and 2018. The largest reduction in employment between 2011 and 2018 was in the public administration sector (O), although until 2016 the reduction was most marked in manufacturing (C). It is almost exclusively workers of Belgian origin who have left these sectors and, to a limited extent, people of Other European (for public administration) and EU-14 (for manufacturing) origin. In manufacturing, it is therefore mainly the older generations of Belgian- and EU-14 origin who have lost their jobs. Similarly, finance and insurance (K), trade (G), electricity and gas (D) and mining and quarrying (B) experienced a net decrease in employment. In the first two cases, this only concerned people of Belgian origin, in the latter two cases it concerns a more diversified group. In construction (F), transport (H), and accommodation and food (I), workers of Belgian origin have disappeared too (the cause may be retirement, mobility between jobs or (collective) redundancy), but the net evolution has remained positive due to the increase in the numbers of workers of other origins. In construction (F), this mainly concerns (men) from the EU-13; elsewhere, entry is more diversified.

GRAPH 36: **Net evolution of employment by sector and origin (20–64 years, 2011-2018)**[38]
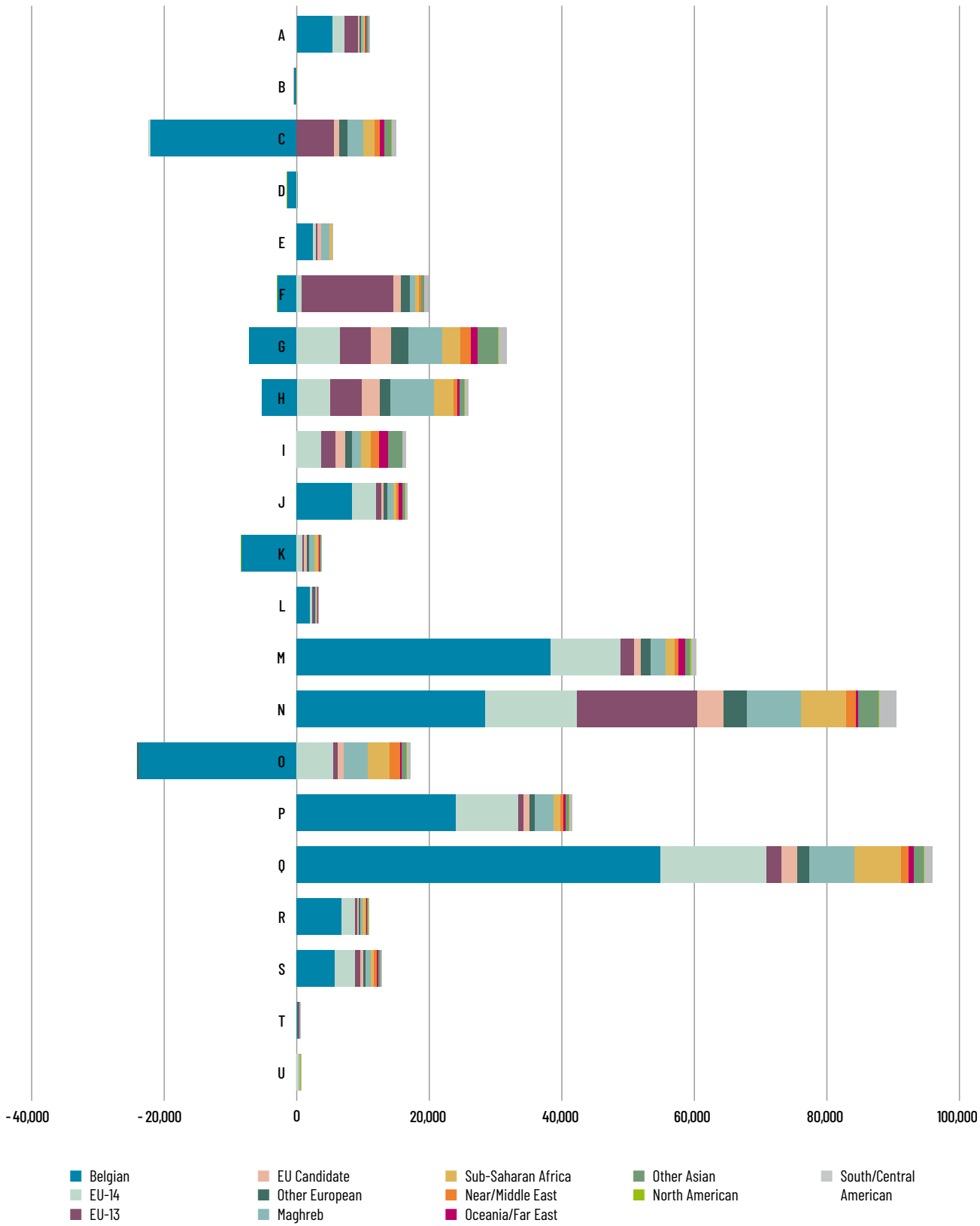
Legend:
- Belgian
- EU-14
- EU-13
- EU Candidate
- Other European
- Maghreb
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Near/Middle East
- Oceania/Far East
- Other Asian
- North American
- South/Central American

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

38 For the full name of the sectors, see: https://statbel.fgov.be/fr/propos-de-statbel/methodologie/classifications/nace-bel-2008.

The net evolution of **employment by level of qualification** shows that, during the period 2011-2018, jobs mainly disappeared for people with a certificate of lower secondary education or less (-116,884 workers), while jobs were added for the other levels of qualification (+81,413 workers with a degree of upper secondary education, +183,832 with a degree of tertiary education)[39]. The decline in the number of people with a maximum of lower secondary education has diminished in the most recent years. The positive net evolution of employment for the other two levels applies to all origins, except in the case of the three sectors with the largest net decline (public administration (O), manufacturing (C) and finance and insurance (K)) where people of Belgian origin with at most lower secondary education have been disappearing. As far as the employment of persons with at most lower secondary education is concerned, in almost all sectors except 'Administrative and support service activities' (N), we observe a net decrease in the number of workers of Belgian origin; for most of the other origins, the number of workers with at most a lower secondary education degree is still increasing slightly, albeit to a much more limited extent than for the other two degree levels. In summary, jobs have disappeared in administration and manufacturing and jobs have been created in the service sector. The new jobs were mainly for higher education graduates.

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39 The total increase across all sectors for the period 2011-2018 is 233,130. This figure includes those for whom the level of qualification is not known.

GRAPH 37: **Net evolution of employment by sector, origin, and level of education (20-64 years old, 2011–2018)**[40]
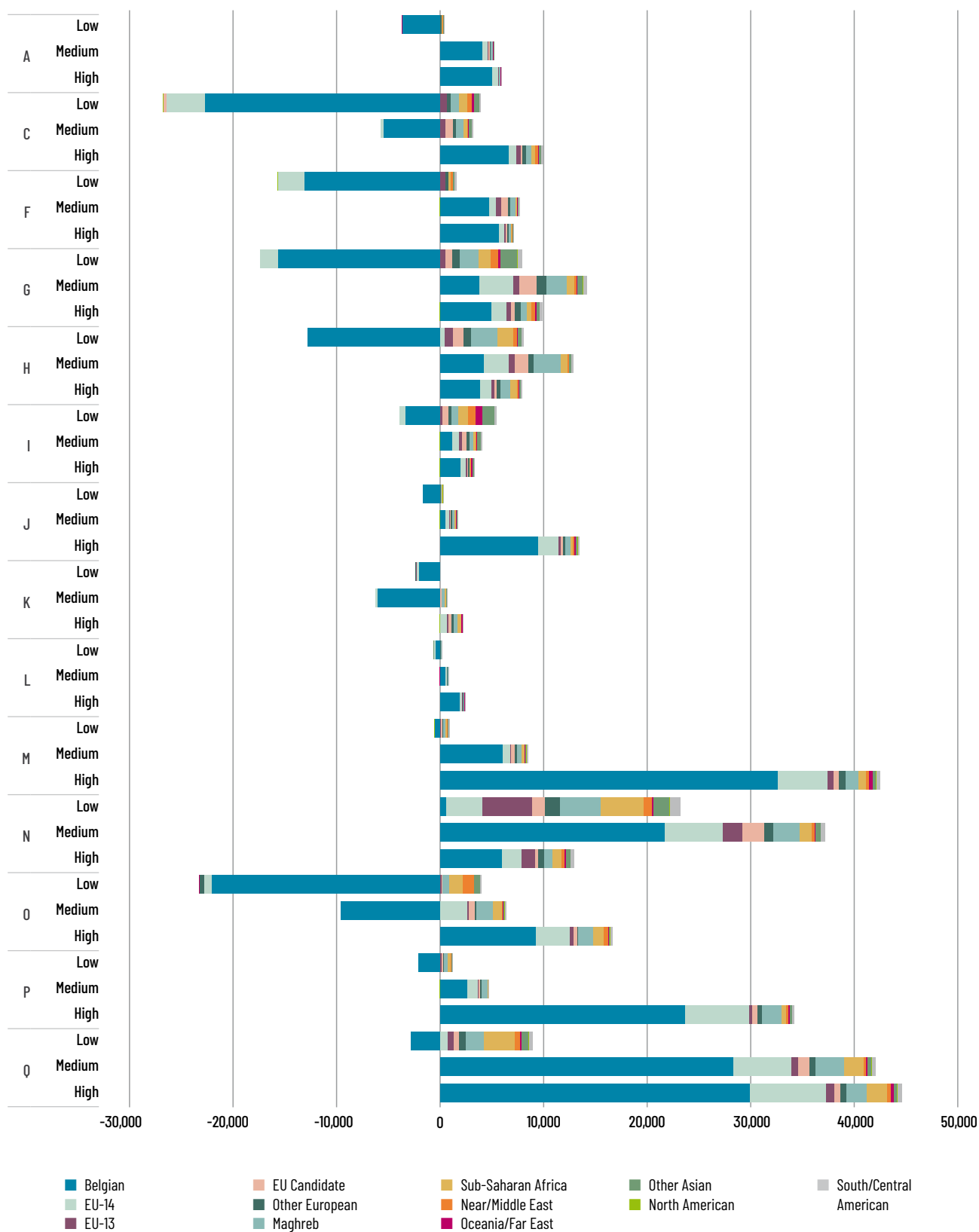
Legend:
- Belgian
- EU-14
- EU-13
- EU Candidate
- Other European
- Maghreb
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Near/Middle East
- Oceania/Far East
- Other Asian
- North American
- South/Central American

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

40 The sectors with the smallest numbers of workers are not included in the graph.

2.3. **Mobility**

Just like the 'static' labour market indicators (which give the stock of workers, unemployed and inactive persons at a certain point in time), the figures for **socio-economic mobility**[41] have evolved favourably compared to the previous edition in which we looked at the evolution between 2014 and 2016. Of the people of Belgian origin who were working in the fourth quarter of 2017, 94.0% were still employed two years later. For all other origins, this percentage is lower. However, except for people from the Near/Middle East, all rates are still above 86% (see next table) and they have increased compared to the previous edition. The shares of jobseekers have decreased for all origins, but they remain highest for people of Near/Middle East and Sub-Saharan African origin.

TABLE 15: **Distribution of people who were employed in 2017 according to their activity status in 2019 and origin (18–64 years)**

	Employment	Unemploy-ment	Inactivity
Total*	92.6%	1.8%	5.6%
Belgian	**94.0%**	1.2%	4.8%
EU-14	91.0%	2.6%	6.4%
EU-13	89.4%	2.6%	8.0%
EU Candidate	88.4%	4.2%	7.5%
Other European	88.3%	4.3%	7.3%
Maghreb	87.8%	5.3%	6.9%
Sub-Saharan Africa	86.0%	6.3%	7.6%
Near/Middle East	84.8%	**6.4%**	**8.8%**
Oceania/Far East	91.4%	2.2%	6.4%
Other Asian	88.5%	3.7%	7.8%
North American	90.9%	2.0%	7.1%
South/Central American	88.8%	3.8%	7.4%

* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS.
Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

Of those who were unemployed in the fourth quarter of 2017, people of Other Asian origin have the highest percentage of people in employment two years later (39.1%). In contrast, people from Maghreb origin are the least likely to move to employment (25.9%). More than half of them are (still or again) unemployed two years later. This is less than two years earlier (when almost two-thirds of them were still unemployed). It is therefore not surprising that the share of long-term unemployed has decreased. In more than 60% of cases, the outflow to a job is sustainable: between 60 and 70% of jobseekers who found a job in 2018 were still working in 2019 as well. There is little difference between the origins in this respect.

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41 In this section, people are classified on the basis of their socio-economic status in the fourth quarter of 2017 and in the fourth quarter of 2019, provided that they were registered in the National Register in both periods. This allows us to determine the number of people with the same status for each origin category. Please note that this is a 'snapshot' of the situation for each of these periods, so we do not look at any changes that may have occurred between two periods, such as a possible short period of unemployment.

TABLE 16: **Distribution of people who were unemployed in 2017, by activity status in 2019 and origin (18-64 years)**

	Employment	Unemploy-ment	Inactivity
Total*	30.6%	47.4%	22.0%
Belgian	32.3%	44.2%	**23.5%**
EU-14	31.0%	46.3%	22.7%
EU-13	37.4%	42.4%	20.2%
EU Candidate	30.8%	46.2%	23.0%
Other European	28.8%	51.8%	19.4%
Maghreb	25.9%	**55.3%**	18.7%
Sub-Saharan Africa	32.3%	51.8%	15.9%
Near/Middle East	33.2%	51.8%	15.0%
Oceania/Far East	35.0%	50.8%	14.2%
Other Asian	**39.1%**	45.8%	15.1%
North American	30.1%	50.0%	19.9%
South/Central American	35.3%	46.6%	18.1%

* Including unknown
*Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS.
Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.*

TABLE 17: **Distribution of people who were inactive in 2017, by activity status in 2019 and origin (18-64 years)**

	Employment	Unemploy-ment	Inactivity
Total*	19.9%	2.1%	78.0%
Belgian	19.9%	2.0%	78.2%
EU-14	19.5%	2.2%	78.4%
EU-13	**35.6%**	1.5%	62.9%
EU Candidate	18.7%	2.8%	78.5%
Other European	21.4%	2.2%	76.3%
Maghreb	16.8%	**3.0%**	**80.2%**
Sub-Saharan Africa	22.6%	**3.0%**	74.4%
Near/Middle East	18.6%	1.4%	**80.0%**
Oceania/Far East	20.5%	0.8%	78.7%
Other Asian	24.4%	1.4%	74.2%
North American	12.9%	0.7%	86.4%
South/Central American	27.2%	1.8%	71.1%

* Including unknown
*Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS.
Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.*

Similarly, the outflow from inactivity to work has clearly increased by 2.5 percentage points compared to the 2014-2016 figures and it is the Near/Middle East origin that has increased the most (+6.1 percentage points). Inactive people of EU-13 origin are the ones who are most likely to be in employment (35.6%), while those of Maghreb origin are the ones who are least likely to be in employment[42] (only 16.8% of inactive people in the fourth quarter of 2017 are in employment in 2019). It can be observed for all origins that it is quite difficult to move (sustainably) from one status to another. This is good news for people in employment, but unfortunately not for people without work[43].

The entry of 'new' employees (people who were not employed in 2014 but who are in fact employed in 2019) is mainly - and logically, given that our wage structure is strongly based on seniority - via the first, second and third decile. However, the shares differ greatly depending on the origin of the new entrants. Until 2018, people of Belgian origin entered least often via the three lowest deciles - followed by people from Oceania/Far East and EU-14 - but in the most recent figures they are overtaken by people from Oceania/Far East. People of Other Asian origin have the highest share of new employees in the lowest deciles, followed by people from the Near/Middle East and Sub-Saharan African origin.

42 This excludes North Americans, for whom the figures are unreliable.
43 See FPS ELSD (2022), Etat des lieux de la mobilité professionnelle en Belgique (https://emploi.belgique.be/fr/publications/etat-des-lieux-de-la-mobilite-professionnelle-en-belgique).

GRAPH 38: **Distribution in the first three deciles of people who were not employed in 2014 and who are employed in 2019 by origin (18-64 years)**
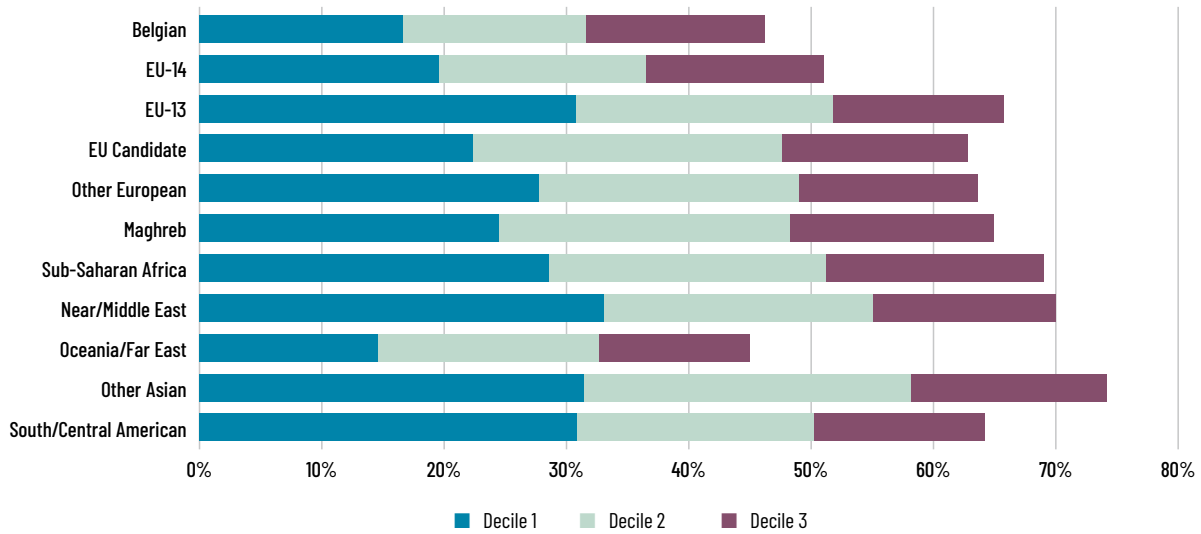
Legend: ■ Decile 1   ■ Decile 2   ■ Decile 3

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

For people of Belgian origin, the outflow (people who were working in 2014 and were no longer working in 2019) is distributed evenly across all deciles (this is by far the largest group, so they strongly determine the distribution), but the slight dominance of the top two deciles has become even more pronounced in recent years. The outflow may be due to retirement but also to job loss, whether voluntary (resignation) or involuntary (dismissal). The role of seniority in this distribution is not known with certainty, but it can be assumed given the data on inactivity and the age distribution that workers of Belgian origin transition to pensions more frequently and that the dominance of the upper deciles here is likely fueled by seniority. For other origins, the outflow is most often at the expense of the two lowest deciles. Since people from Other Asian backgrounds are most strongly under-represented in the highest wage deciles, they rarely exit from these deciles. People from an EU country, Maghreb and Sub-Saharan African origin have an even smaller share of high wage deciles among the leavers.

GRAPH 39: **Distribution of people who were employed in 2014 and who are no longer employed in 2019 in the last three deciles by origin (20-69 years)**
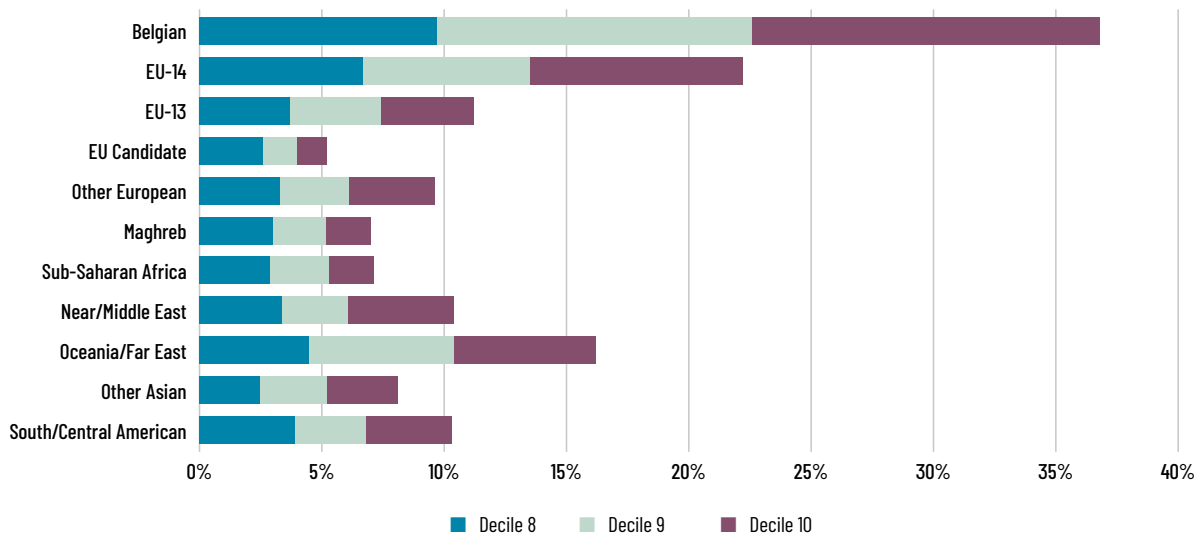
Legend: ■ Decile 8   ■ Decile 9   ■ Decile 10

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The share of **long-term unemployed** (jobseekers for more than 12 months) has been fluctuating at a high level for years. In absolute terms, the number of long-term unemployed is falling sharply year after year, but less sharply than for the other unemployed. People who have been unemployed for some time therefore find it very difficult to find work. The monitoring carried out by the public employment services in the different regions shows that the probability of leaving unemployment for a job decreases with the duration of the unemployment period[44]. People of Maghreb, Sub-Saharan and Other European origin account for the largest share of the long-term unemployed in 2019 (72.0%, 69.3% and 69.6% respectively). Those of EU-13 origin have the smallest share (57.2%). In addition, people of Other Asian, EU-14 and South/Central American origin are less likely to be long-term unemployed than people of Belgian origin. People of Maghreb origin not only have the second highest share of unoccupied persons (jobseekers and inactive persons in relation to the total population), but also the highest share of long-term unemployed among jobseekers. This means that there is a considerable number of people who are very far from the labour market and for whom integration is far from straightforward.

GRAPH 40: **Share of unoccupied (jobseekers and inactive) and share of long-term unemployment among the unemployed, by origin (20-64 years, 2019)**
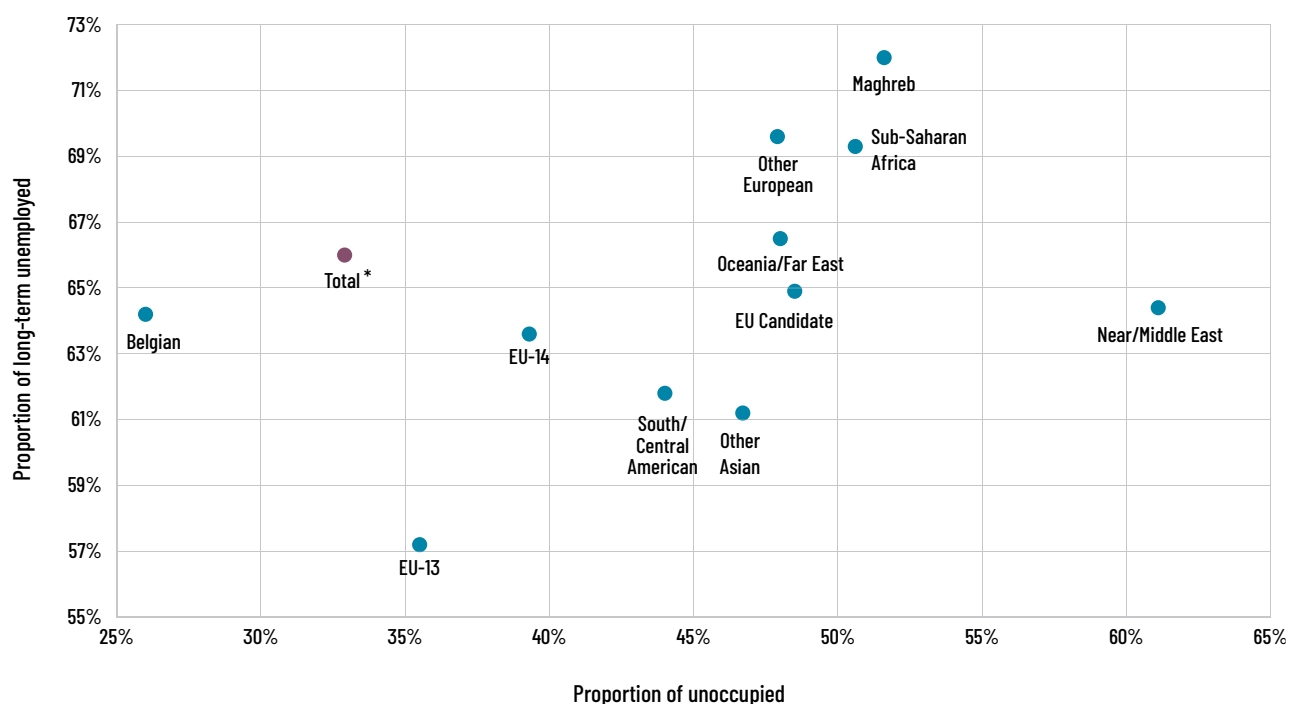
Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

If we look at the share of **long-term unemployment by level of education**, we see that the differences between levels of education are less pronounced than for most other indicators discussed in this chapter. Even if the share of unemployed people who have only completed lower secondary education is still 10 percentage points higher in 2018 than for the other two levels of education. The differences between the origin groups are also relatively limited and people of Belgian origin fare only slightly better than the average.

Of all persons who have completed at most lower secondary education, persons of Belgian origin

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44   NEO, Exit flows to employment of fully unemployed jobseekers by duration of unemployment. https://arvastat.vdab.be/help/arvastat_help_dynam.html; DG Employment, LTU monitoring database.

have, with one exception, the highest share of long-term unemployed (after the Maghreb origin). Consequently, for people of Belgian origin, the difference between the share of long-term unemployed for people with at most a lower secondary education and higher education graduates, is largest. For the other origins, we find that further education does not necessarily reduce the risk of being long-term unemployed.

GRAPH 41: **Share of long-term unemployed in the total number of unemployed by origin and level of education (25–64 years, 2018)**
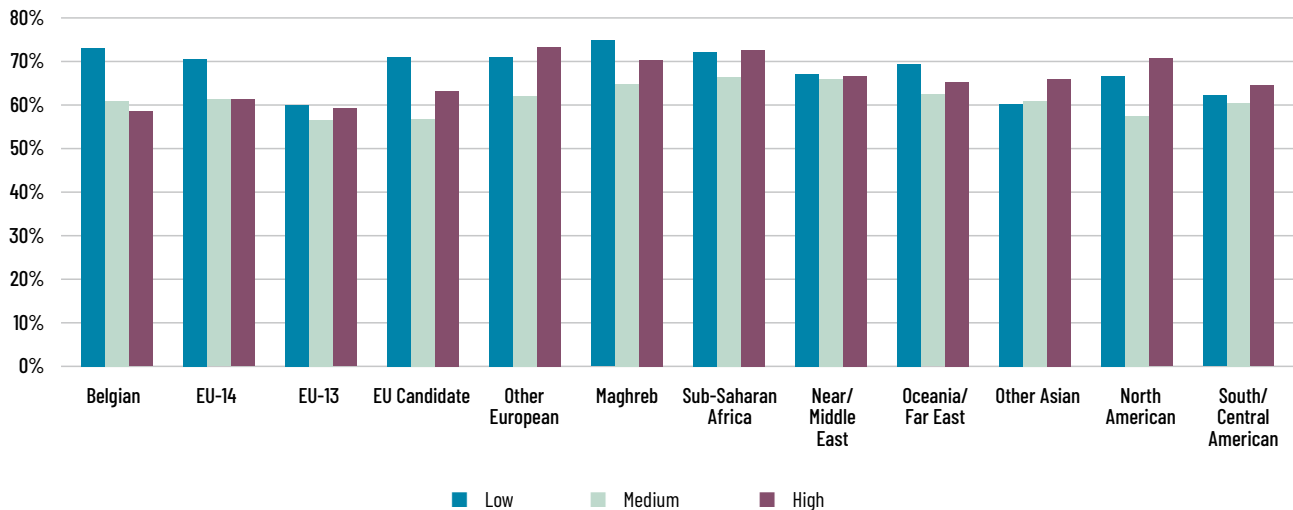
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

FOCUS: **Young people in professional integration period**

Young people who register for the first time as job-seekers do not receive an allowance straight away. They first go through a 'professional integration period'[45]. The pathway of young people from the moment they register for professional integration is not the same for all origin groups[46].

In 2018, 39,427 young people (aged 18-24) registered for the first time as jobseekers in the third quarter of the year (end of the school year). Less than half of the young people found a job after the first quarter of the professional integration period, except for young people of Belgian origin. In general, women are less represented in the category 'long-term unemployed' (no work after one year), except for women from an EU candidate country and from Other European origin. The share of young people who managed to get at least one job during the first quarter of the period has slightly increased since the previous edition, but it is only for people of Belgian origin that this rate exceeds 50%. For young people from the Near/Middle East, this percentage is only 23.1%, which is still a clear improvement compared to 2016 (16.4%).

For people of Sub-Saharan African origin, the exit to work after one quarter is limited too (25.0%) and here there is no increase since the previous edition. Their total share of long-term unemployed remains at about 50% and is even larger for people with at most a lower secondary education degree (73.8%).

45 https://www.onem.be/citoyens/stage-d-insertion-professionnelle.

46 For a description of the methodology that is followed in this context, we refer to Chapter 8 'Young people on work placements' of the Socio-Economic Monitoring 2019. More details on this group can be found in the statistical annexes.

After a year, 81.3% of young people of Belgian origin found a job, compared to only 47.2% of young people from the Near/Middle East. After people of Belgian (18.7%) and EU-14 origin (27.4%), the group of people of Other Asian origin has the lowest share of the overall "long-term unemployed" (30.7%) population.

TABLE 18: **Median duration of first job search since enrolment and percentage of "long-term unemployed" among young people enrolled in an integration course, by origin and level of education (18–24 years, 3rd quarter 2018)**

	First job			Long-term unemployed		
	Low	**Medium**	**High**	■ **Low**	☐ **Medium**	■ **High**
Total*	> 12 months	6 months	3 months			
Belgian	> 12 months	6 months	3 months			
EU-14	> 12 months	6 months	3 months			
EU-13	> 12 months	6 months	3 months			
EU Candidate	> 12 months	6 months	3 months			
Other European	> 12 months	9 months	3 months			
Maghreb	> 12 months	9 months	3 months			
Sub-Saharan Africa	> 12 months	9 months	6 months			
Near/Middle East	> 12 months	12 months	6 months			
Other Asian	9 months	6 months	3 months			
South/Central American	> 12 months	9 months	6 months			

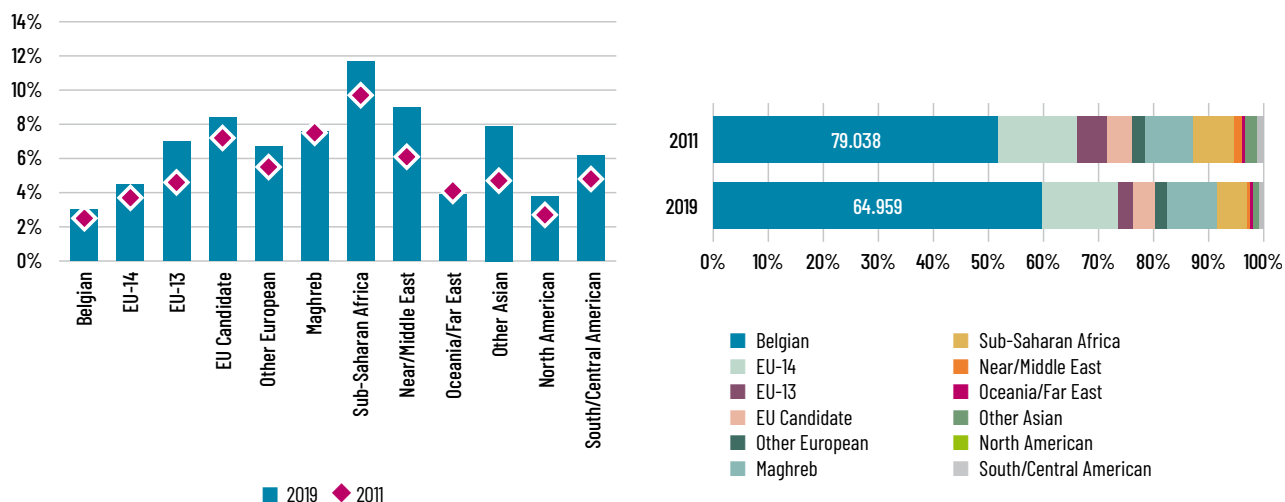*(Chart, right portion: horizontal bar chart with axis 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%)*

* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The link between educational attainment and the probability of finding a job quickly is undeniable. The less educated people are, the more likely they are to wind up in the long-term unemployed category. Despite a general improvement since 2012, which has also continued over the past two years, more than 60% of young people who have completed at most a vocational education remains unemployed after the work placement trajectory, regardless of origin. Only for those of 'Other Asian' origin do more than half (56.3%) manage to get a job at the end of their professional integration period (but they often end up in lower-paid jobs, see Graph 37). They thus have the lowest share of long-term unemployed of all origins. for those with at most a lower secondary certificate (43.7%). Young people with at most

lower secondary education from the Near/Middle East account for the highest share of long-term unemployed (79.4%). In addition, this origin has a relatively large group of people with at most lower secondary education (31.6%).

For new higher education graduates from all backgrounds, 90.4% find a job before the end of the period in 2018. For several origins, however, the probability of finding work quickly is lower. For higher education graduates from the Near/Middle East, South/Central America and Sub-Saharan Africa, less than three quarters of young people manage to find a job. A high level of education is therefore not in itself sufficient for everyone to find their way into employment quickly.

The average **tenure** over a 10-year period continues to increase slightly in Belgium for all origins[47]. The increase is mainly due to the evolution observed for women. People of Belgian origin still have by far the highest share of people who have been working for more than 8 years over a 10-year period (75.3% in 2019), which is partly explained by the fact that the Belgian population is older and has been living here longer. Similarly, if we look at tenure by age group, the difference between the origin groups remains significant. People from the Near/Middle East have the highest share of people who have not worked at all over a period of 10 years, but that share is decreasing since 2016 and can of course also be explained by the fact that many of them have been registered for 5 years or less. Since 2016, we have seen the largest decrease in the share of people who have not worked for the EU-13 origin. People with at most a lower secondary education certificate have a much lower average tenure than other degree levels overall. For people of non-Belgian origin, however, the share of people employed for more than 8 years is smaller for people with a higher education degree than for those with an upper secondary education degree.

GRAPH 42: **Share of people who, over a 10-year period, did not work and worked for more than 8 years, by origin (30-64 years, 2016/2019)**
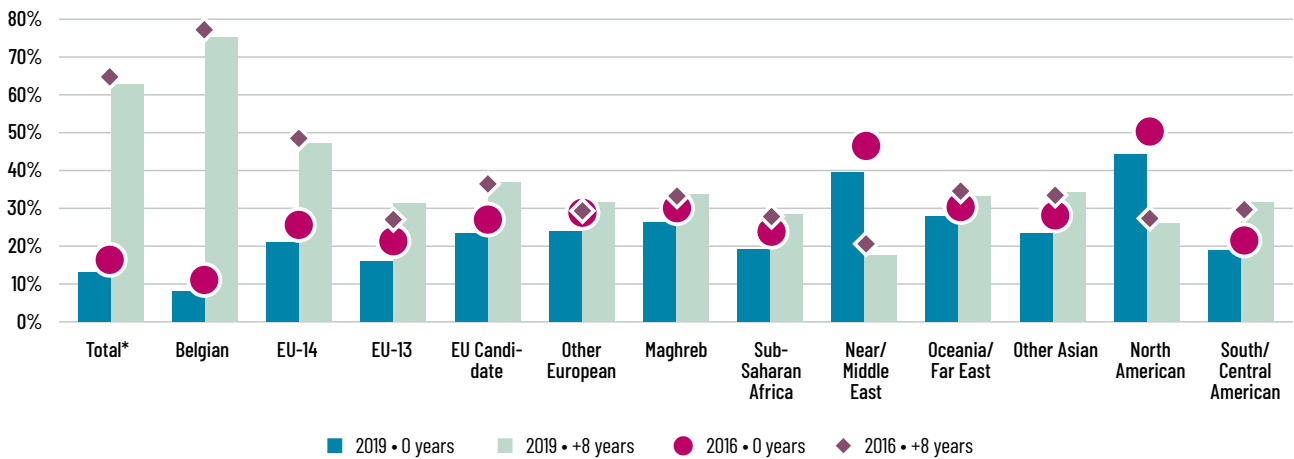
Legend: ■ 2019 • 0 years   ■ 2019 • +8 years   ● 2016 • 0 years   ◆ 2016 • +8 years

* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

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47 For 30-64 year olds. See Chapter 2.8 of the Socio-Economic Monitoring 2015 for details of the methodology.

2.4. Working conditions

In addition to wage, sector, and job security, we can map various other job characteristics. In doing so, we can further analyse the segmentation of the labour market (i.e. the separation between stable jobs with good working conditions versus an uncertain and less favourable segment).

First, we will look at working arrangements. The shares of **part-time workers** have remained fairly stable over the years (and high in an international perspective)[48]. For all origins, the differences between

men and women are substantial, despite a slight increase in part-time male workers. The gender gap in terms of part-time work is smallest for people from Oceania/Far East and North America origin, as women from these origins work part-time less often. We find the highest share of men working part-time among people of Other Asian origin. Women from EU-13, EU-candidate and South/Central American backgrounds work part-time most often. This is probably due to the fact that they are over-represented in sectors where there are few full-time jobs, especially in the service voucher system.

GRAPH 43: **Share of employed part-time workers, by origin and gender (18-64 years, 2019)**
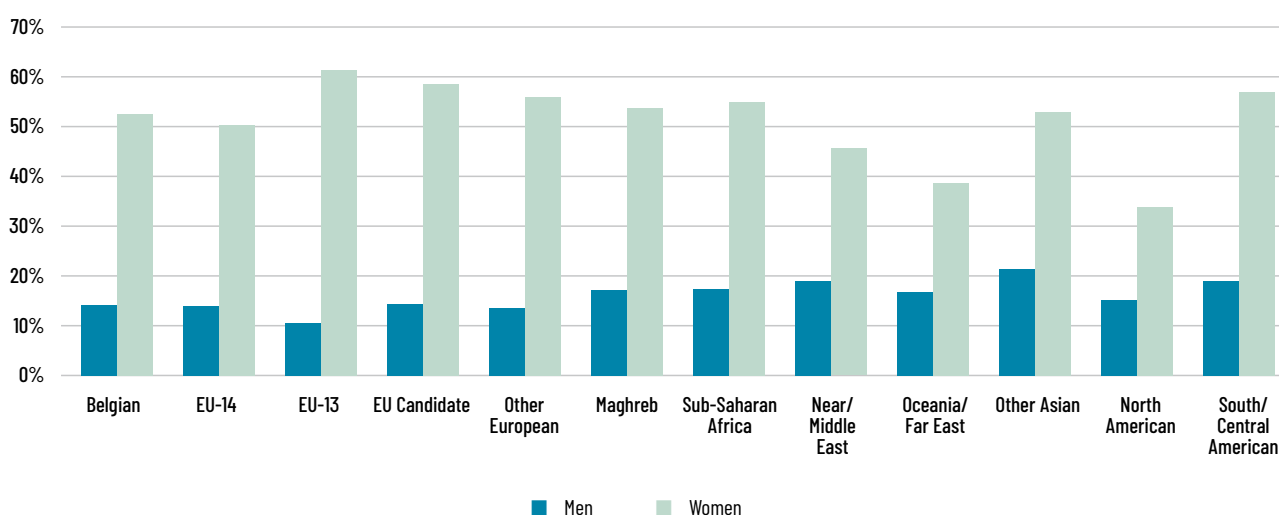
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The **gender gap in part-time work participation** becomes even more apparent when examined by household type. For men, there are only small differences in part-time work participation according to family situation with the exception that for some origins, fathers (men in couples with children) still work full-time slightly more often than other men. For women, on the other hand, we observe large differences both between them as well as compared to men in the same family situation. In 2019, the differ-

ence between the shares of men and women working part-time is most pronounced for those in a couple with children, a gap that has increased further since 2016 (from 45.8 to 47.6 percentage points for the total population). The difference between fathers and mothers is greatest for people from the EU-13 and an EU candidate country (60.0 and 56.9 percentage points respectively). For all origins, women in couples without children work full-time more often than mothers, and single mothers do so even more often.

48 Coenen, A., & Morsink, N. (2018), 'Deeltijds werk bij vrouwen: een genderkloof onderzocht', *Over Werk. Tijdschrift van het Steunpunt Werk*, 28 (1), 61-67.

GRAPH 44: **Share of employed part-time workers, by origin, gender, and household type (18–64 years, 2019)**
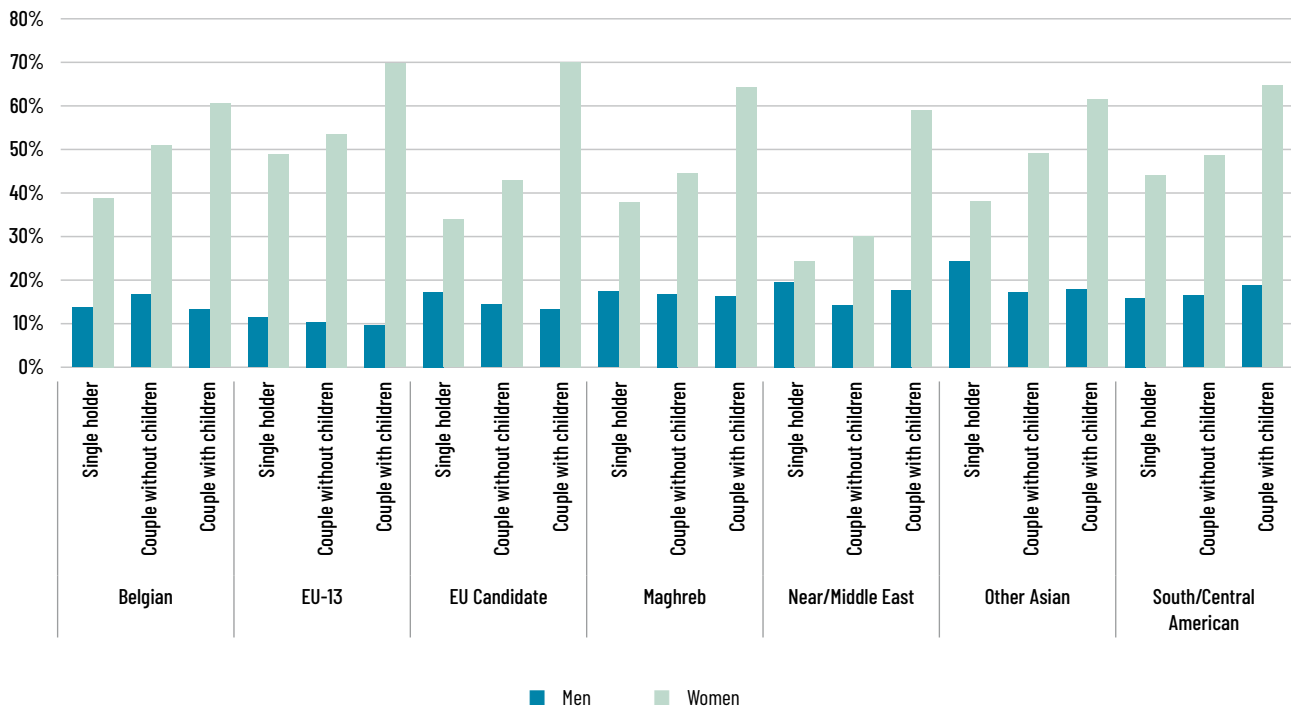
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

As far as part-time work is concerned, there is more than only a gender gap. The level of education again plays an important role. Women with at most a lower secondary school certificate work part-time much more often than other women, and this applies to all origins (with percentages of part-time work ranging from 60.6% for people from the Near/Middle East to 73.5% for people from the EU-13 origin). Moreover, these shares are still slightly higher than in 2016. For women with a higher education degree, the Belgian origin has the highest share of part-time work (45.3%), albeit with a relatively large share of 'smaller' types of part-time work (a 4/5th or 9/10th work arrangement), compared to the other origins (except for the EU-13). Although men who have completed upper secondary education also work part-time more often than other men, the gender gap in part-time shares is by far the largest among those who have completed upper secondary educa-

tion. In the case of the EU-13 origin, women with at most lower secondary education work up to 4 times more often part-time than men.

In summary, for all women and - to a lesser extent - for men of non-EU origin, the level of education seems to be a determinant of the proportion of part-time work, which is probably related to the types of jobs these people have. Women with a lower secondary school certificate or less tend to earn less and therefore suffer less loss of income if they work fewer hours. They are also more likely to work in sectors where there are fewer full-time jobs or where it is difficult to work full-time (e.g. in cleaning where non-standard hours are often required). Men with at most lower secondary education also work more often in non-standard jobs (flexible contracts, shift systems) which explains why this group is more often not working full time.

GRAPH 45: **Proportion of male and female workers who work part-time by origin and level of education (18-64 years, 2018)**
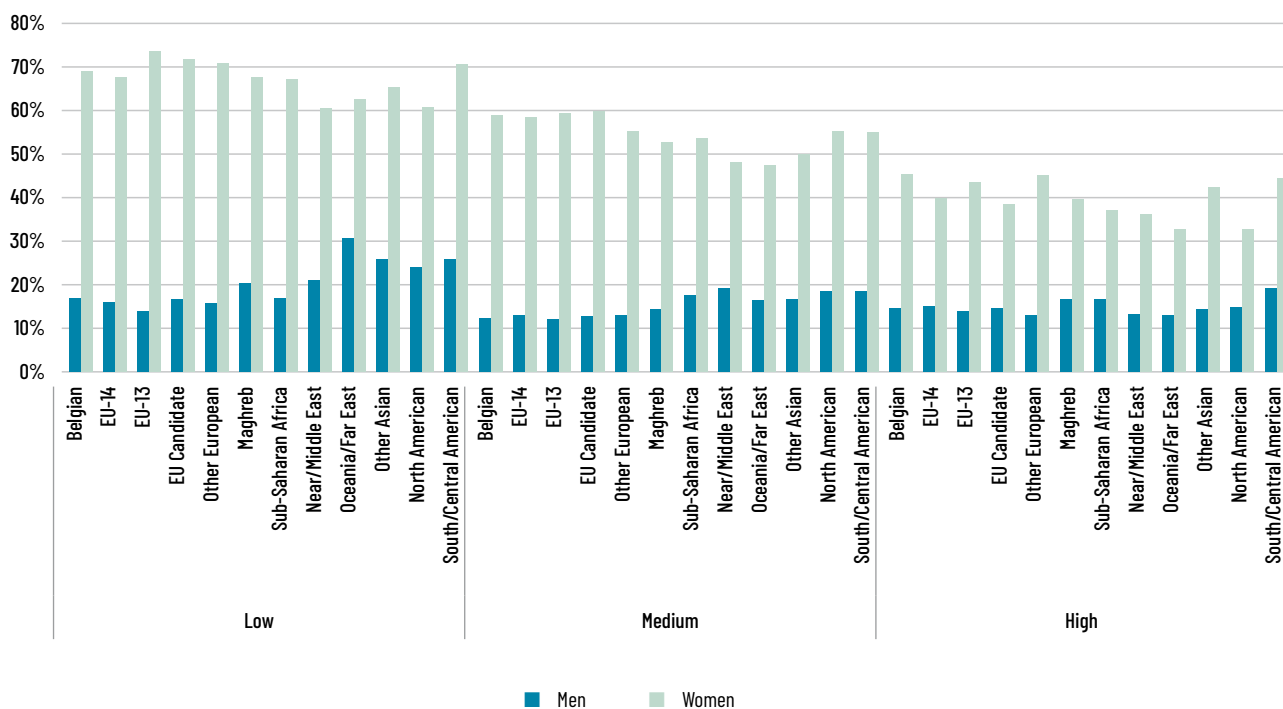
Temporary work has changed significantly since the first edition of this report, and this is also true for the share of employees who are employed in this context. However, we still find proportionally fewer employees of Belgian origin in the temporary work sector (in 2011, 59.8% of temporary workers were of Belgian origin, compared to 51.8% in 2019). Workers from Sub-Saharan Africa have the highest share of temporary workers within their working population (11.7%), followed by people from the Near/Middle East and from an EU candidate origin. For all origins, men have higher shares of temporary agency work than women, the 18–29-year-olds have a much higher share of agency workers than other age groups, and Flanders has a higher proportion of agency workers than the other regions. People with a higher education degree have a much smaller share in temporary agency work (2.1% in 2018) than other degree levels (5.2% for graduates of upper secondary education, 5.6% for those with at most lower secondary education).

GRAPH 46: **(left) Share of employees working in the temporary sector by origin (Q3 2011/2019); (right) Breakdown of interim workers by origin (2011/2019)**

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

In the figures for paid employment by **type of contract** (blue-collar, white-collar, or civil servant), there has been little change since the previous edition[49]. In 2019, employees of Belgian and North American origin work less often as blue-collar workers and most often as white-collar. The share of civil servants is also by far the largest among people of Belgian origin[50]. People of EU-13 origin have the highest share of blue-collar workers (63.5%), followed by people from an EU candidate country (55.2%). Men are more often employed as blue-collar workers and less often as employees or civil servants, but the difference is relatively small for people of South/Central American and Other Asian origin. For these origins we observe high shares of blue-collar workers for both men and women.

If we look at the types of contracts by degree level and origin, we see that higher education graduates of Belgian, EU-14, or North American origin very rarely have a blue-collar contract and – in the case of Belgian origin – we get a notably high share of civil servants. Higher education graduates from Other Asian origins, but also from the Near/Middle East, from Another European origin and from the EU-13 have relatively high shares of blue-collar workers. For all origins, except North American and Belgian, at least 60% of employees with at most a lower secondary school certificate perform blue-collar work. The differences between the origins are therefore – as is the case for many other indicators in this report – less pronounced for this level of education than for upper secondary and tertiary graduates.

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49 The data on the type of contract (CLATRA) contains for each year the last quarter of the year for which a CLATRA position is known.

50 It should be noted, however, that here too it should be taken into account that foreign officials working for international institutions are likely to be largely absent from the figures, which may have an effect, particularly in the case of EU-14 and EU-13 origins.

GRAPH 47: **Share of employees by type of employment contract, origin, and level of education (2018)**

Source: *Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.*

Finally, we examine the shares of workers in the **service voucher system**[51]. In practice, these are almost exclusively female workers, with only about 1 in 50 workers being male. The EU-13 origin has, already since 2010, the highest proportion of workers employed in this sector (in 2019, 39.9% for the country as a whole and even 53.1% in Brussels), followed at a distance by the South/Central American origin (27.4%). People of Belgian and North American origin work least often in the service voucher system. The share of service voucher workers is highest for all origins among those who have completed lower secondary education or less, but for the rest, there are large differences between the origin groups in the composition of the service voucher group according to education level. For the origins that work most frequently in this system (people from EU-13 origin, South/Central America, Other Europeans, and Other Asians), the shares of higher education graduates are even higher than for upper secondary school graduates. Thus, the system does not only attract people with a maximum of a lower secondary school certificate.

If we look at the migration history of the origins with the largest shares (see second graph below), it is striking that, in the case of people from the EU-13, more than 80% are new arrivals (registered in the National Register for 5 years or less). Among the other origins, we also find slightly more newcomers than we would have expected based on the demographic distribution, but this phenomenon is less pronounced than for people originating from EU-13 origin. Among the people from Another European origin, Other Asian country and Sub-Saharan Africa, the recent first generation of Belgians (nationality acquired within the last 5 years) is strongly represented. This suggests that this type of employment constitutes a relatively easy access to the labour market for women who are recent arrivals. The question is whether this can also serve as a steppingstone to other jobs that match their skills more closely.

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51 Since 2014, the competence for service vouchers has been assigned to the 3 regions. You can find information on how this system works on the website of each region:
   - the Brussels-Capital Region
   - the Walloon Region
   - the Flemish Region

GRAPH 48: **Share of workers in the service voucher system in relation to the total number of employees by origin and level of education (18–64 years, 2018)**[52]
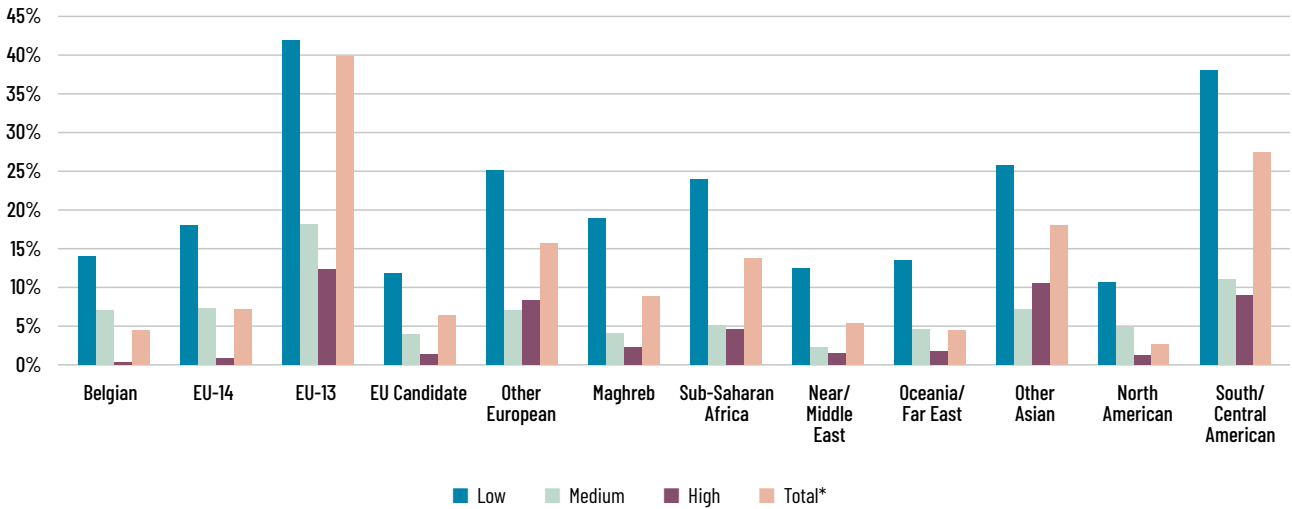
* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

GRAPH 49: **Female workers in the service voucher system by migration background and origin (18–64 years, 2019)**[53]
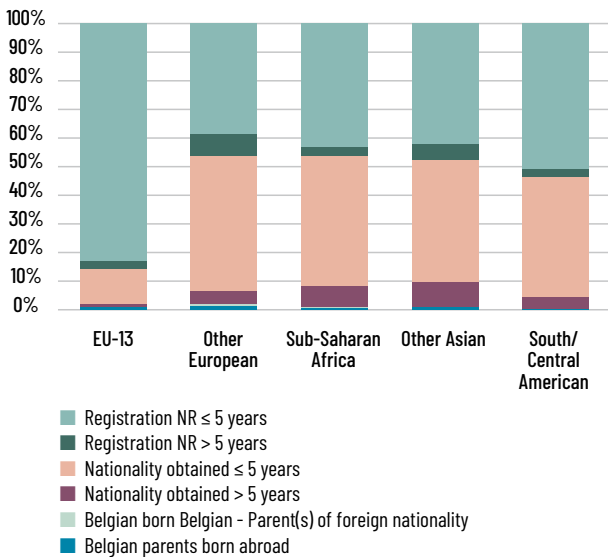
Registration NR ≤ 5 years
Registration NR > 5 years
Nationality obtained ≤ 5 years
Nationality obtained > 5 years
Belgian born Belgian - Parent(s) of foreign nationality
Belgian parents born abroad

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

This chapter shows that there are big differences in the position of the different groups in our labour market. Although we see positive trends for all origin groups in 2018 and 2019, people with a migrant background are more likely to be unemployed and if they do work, it is often in less sustainable and qualitative positions. This even holds in the case of equal levels of education and field of study. People of foreign origin who also are part of the group of people with at most a certificate of lower secondary education, over 55s, women/mothers , and/or recent immigrants, have an even harder time to participate in the labour market in a sustainable way. They deserve extra attention in policy.

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52   We look at the situation in the third quarter of the year.
53   The graph contains only the origins with the largest share of service voucher workers in the total number of employees.

03
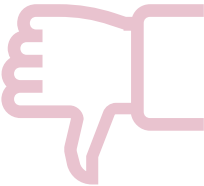
The impact of COVID-19

03
Key elements

The impact of COVID-19 on the labour market situation of people of foreign origin

This chapter examines labour market developments by national origin in the first three quarters of 2020, when **the COVID-19 pandemic** reached Belgium.

People of non-EU origin were less likely to **telework** in 2020 and therefore had a higher risk of COVID-19 infection.

The **effects of the crisis** remain more limited than initially feared, thanks to the job retention schemes (temporary unemployment) that have cushioned the impact of the lockdowns on workers. The impact initially affected everyone fairly evenly, even narrowing the gap between the origin groups (employment and unemployment rate gaps narrowed until the third quarter of 2020).

However, **as the crisis progresses, the gap widens again**, as people of Belgian origin are less likely to lose their jobs and are more likely to be re-employed. In almost all sectors, workers of foreign origin have been replaced - at least temporarily - by workers of Belgian origin.

The **loss of income** during the crisis period is probably less important for people of Belgian origin than for others because they were temporarily unemployed for shorter periods and for a more limited part of their working time.
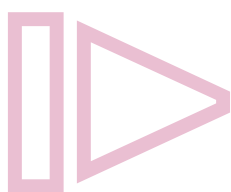
The **return to work** is more difficult for people of foreign origin, especially for people of non-EU origin, people with a lower secondary education certificate or less and people in lower paid jobs. This situation is similar to the developments following the financial crisis of 2008-2009.

The negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on **the labour market** outcomes of people of foreign origin is further reinforced by the fact that they are over-represented in the sectors most affected by the pandemic.
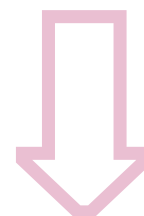
As the first chapters of this edition of the Socio-economic Monitoring show, there is still a very large gap between people of Belgian and foreign origin on the Belgian labour market. It is mainly people of non-EU origin who have, on average, a lower activity rate, a higher unemployment rate, a higher rate of long-term unemployed and lower wages. In 2018 and 2019, however, there have been several positive trends, which have improved their situation. However, their position in the labour market remained relatively vulnerable even before the COVID-19 crisis broke out, and there is therefore a high risk that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this and other vulnerable groups[1] will also be disproportionate.

As we have been monitoring the labour market situation of people of foreign origin since 2008, we also know that the financial crisis of 2008-2009 hit them particularly hard, especially the second generation[2]. And it took much longer (until after 2014) before a positive trend emerged again for this group. International institutions such as the International Labour Organisation and the OECD also warn that in crisis situations it is often the groups already in the most precarious situation that are hit hardest[3]. Unfortunately, we do not yet have complete data for 2020, but in this chapter we can the first findings on the uneven socio-economic impact of the pandemic are already available. To already describe the effects in the year 2021, we will complement the administrative data with indicators based on quarterly data from the Labour Force Survey (Statbel).

International and Belgian research shows that people of foreign origin – due to a range of inequality factors such as poverty, overcrowded housing, and a high concentration in jobs where physical distance is difficult to maintain and where it is not possible to work from home - are at much higher risk of COVID-19 infection[4]. Globally, we find that occupations with a higher risk of COVID-19 infection are more likely to be low-paid workers, young people, people with lower secondary education or less, migrants and ethnic minorities[5]. Studies in different OECD countries have shown that people of foreign origin are at least twice as likely to be infected as the native population. The risk of other health problems and even death is also higher for people born abroad[6]. In Belgium, this phenomenon is also linked, among other things, to their position on the labour market, as we will see below. Several explanatory factors have already been discussed in chapter 2, but in the previous chapter we will take a closer look at various elements that contribute to increased vulnerability, both in terms of exposure to illness and in terms of the impact on labour market position.

This chapter will specifically address the access of people of foreign origin to a range of worker protection measures (in particular, telework and temporary unemployment) and their over-representation in the hardest hit sectors and statuses. We then examine the extent to which the socio-economic consequences have been unevenly distributed (impact on employment, exit into unemployment or inactivity and probability of re-entry into the labour market).

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1 For more information on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups (people with a lower secondary education certificate or less, young people, women, people on low wages, atypical forms of work), see the 'Monitoring the social impact of the COVID-19 crisis in Belgium', published every fortnight: https://socialsecurity.belgium.be/fr/elaboration-de-la-politique-sociale/impact-social-covid-19.

2 See Chapter 'Labour market developments by national origin'.

3 ILO (2021), *COVID-19: ILO Observatory - 8th edition* (https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_824099/lang--en/index.htm); OECD (2020), Employment Outlook 2020: Worker Security and the COVID-19 Crisis (https://www.oecd.org/employment-outlook/2020/).

4 OECD (2020), 'What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigrants and their children?', OECD Policy brief.

5 OECD (2022), *Employment Outlook 2022*.

6 EU-OSHA (2021), 'COVID-19 and musculoskeletal disorders: risks that weigh doubly on migrant workers in Europe?'; Gadeyne, S., Rodriguez-Loureiro, L., Surkyn, J. et al. (2021), 'Are we really all in this together? The social patterning of mortality during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Belgium', *Equity in Health*, nr. 20 (https://www.brain-helicon.be/); Vanthomme, K., Gadeyne, S. et al. (2021), 'A population-based study on mortality among Belgian immigrants during the first COVID-19 wave in Belgium. Can demographic and socioeconomic indicators explain differential mortality?', *SSM - Population Health*, 14.

1. Immediate impact of the pandemic: teleworking and temporary unemployment

In March 2020, the number of COVID-19 virus infections was rising sharply in large parts of the world, and it became clear that Belgium would not escape the virus either. For the health sector to cope with this increase, the spread of the virus had to be contained. Therefore, on 18 March, Belgium, like many other European countries, went into lockdown. Workers began to telework where possible, but this was obviously not possible in many essential sectors. For example, in food shops. In other non-core sectors where teleworking was not possible, many were forced to stop working. To make these extensive protective measures possible and to minimise the socio-economic impact, several measures for the protection of jobs and the purchasing power of workers were immediately implemented. The most important of these, for workers, is temporary unemployment. This system had already existed for a long time[7], but the procedure, the conditions of eligibility and the replacement ratio of the benefit were adapted as of 13 March[8]. To also limit the impact on the unemployed (who had more difficulties in finding a job), the degressivity of the unemployment benefit was temporarily frozen[9].

Telework also existed long before the arrival of COVID-19. It mainly concerned people with a higher education degree who were already working occasionally or regularly at home one or more days a week. Figures based on the Labour Force Survey (see graph below) show that, prior to 2020, people born outside the EU worked 'occasionally or regularly' at home less often[10] than those born in Belgium or an EU Member State (around 13 percentage points less). From the first quarter of 2020 onwards, the share of teleworkers increases for all groups, but especially for employees born in Belgium or in the EU (the latter even showing the highest increase, possibly due to the additional difficulty for cross-border workers to commute). The difference with non-EU nationals thus increases during the health crisis and remains very significant throughout 2021. In Belgium too, people of foreign origin have to go to work more often than those of Belgian origin, thus running a greater risk of being infected. Or, on the contrary, they cannot work at all because their job is not "teleworkable" and, unlike other origins, they suffer more often a loss of income.

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7   NEO (2021), *Long-term evolution of NEO allocations: 100 years of data* (https://www.onem.be/file/cc73d96153bbd5448a56f19d925d05b1379c7f21/8e8c02a7e1229a3fafc4eaf3d57ebd206095bb88/20211013_historischereeksen-bis_fr.pdf).

8   For an overview, see: https://www.onem.be/documentation/faq/faq-chomage-temporaire. Already during the financial crisis of 2008-2009, substantial adjustments were made to the system. For more details on the regulatory changes, see: Loÿen, C., Nuyts, N. and Segaert M. (2020), 'The impact of de COVID-19-pandemie op de werkloosheid: eerste resultaten', RBSS, (2020)1.

9   Temporary freeze of the degressivity of full unemployment benefits (Royal Decree of 23 April 2020).

10 Working at home is defined as work done in the worker's home. It is not necessarily telework, carried out with the help of telecommunications. However, the two concepts largely overlap.

GRAPH 50: **Percentage of the working population who occasionally or regularly work at home by country of birth (Q1 2018 - Q3 2021)**[11]
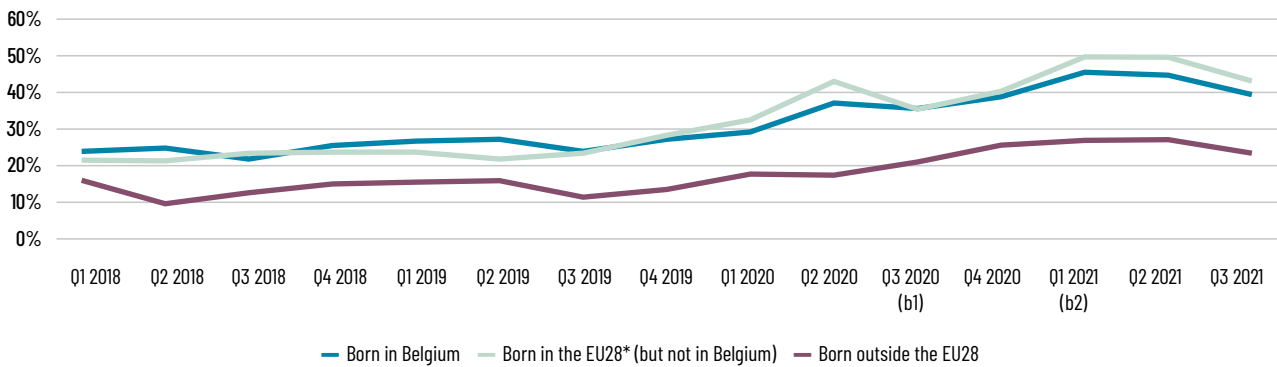
Q stands for quarter
*EU28: EU Member States including the UK
Source: Statbel (Directorate General Statistics - Statistics Belgium), Labour Force Survey.

In jobs where teleworking was not possible, but where work nevertheless had to be stopped due to the pandemic, temporary unemployment could in most cases be used. The National Employment Office (NEO) figures on payments for **temporary unemployment** can be broken down by nationality. The data show, for the whole period March 2020-November 2021, an over-representation of workers of foreign nationality in the case of temporary unemployment benefits (paid to those who have been temporarily unemployed for at least one day in the month). This over-representation rises from +6.7 percentage points relative to their share of total workers in March 2020 to +11.0 percentage points in August 2021. The gap then narrowed slightly again but remains higher than at the start of the crisis.

GRAPH 51: **Overrepresentation of foreign nationals in temporary unemployment, in percentage points (March 2020-November 2021)**[12]
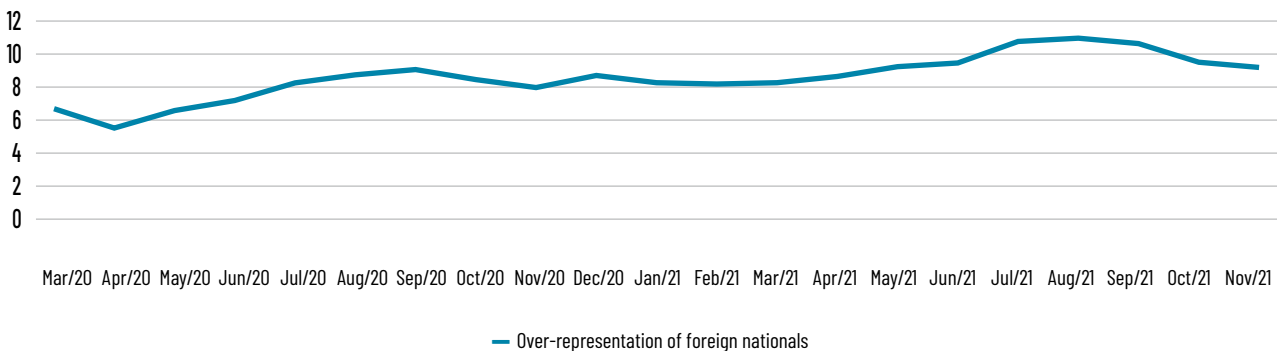
Source: NEO. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

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11 (b1) Break in results. Figures up to and including Q2/2020 are based on a smaller sample and therefore cannot be compared as such with the figures for Q3/2020. Up to and including Q2/2020, the question about working at home was asked exclusively of respondents from the first wave. From Q3/2020 onwards, the question about working at home was extended to all waves, resulting in significantly larger sample sizes. (b2) Break in results in Q1/2021 due to revision of the questionnaire and change in ILO definitions of unemployment and employment.

12 Difference between the share of foreign workers in temporary unemployment payments and their share in total employed workers.

Administrative data allow for a more detailed mapping of the distribution of temporary unemployed by origin, but at present only the first three quarters of 2020 are available (see Graph below). The data confirms that almost all persons of foreign origin - except for persons of North American origin - were more often temporarily unemployed in the three quarters available. The shares of temporary unemployment are by far the highest among workers from other Asian countries, South/Central America, and the EU-13; they are up to almost twice as high as for workers of Belgian origin. During the months

of lockdown in Belgium, workers of Belgian origin experienced an average share of temporary unemployment of around 20%, while the share of workers of other Asian origin was around 40%. This is consistent with the sectors in which these origins are over-represented, namely hotels and restaurants (I), construction (F) and administrative and support services (N). These are commonly sectors where many jobs "do not lend themselves to telework" and where it was therefore mostly impossible to work, i.e. sectors considered "non-essential" and therefore closed at certain times.

GRAPH 52: **Share of temporary unemployed**[13] **among workers by origin (1st to 3rd quarter 2020)**
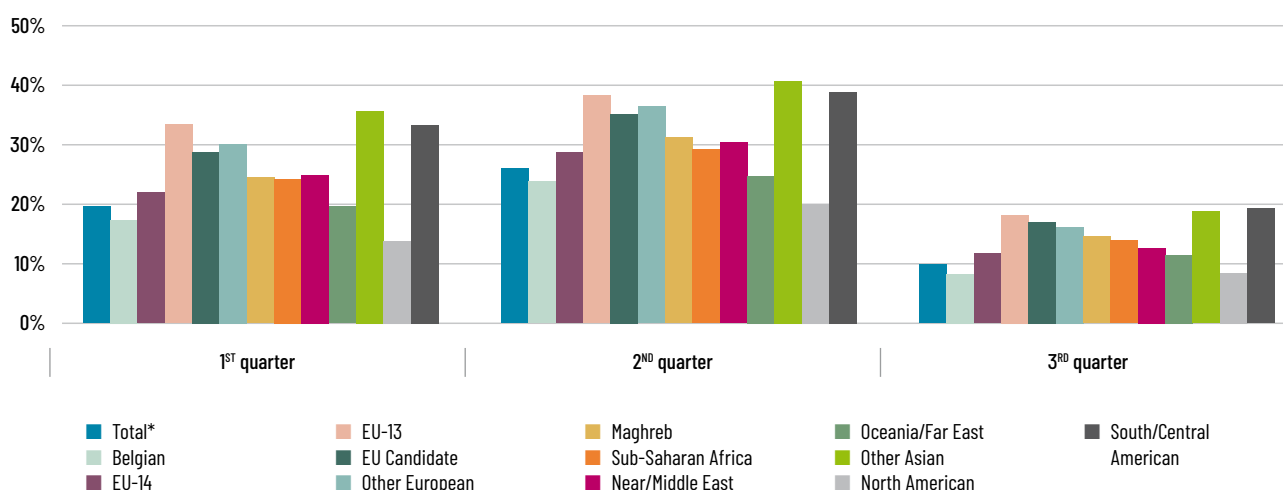
* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The differences in the shares of temporary unemployment are even more pronounced if we also consider the **educational attainment** of the employees. For each national origin, people with a higher education degree have a lower share of temporary unemployment than those who have completed upper secondary education, and the latter always have a lower share than those with at most a lower

secondary education certificate. This, of course, cannot be separated from the finding above that teleworking has traditionally been more widespread among workers with higher education. The differences between degree levels are smallest for people of Other European and Asian origin, as these workers - for all degree levels - often work in sectors where work cannot be done remotely[14].

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13   These are all workers who have been temporarily unemployed for at least one day. The distribution of the unemployed according to the duration of their absence is discussed below.

14   See Chapter 'Labour market developments by national origin'.

GRAPH 53: **Share of temporary unemployment among workers by origin and level of education (1ˢᵗ to 3ʳᵈ quarter 2020)**
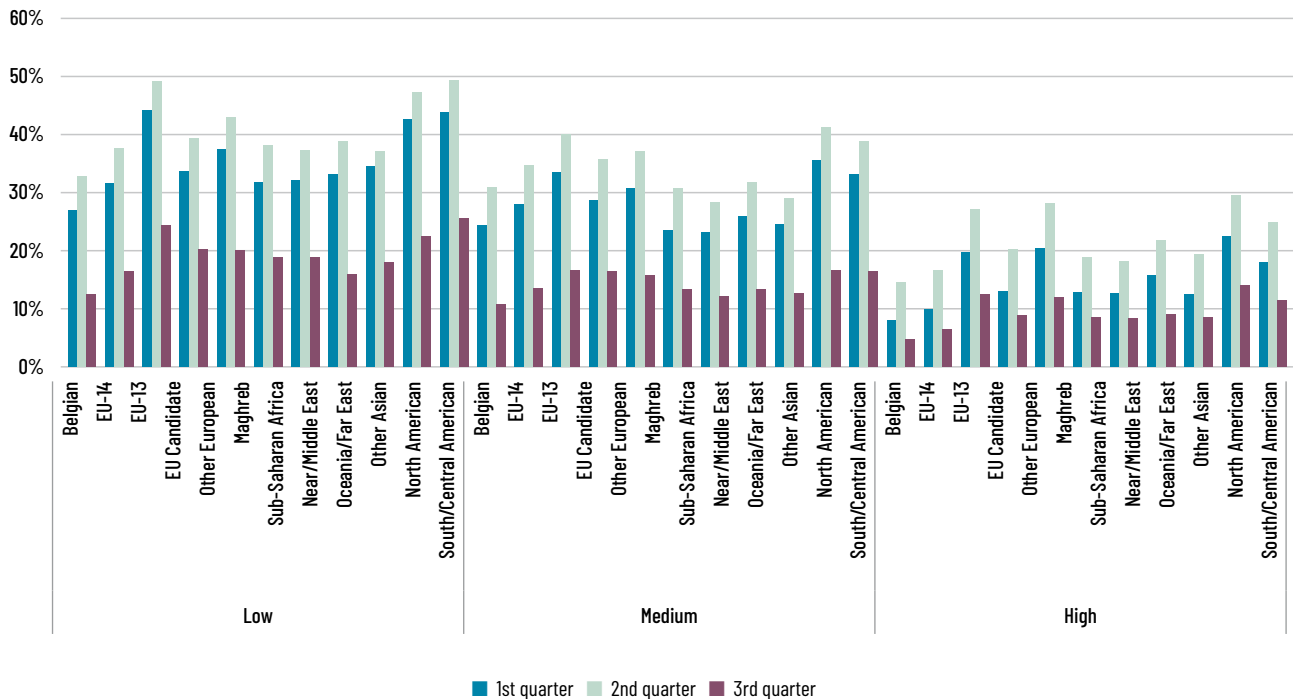
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The differences are even more pronounced when we also take into account the **wage deciles**[15]. Apart from workers from EU candidate countries, the shares of temporary unemployment among employees in the three highest wage deciles never exceed 20% for all origins, even in the second quarter of 2020. In the third quarter, they no longer exceed 10%. In contrast, among workers in the three lowest wage deciles, we observe temporary unemployment shares of up to almost 70% (for the EU-13 origin). The monthly NEO figures on temporary unemployment also show that, in March 2020, 75% of the temporary unemployed had a gross reference wage 1500 to 3,000 euros[16]; 91% were below 3,500 euros. By way of comparison: according to the Structure of Earnings Survey (Statbel), only 50.7% of workers receive a monthly salary of less than 3,500 euros[17]. Both percentages drop slightly during the summer months, while the share of reference wages above 3,500 euros increases somewhat, but since December 2020 this share has fallen significantly again. The vast majority of these are therefore medium-low to low wages, again a segment in which we find an over-representation of people of non-EU origin.

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15   Based on gross monthly wages. See chapter 'Labour market developments' for further explanation.

16   For the most recent shares in the NEO figures, see 'Monitoring the social impact of the COVID-19 crisis in Belgium': https://socialsecurity.belgium.be/fr/elaboration-de-la-politique-sociale/impact-social-covid-19.

17   Figures for 2019: https://statbel.fgov.be/fr/themes/emploi-formation/salaires-et-cout-de-la-main-doeuvre/monthly-gross-average-wages.

GRAPH 54: **Share of temporary unemployed among workers by origin and wage level**[18] **(1st to 3rd quarter 2020)**
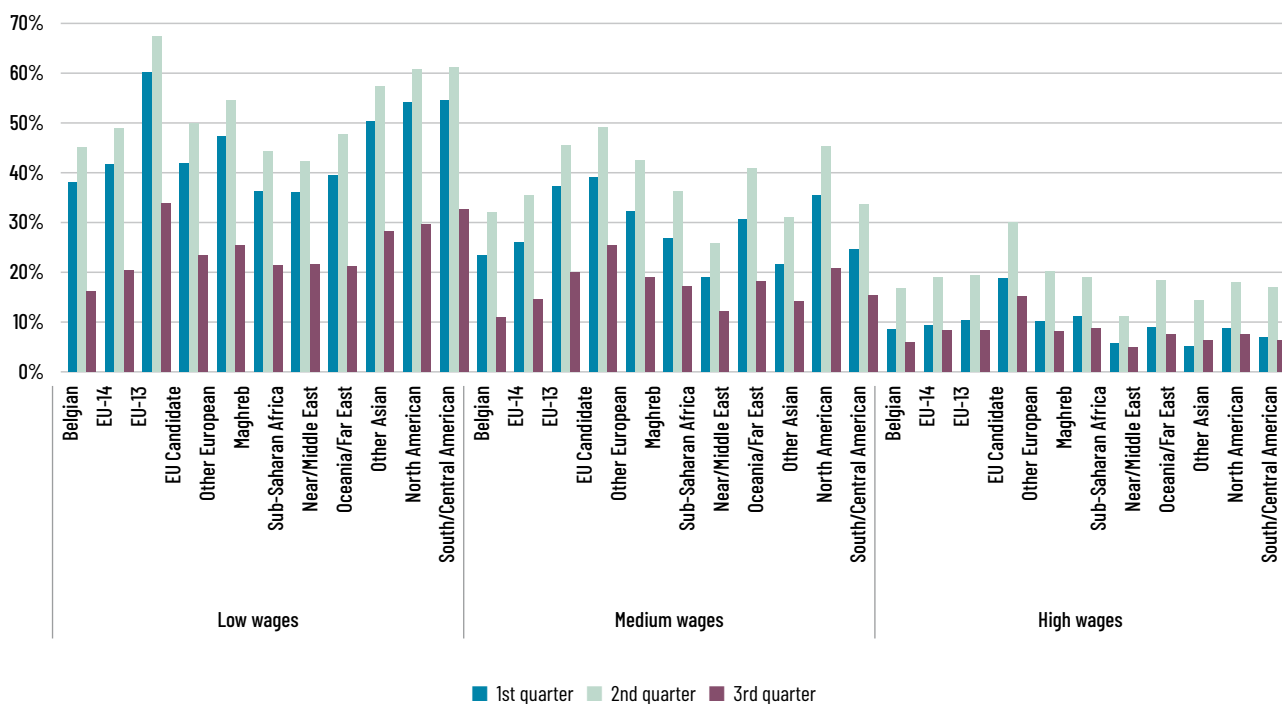
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

Finally, we also know the distribution of the temporary unemployed by **sector**[19]. The percentage of temporarily unemployed workers (monthly payment data from the NEO) was highest in the hotel and catering industry throughout the period from March 2020 to September 2021 (with peaks of more than 70% during the lockdowns). We also see the persistence of high shares of temporary unemployment, until autumn 2021, in construction, the arts and events sector, trade, administrative and support services (including cleaning services) and industry (see Table 19). Chapter 2 shows that people of non-EU origin are over-represented in construction, hotels and restaurants, retail trade and support services. These are precisely the sectors

that have had to restrict or interrupt their activities the most and for the longest time. Although these are the sectors in which the share of temporary unemployment is highest for all employees, there are still large differences between the groups of origin within these sectors (see graph 55). In the hotel and catering industry (I), for example, we find that for staff of Belgian origin the share of temporary unemployment was 'only' 41.5% in the second quarter, whereas for people of non-EU origin this share was 55.6%. Only in the information and communication (J) and real estate (L) sectors is the share of temporary unemployment slightly lower for workers of foreign origin.

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18 Low wages: deciles 1-3, medium wages: deciles 4-7, high wages: deciles 8-10.

19 This chapter does not address the gender and age distribution of the temporary unemployed. Men are over-represented in temporary unemployment throughout the pandemic. The age distribution is relatively balanced. For details on the profile characteristics of the temporary unemployed, see the 'Monitoring the social impact of the COVID-19 crisis in Belgium': https://socialsecurity.belgium.be/fr/elaboration-de-la-politique-sociale/impact-social-covid-19.

TABLE 19: **Sectors with the highest shares of temporary unemployed (payments) in April 2020 and January 2021**

	TU payments/ number of workers April 2020	TU payments/ number of workers January 2021
Administrative and support services	46.4%	17.8%
Construction industry	62.0%	32.3%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorbikes	47.3%	10.1%
Industry	44.7%	14.5%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	48.3%	36.3%
Accommodation and catering	71.9%	75.4%
Total	29.1%	10.8%

Source: NEO. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

GRAPH 55: **Share of temporary unemployed among workers by origin and sector of activity (2nd quarter 2020)**
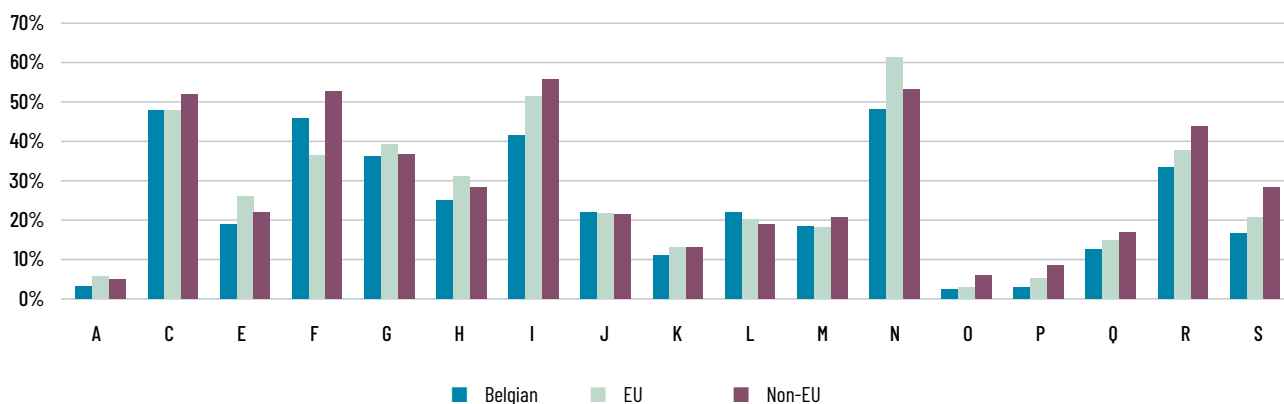
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

In summary, all available figures show that workers of foreign origin were more often temporarily unemployed in 2020 and 2021, which is partly related to both the sectors and types of jobs in which they are over-represented. Although the temporary unemployment benefit compensated for a large part of the loss of income of the temporary unemployed, for those with the lowest wages, the immediate drop in monthly income - even if it is then smoothed out by taxation - can have a significant negative impact on the household's ability to make ends meet in the months in question, especially if they have no financial reserves[20]. We have seen above that temporary unemployment is more frequent in the lower wage

20 For the replacement ratios of temporary unemployment benefits and the impact on the income of different types of workers and households, see Bevers, T., Burnel, V., Coenen, A., Gilbert, V. & Jacobs, A. (2020), 'The end of the world as we know it? The impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on the Belgian labour market', RBSS, (2020)1, 41-65; COVIVAT (2020), *Huishoudbudgetten en sociale minima in lockdown*.

deciles, so there is a real risk that it will also more often affect people with few financial resources.

This is also reflected in the fact that in 2020 the Public Centers for Social Welfare (PCSWs) received more requests for advances from temporary unemployed people[21]. Moreover, some of these sectors may still have to lay off workers if activity does not pick up sufficiently. It is therefore not excluded that people from outside the EU are more often employed in the sectors that are currently most vulnerable to bankruptcies and redundancies.

Furthermore, calculations on the replacement ratio of temporary unemployment benefits also show the importance of the **duration of temporary unemployment** on income[22]. Since the share of temporary unemployment is higher among persons of foreign origin throughout the period, we find relatively more workers among them who were (partially) temporarily unemployed for a longer period. When we look at the proportion of employees who were (partially)

temporarily unemployed in the first, second and third quarters of 2020, we again find that this percentage is lowest for Belgian and North American origins, and highest for South/Central American, Other Asian, and EU-13 origins. Similarly, when we look at the number of days in the month that workers were temporarily unemployed (converted into a percentage of hypothetical working time, see graph below), we see differences between origins. Workers from Belgian and EU-13 origin were least often absent for almost the entire duration (more than 75% of working time), while those from other Asian countries, Oceania/Far East and Near/Middle East were most often absent. Even in the second quarter of 2020, when people of Belgian origin were temporarily unemployed, this applied, for almost half of them, for only a quarter of the working time. Similarly, for people from the EU-13 - who have the third highest proportion of temporary unemployed - this only applies to a limited part of the usual working time for a relatively large proportion of them.

GRAPH 56: **Distribution of temporary unemployed by origin and duration of unemployment[23] (2nd and 3rd quarter 2020)**
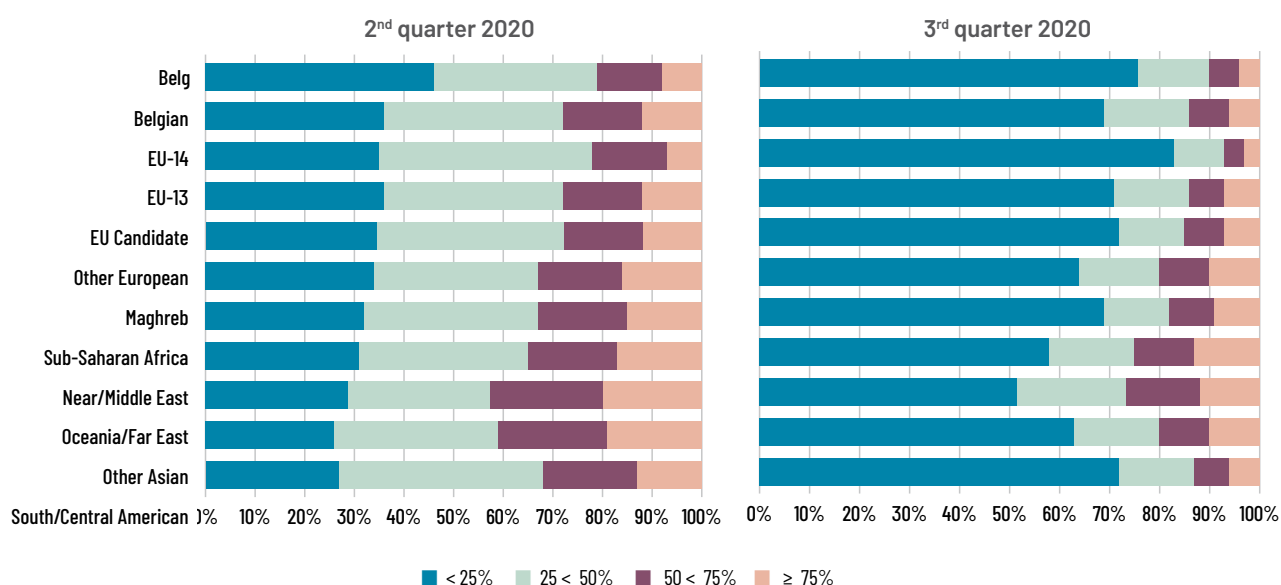
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

21 COVIVAT (2020), *Meer vragen om hulp bij OCMW's en voedselbanken: eerste resultaten van een grootschalige bevraging.*
22 For low wages, the replacement ratio still shows that the effect remained limited. See 'Monitoring the social impact of the COVID-19 crisis in Belgium': https://socialsecurity.belgium.be/fr/elaboration-de-la-politique-sociale/impact-social-covid-19.
23 The percentages indicate the share of days normally worked on which workers were temporarily unemployed.

Workers in certain statuses had no access at all to support measures such as temporary unemployment. As a result, when these people had to stop working, they lost more of their income. Temporary agency workers are in this case. After 18 March 2020, temporary agency work fell by 25-30% according to Dimona declarations to the National Social Security Office (NSSO), and it is only from the beginning of May 2020 that there are very timid signs of recovery. People of foreign origin are also strongly over-represented in temporary agency work (as well as in other statuses with less access to temporary unemployment), as we have seen in the chapter 'Labour market developments'. Belgium also has a higher-than-average share of self-employed people born in another country[24]. The majority of self-employed of foreign origin are active in the trade sector. We do not have figures on the extent to which self-employed of foreign origin make use of the bridging right, but here too it cannot be excluded that they are more often found in the sectors hardest hit by the crisis. Finally, it turned out that occupational health and safety in some sectors and professions was (even more than usual) put under pressure due to the non-compliance with (additional) health and safety regulations during the pandemic[25]. People of foreign origin more often work on temporary contracts and have less seniority, so they were less able to protect themselves against such violations.

2. Impact on labour market position

So far, we have only looked at workers and their access to a number of protective measures in this chapter, but how has the labour market position of the whole working-age population changed since March 2020? And have all workers stayed in work? To answer these questions, let us first look at the labour market indicators by quarter. Firstly, it should be noted that, certainly in 2020, protective measures have been successful in cushioning the immediate impact of the crisis. Contrary to initial fears, employment and unemployment have remained fairly stable overall. Even if the figures hide a significant reduction in the number of hours actually worked[26] (and a drop in the search activity of the unemployed), this means that few people have lost their jobs. However, people of foreign origin are more often in a more vulnerable position on the labour market due to their generally less stable working conditions and their more limited seniority[27]. International studies also show that discrimination increases in times of labour market weakness, e.g. because the networks of contacts - which migrants have less access to - become more relevant for finding a job and because employers are becoming more selective[28].

Indeed, the administrative data once again show some disparities between people of different origins. People from the EU-13 experienced the biggest drop in the **employment rate** between the end of 2019 and the third quarter of 2020[29].

This group is largely employed in the construction sector (F) and in support services (N), sectors that had to suspend their activities to a large extent during the lockdown, but also for a long time af-

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24 Source: Statbel (Directorate General Statistics - Statistics Belgium), Labour Force Survey. See also: https://economie. fgov.be/fr/publications/entrepreneuriat-et-diversite.

25 De Wispelaere, F. and Gillis, D. (2020), 'The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the evolution of undeclared work in Belgium and the fight against it.' RBSS, (2020)1, pp. 227-273.

26 For figures, see 'Monitoring the social impact of the COVID-19 crisis in Belgium': https://socialsecurity.belgium.be/fr/ elaboration-de-la-politique-sociale/impact-social-covid-19.

27 See Chapter 'Labour market developments by national origin'.

28 OECD (2020), 'What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigrants and their children?', OECD Policy brief; OECD (2022), *Employment Outlook 2022*.

29 However, we have to take into account the possibility that some people may have left Belgium during the year 2020 who would not yet be included in these figures. If this is the case, then the employment rate is slightly higher than in this chapter.

terwards. For people of Maghreb and Sub-Saharan African origin, the fall in the employment rate was also more pronounced up to and including the second quarter of 2020, but they then experienced a relatively strong recovery. Except for the EU-13 origin, the gap with the Belgian origin has even narrowed slightly for all origins during this period. Of course, the data only relate to the first months of the crisis. Below, we will also discuss the LFS figures, which are available up to and including the third quarter of 2021 but which, admittedly, do not concern the entire population of foreign origin (only foreign-born persons).

GRAPH 57: **Employment rate**[30] **by origin (18-64 years, 2019-2020)**
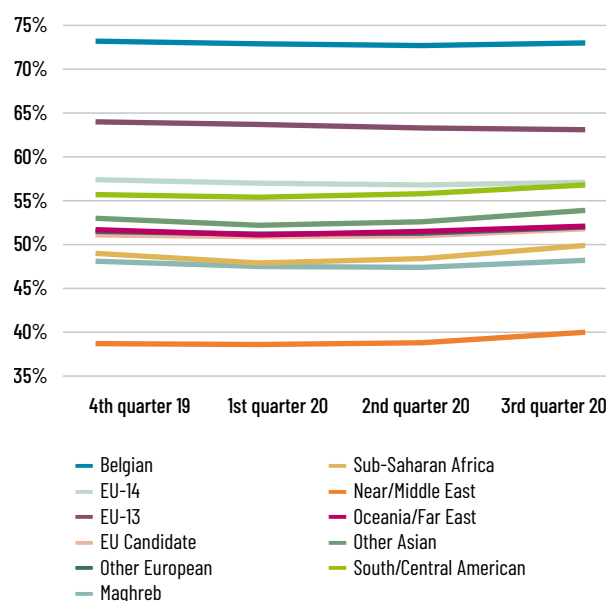
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS.
Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

When we look at **the migration background**, we see that in the first three quarters of 2020 the employment rate for first generation non-Belgians (people who have not obtained nationality) falls the most. The drop is especially significant for people who have been registered in the National Register for more than 5 years (from 53.6% in the fourth quarter of 2019 to 49.6% in the second quarter of 2020).

[30] The figure reported here for the fourth quarter of 2019 differs from that in Chapter 2 because Chapter 2 considers the population aged 20-64. For the available quarters of 2020, we only have the age category 18-64 and there is no correction for cross-border work. This means that in particular the employment rate of EU-14 origin is strongly underestimated (by about 3.5 percentage points for cross-border workers, plus another limited underestimation for workers from international institutions that do not pay Belgian social security contributions).

GRAPH 58: **Employment rate by migration background (18-64 years, 2019-2020)**
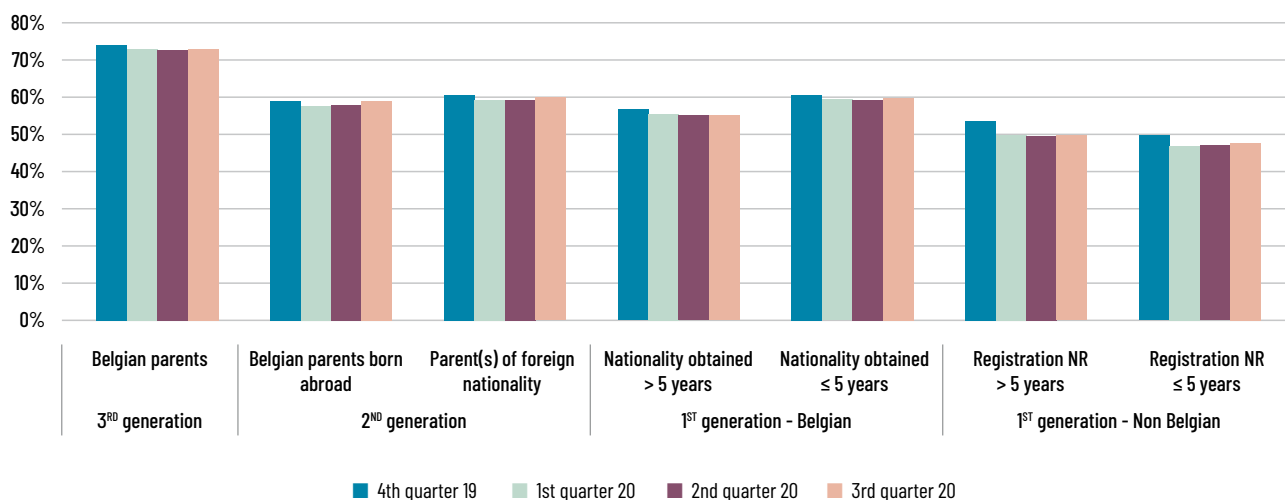
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

As in the other chapters, we can look at other variables, in particular family status and educational attainment[31]. However, there are no major differences in trends when we break down the data for 2020. The employment rates of women and men show a similar evolution, but the employment gap between women and men is slightly reduced compared to 2019 for all origins, except for people of Near/Middle East and Sub-Saharan African origin (for whom the gap remains stable)[32]. The employment rate decreases most strongly for people in couples without children, but almost exclusively for people of Belgian origin. We also observe a greater fall in the employment rate in the year 2020 for people with a lower secondary education certificate or less than for upper secondary education and higher education graduates, and again mainly for people with a lower secondary education certificate or less of Belgian origin. As we will see below, there is certainly also a link with the sectors where the different levels of qualification are over-represented. On the other hand, we also see a relative sharp drop in the employment rate of tertiary education graduates from the EU-13. Finally, the decline in the employment rate is somewhat more marked for graduates in the 'services' field than for other fields of study,

and again especially for people of Belgian and EU origin.

As already mentioned, the **unemployment rate** also remained more stable than the European Commission's initial forecasts had feared: an increase of 0.5 percentage points between the fourth quarter of 2019 and the second quarter of 2020 (from 5.5% to 6.0%), followed by a slight decrease to 5.8%. The increase was strongest for people from the EU-13 and especially among those of other Asian origin. These origins, as already mentioned, are over-represented in construction (F), support services (N) and, for the last group, accommodation and food service (I). The third generation of Belgians experienced the smallest increase in unemployment in the year 2020, followed by the first-generation Belgians (who obtained their nationality more than 5 years ago). The increase in the unemployment rate was relatively higher for people with a higher education degree than for other levels of education, but their unemployment rate is obviously still much lower.

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31   You can find the figures in the statistical annexes.

32   This chapter does not further discuss the impact on women. The available figures show that the impact on the labour market was not more negative for women than for men in Belgium. For details, see the 'Monitoring the social impact of the COVID-19 crisis in Belgium': https://socialsecurity.belgium.be/fr/elaboration-de-la-politique-sociale/impact-social-covid-19.

GRAPH 59: **Unemployment rate by origin (18-64 years, 2019-2020)**
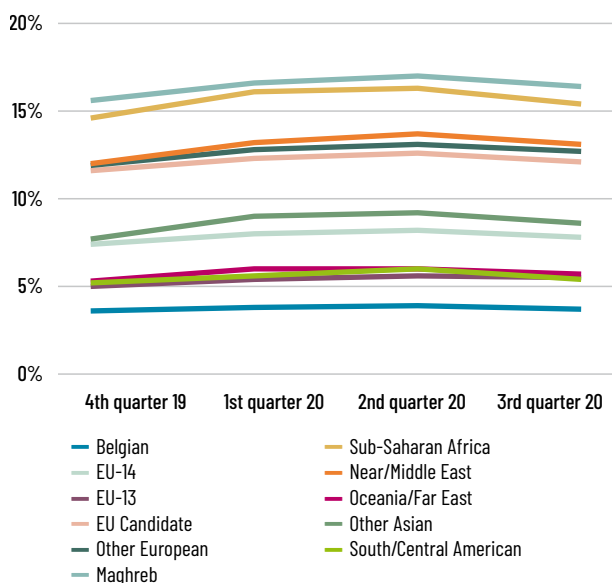
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS.
Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

For the period from the fourth quarter of 2020 to the third quarter of 2021 included, we have quarterly data based on the Labour Force Survey[33]. Although these are survey data based on a sample and on a more limited group of people of foreign origin (only foreign-born), they give a good overall picture of the impact of the crisis over a somewhat longer period. The figures can be broken down into three groups according to country of birth (Belgium, EU, non-EU). In the LFS data, the decrease in the employment rate in the first three quarters of 2020 for people born outside the EU is somewhat stronger than what we observed in the administrative data for the whole group of people of non-EU origin, but this evolution is in line with the finding for the first generation (see Graph 58). In the first quarter of 2021, the employment rate (20–64 year-olds) reached its lowest level (69.0%) since 2018, before rising sharply again.

The employment rate of people born outside the EU fell more sharply between 2019 and the first quarter of 2021 than that of people born in Belgium or the EU, and in contrast to the latter two groups, their employment rate in the third quarter of 2021 is still slightly lower than in 2019. Over a slightly longer period, the employment rate gap has therefore widened, since the recovery (just as after the 2008 financial crisis) appears to be slower for people born outside the EU.

GRAPH 60: **LFS employment rates by country of birth (20–64 years, 2019-2021)**
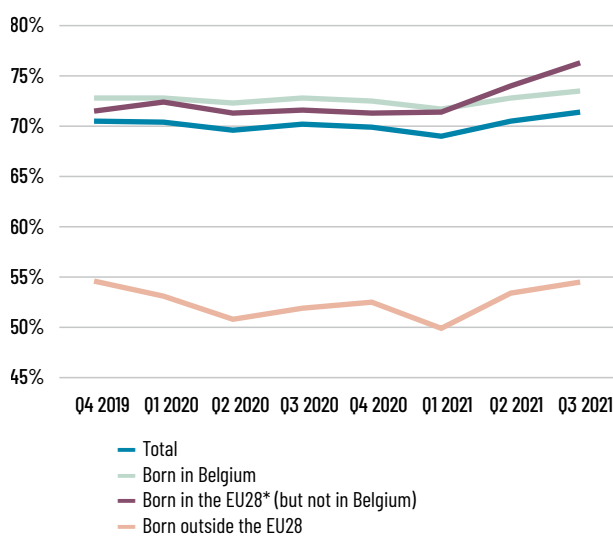
*EU28: EU Member States including the UK
Source: Statbel (Directorate General Statistics - Statistics Belgium), Labour Force Survey.

The ILO[34] unemployment rate of the non-EU born increased more strongly than the average until the first quarter of 2021, but then fell more strongly again. Finally, the increase over the whole period (end of 2019 to the third quarter of 2021) is even slightly larger in percentage for people born in Belgium, although their unemployment rate remains at a much lower level than that of people from non-EU countries. In most OECD countries, the gap between people of local and foreign origin increases sharply at the beginning of the crisis, and then evolves quite rapidly towards an (incomplete) recovery[35]. In Belgium, the gap does not seem to increase as much as at the international level, but the impact seems to be more persistent.

33 https://statbel.fgov.be/fr/themes/emploi-formation/marche-du-travail/emploi-et-chomage.
34 The unemployed according to the ILO definition are all persons who are unemployed but actively seeking work AND are available to start work within two weeks.
35 OECD (2022), *Employment Outlook* 2022.

GRAPH 61: **ILO unemployment rate of 15–64-year-olds by country of birth (2019-2021)**
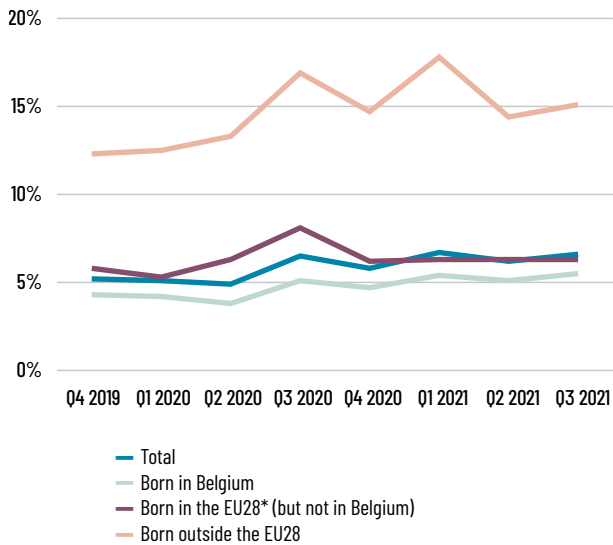
*EU28: EU Member States including the UK
Source: Statbel (Directorate General Statistics - Statistics Belgium),
Labour Force Survey.*

So far, this chapter has only dealt with the labour market situation at certain points in time, but the administrative data also allow us to examine the evolution of the situation of individuals during the year 2020: did they continue to work? Did they become unemployed and subsequently return to work or not? Did a period of temporary unemployment influence these transitions? And are there also differences here - apart from origin - according to degree level, salary and/or sector?

We start with the composition of the group of people who were employed in the first three quarters of the pandemic (Q1 to Q3 2020)[36], according to their national origin. When we look at the proportion of people who were working at the end of 2019 and who were also in employment during the following three quarters, we see that this proportion amounts to 94.6% for people of Belgian origin, 90.5% for people of EU origin and only 87.0% for people of non-EU origin[37]. This is a fairly large gap, which is even more marked in certain specific sectors. The largest gap between Belgian and non-EU origin is observed in support services (N), public administration (O) and agriculture, forestry, and fishing (A). Moreover, this first sector is also the one with the lowest proportion of people who remain employed throughout the period (81.7%)[38].

GRAPH 62: **Share of 18–64 years employed in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2020 among those employed in the 4th quarter of 2019, by origin and sector of activity**
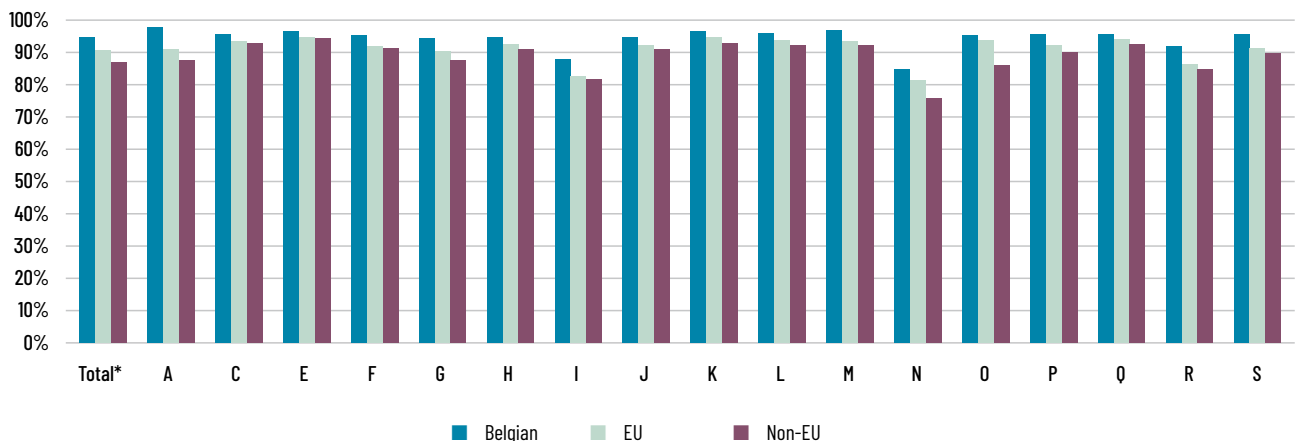
** Including unknown
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.*

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36 It is of course possible that they were partly temporarily unemployed or worked fewer hours, or that their work was interrupted by short periods of unemployment.

37 The origins have been grouped into three categories, as the numbers would otherwise be too small.

38 Except for possible short periods of inactivity or unemployment which are not reflected in the figures.

Employees in the three highest wage deciles were more likely to remain in employment over the three quarters than those in the lowest wage categories (see table below). Combining the variables 'wage' and 'origin', the difference is very significant: from 79.9% having remained in work during the three quarters for people of non-EU origin in the lowest wage deciles to 96.7% having remained in work for people of Belgian origin in the highest deciles. In addition, workers with a higher education qualification more often continued to work in all three quarters than workers with another qualification. Similarly, workers employed full-time in Q4 2019 continued to work slightly more often than those employed part-time and much more often than those with special working arrangements[39]. Workers of foreign origin are more often working in 'special' benefit schemes, especially workers from Sub-Saharan Africa and the Near/Middle East.

TABLE 20: **Share of 18–64-year-olds who were employed in Q1, Q2 and Q3 2020 compared to employed workers in Q4 2019, by origin and wage decile category**

	Belgian	EU	Non-EU
Low wages	88,4%	84,0%	79,9%
Medium wages	95,3%	92,5%	91,2%
High wages	96,7%	95,2%	94,8%

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS.
Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

We then look at the **exits from employment into unemployment**, in particular of those who were working at the end of 2019 and who are unemployed in the second quarter of 2020. Here too we find that people of Belgian origin are less likely to be unemployed than people of EU and non-EU origin. Only 0.8% of workers of Belgian origin who were active in the fourth quarter of 2019 were unemployed in the second quarter of 2020, compared with 1.7% for the EU origin and 3.1% for the non-EU origin. Higher education graduates were less likely to be unemployed than those with lower qualifications, and the proportion is even lower for those in the three highest

wage decile (see tables below). Moreover, among those who were employed in the fourth quarter of 2019, people of non-EU origin are more likely to be unemployed in the first, second and third quarters of 2020. When these people become unemployed, unemployment is therefore also more persistent. This was already the case before the pandemic.

TABLE 21: **Share of 18–64-year-olds who were employed in Q4 2019 and unemployed in Q2 2020, by origin and level of education**

	Belgian	EU	Non-EU
Low	1,4%	2,9%	4,3%
Medium	1,1%	2,3%	3,5%
High	0,5%	1,1%	2,0%
Total*	0,8%	1,7%	3,1%

* Including unknown
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS.
Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

TABLE 22: **Share of 18–64-year-olds who were employed in Q4 2019 and unemployed in Q2 2020, by origin and wage decile category**

	Belgian	EU	Non-EU
Low wages	2,5%	3,5%	5,0%
Medium wages	0,7%	1,5%	2,3%
High wages	0,2%	0,5%	0,8%

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS.
Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

There are also differences in the extent to which workers in different sectors have been affected by job loss. The graph below again shows that more workers are unemployed in support services (N) than in other sectors (and we do not know whether this is due to non-renewal of a contract, dismissal, or voluntary departure). A relatively large number of workers in the hotels and restaurants (I) and arts, entertainment, and recreation (R) sectors also became unemployed. The latter sectors are precisely those which also had the highest share of temporary unemployment, and which had to close down

[39] The 'special' category in the 'type of work' variable is reserved for workers on very short/irregular contracts (temporary agency work, seasonal work, occasional work in horticulture and agriculture and occasional work in hotels and restaurants).

completely for a long period. It is therefore possible that a large proportion of these were temporary contracts that were not renewed during the period of forced closure. The arts, entertainment and recreation sector is also the only sector in which the proportion of EU workers who become unemployed is higher than that of non-EU workers.

In the public administration sector (O) too, many workers became unemployed, and people of non-EU origin were by far the most affected. The explanation probably lies in the fact that people of Belgian origin working in the public sector are much more likely to be (statutory) civil servants, whereas people of foreign origin are mainly manual or clerical workers[40]. In addition, the latter are over-represented in the local administrations (municipalities), where jobs can be more sensitive to the economic situation.

GRAPH 63: **Share of 18–64-year-olds who were employed in Q4 2019 and unemployed in Q2 2020, by origin and sector**
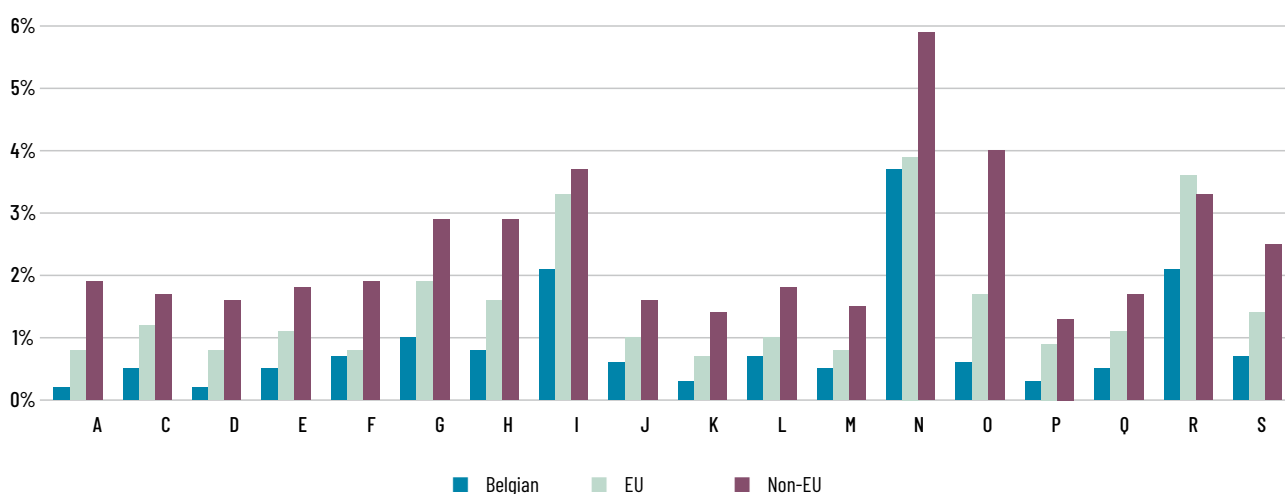
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

Unfortunately, at the time of writing this report, we are not yet able to provide a detailed mapping of **exits from work to inactivity** in 2020, as we do not yet have figures for all categories of inactivity. The number of social welfare benefit recipients in 2020 is, for example, still incomplete. For total inactivity, we observe that the outflow to inactivity between the end of 2019 and mid-2020 was also higher for people of non-EU origin (and more important for people with at most a lower secondary education certificate than for those with a higher education degree). Data on labour market transitions based on the Labour Force Survey also show that, during the crisis, jobseekers of foreign nationality remained unemployed or were inactive more often than jobseekers of Belgian nationality[41].

And while the share of workers exiting into unemployment or inactivity remained relatively stable in 2020 compared to previous years for people born in Belgium or in other EU countries, this share doubled for people born outside the EU. Non-Belgians also remain unemployed longer than Belgians (64.0% vs. 48.9% of the unemployed in the third quarter were also unemployed in the second quarter of 2020); they make the transition to work and inactivity less often. Both in terms of inactivity and unemployment, existing inequalities have thus increased in the second quarter of 2020. The situation improves in the course of 2021. Non-Belgians are again slightly more likely to make the transition to employment: only 73.0% remain inactive (compared to 87.4% for Belgian nationals).

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40   See statistical annexes for exact percentages.

41   https://statbel.fgov.be/fr/themes/emploi-formation/marche-du-travail/transitions-sur-le-marche-du-travail. For more details on LFS developments in the first and second quarters of 2020, see COVIVAT, Beleidsnota nr.6 (December 2020).

We mentioned above that temporary unemployment theoretically offers protection against dismissal as an employer can reduce activity without laying off staff. Unfortunately, intensive use of the temporary unemployment scheme may also indicate that a company needs fewer staff for a longer period, or even structurally. However, the administrative data show that the proportion of (partially) unemployed employees in the first quarter of 2020 who were unemployed in the second or third quarter of 2020 is not much higher than that of the total group of employees in the first quarter of 2020. There is little difference, especially among those of non-EU origin. Temporary unemployment has thus fulfilled its buffer role. Looking at absolute values, the **outflow from temporary unemployment to full unemployment** since March 2020 is indeed much higher than before the pandemic[42], but proportionally the shift to full unemployment has remained limited: 1.7% of the temporary unemployed in March 2020 were fully unemployed one month later, and 2.7% were fully unemployed three months later. Until June 2020 the shares of those becoming fully unemployed one month and three months later remain higher than in

2019, but from July 2020 onwards these shares decrease and are lower than those observed one year earlier. They are also lower than during the financial crisis of 2008-2009[43].

Therefore, it is no longer surprising to find here too that the size of the effect differs according to the origin of the persons concerned (and according to sector, level of education and wage category). As mentioned above, workers of non-EU origin who were (partially) temporarily unemployed in the first quarter of 2020 are not much more often unemployed in the second or third quarter of the same year than their colleagues who were not temporarily unemployed, but they are much more often unemployed than their counterparts of Belgian or EU origin (except in the hotel and catering industry (I) where the proportion for workers of EU origin is somewhat higher). And the difference is again greatest in the public sector (O), followed by transport and storage (H). Thus, when workers had to leave despite the use of temporary unemployment, it was again workers of foreign origin who were most affected[44].

GRAPH 64: **Share of 18–64-year-olds who were temporarily unemployed in Q1 2020 and unemployed in Q2 or Q3 2020, by origin and sector**
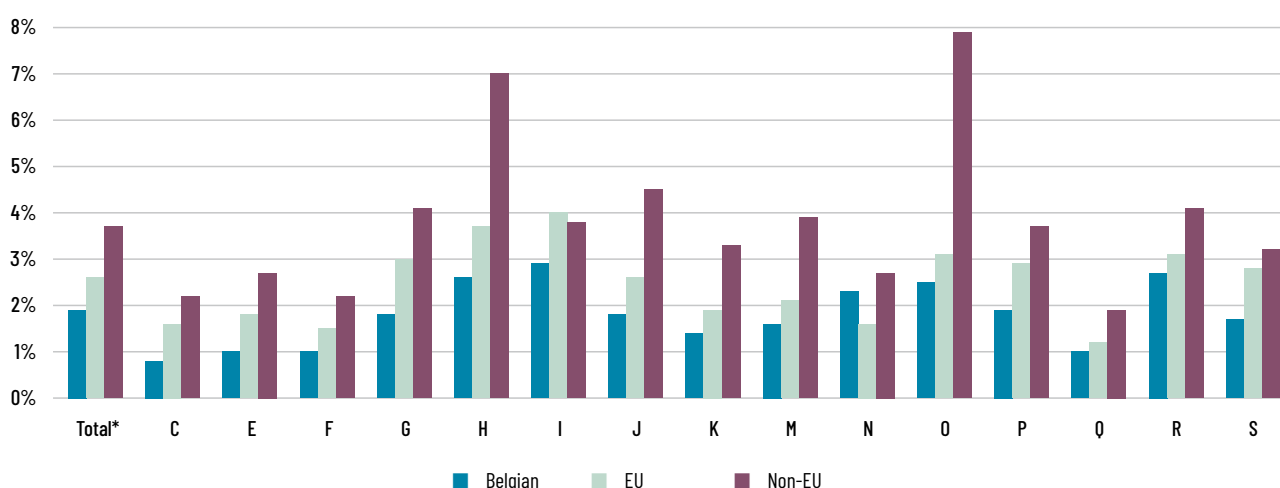
* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

42 Since there are many more temporary unemployed. For monthly figures on the transition from temporary unemployment to unemployment, see FPS ELSD et al, 'Monitoring the social impact of the COVID-19 crisis in Belgium': https://socialsecurity.belgium.be/fr/elaboration-de-la-politique-sociale/impact-social-covid-19.
43 Loÿen, C., Nuyts, N. and Segaert, M. (2020), 'The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on unemployment: first results', RBSS, 2020(1); Bevers, T., Burnel, V., Coenen, A., Gilbert, V. & Jacobs, A. (2020), 'The end of the world as we know it? The impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on the Belgian labour market', RBSS, 2020(1), 41-65.
44 And more often men than women, but this is mainly due to the sectors most heavily affected.

Next, let us look at the group of workers who became unemployed in the first half of 2020 but who are **employed again in** the third quarter of 2020[45]. For all 18–64-year-olds, the percentage of those who have quickly found a job after a period of unemployment is 50.4%. This percentage is again higher for people of Belgian origin (57.8%) than for those of EU (45.8%) or non-EU (42.4%) origin. People of foreign origin have therefore lost their jobs slightly more often as a result of the crisis and have subsequently also suffered a longer loss of income. The proportions of people 'returning to work' are more surprising when we look at salary and degree levels. Across all origins, people with upper secondary education have the highest proportion of people returning to work in the third quarter after a period of unemployment. Although, as we have seen above, tertiary graduates represent a smaller share of workers who become unemployed, they seem to have slightly more difficulties in finding a job than people with at most upper secondary education.

In the case of people with both EU and non-EU backgrounds, they even score the worst of the three educational levels in this respect. The same is true for wage levels[46]: people in the middle deciles are more likely to find a job than those in the top three deciles. On the other hand, the low paid continue to be the worst off. The explanation probably lies in the sectors that employed people of foreign origin but also native Belgians, with a maximum of upper secondary education, who lost their jobs in the first half of the year. We find these people more often in trade, catering, and maintenance services. As we will see below, these are relatively dynamic sectors[47]. Furthermore, we see in the Statbel LFS data that in the second and especially in the third quarter of 2020, temporary jobs (fixed-term contracts) increase quite strongly, while permanent jobs decrease. Perhaps people with a tertiary education degree and those who had higher salaries in their previous jobs are not eager to start working in

such jobs and have the financial reserves (and notice period) to seek better economic conditions or, for example, to take training.

TABLE 23: **Share of 18–64-year-olds who were employed in Q4 2019, unemployed in Q1 and/or Q2 2020, and working in Q3 2020, by origin and level of education**

	Belgian	**EU**	**Non-EU**
Low	50.5%	43.9%	42.0%
Medium	62.5%	51.5%	45.5%
High	55.1%	41.4%	38.0%
Total*	57.8%	45.8%	42.4%

* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS.
Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

As far as the sectors are concerned, we again find that people of Belgian origin have the highest percentage of "return to work". But we also make a more striking observation. The sector with the largest share of workers who have become unemployed, support services (N), also has the highest share of unemployed returning to work in the third quarter of 2020. This is probably because this sector includes the temporary agency work sector, and the service voucher companies, sectors which generally respond more quickly to changes in circumstances and the economic situation. It should be noted, however, that it is mainly people of non-EU origin who have exited and mainly people of Belgian origin who have returned to work. Please note: this analysis relates to the sector in which these people were working in the fourth quarter of 2019[48]. We do not know whether these people also find work in the same sector in the third quarter of 2020. But in any case, it seems that there is a strong dynamic throughout 2020. In public administration (O), on the other hand, we have seen a large number of exits above, and only a small proportion of these leavers

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45 These are therefore people who were working in Q4/2019, were unemployed at the end of Q1 and/or Q2/2020 and were working again at the end of Q3/2020. We do not know whether they will work in a similar job (with the same type of contract and identical conditions) or elsewhere.

46 See figures in annex.

47 Sectors with relatively high proportions of jobs destroyed and created.

48 For more recent information, see: https://statbel.fgov.be/en/themes/work-training/labour-market/transitions-labour-market.

appear to be working again in the third quarter. In particular, we see that in the large group of leavers of non-European origin, few seem to have found a job again. The contraction of the public sector that we have already observed in chapter 2 of this mon-

itoring thus seems to continue in 2020 (although it is of course possible that more people have entered the sector, but this will only become clear when we have employment figures for the whole of 2020).

GRAPH 65: **Share of 18–64-year-olds who were employed in Q4 2019, unemployed in Q1 and/or Q2 2020, and working in Q3 2020, by origin and sector**
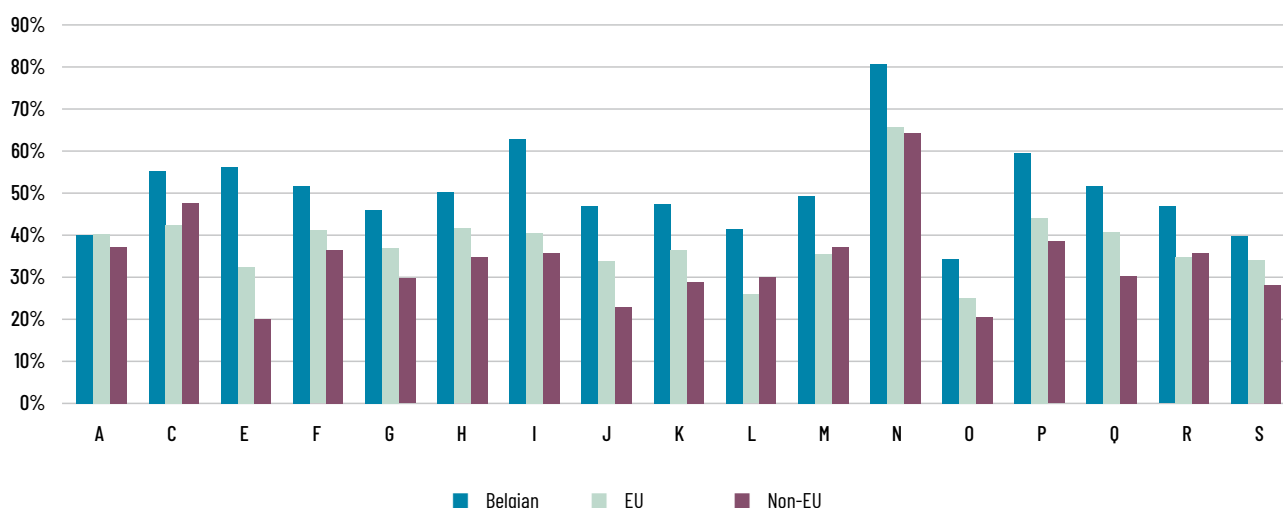
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

If we look at this chapter, we see that the crisis initially seemed to affect everyone, so that the gap between many background groups even narrowed (the gap in employment and unemployment rates decreased until the third quarter of 2020). In addition, employment maintenance schemes (temporary unemployment) have helped to cushion the negative impact of lock-ins for workers and the freeze on degressivity has reduced the impact on the unemployed. But although key labour market indicators have remained surprisingly stable, we find underlying disparities in terms of impact. For example, throughout the crisis, people of foreign origin are over-represented in temporary unemployment but under-represented in telework. Moreover, as the crisis progresses, the difference widens again, in the sense that people of Belgian origin lose their jobs less often and re-enter the labour market more easily. The data on exits and entries show that in almost all sectors there has been a replacement - at least temporary - of workers of foreign origin by workers of Belgian origin. Moreover, the loss of in-

come was also lower for people of Belgian origin, as on average they were temporarily unemployed for shorter periods and for a more limited part of their working time. The recovery is therefore more difficult for people of foreign origin, especially those from non-EU countries, those with lower secondary education or less and those in lower paid jobs. This picture is similar to the developments following the financial crisis of 2008-2009.

The negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market performance of people of foreign origin is reinforced by the fact that they are strongly over-represented in the sectors that were most affected by the pandemic. This is also true across the EU. In the hard-hit hospitality sector, for example, a quarter of EU workers are foreign-born, which is double their share of total employment[49].

Although people of non-EU origin are a heterogeneous group and there are still large differences within this group according to, among other things,

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49   OECD (2020), 'What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigrants and their children?', OECD Policy brief.

educational attainment, occupation, and family situation, we have seen in this chapter that they are overall less likely to be able to telework, that they were at higher-than-average risk of being put on temporary unemployment (and thus suffering a loss of income), to become fully unemployed (or inactive) and to remain there. Although the impact has so far been smaller overall than feared, the gap in the labour market prior to this crisis probably also makes them more susceptible to the effects of an economic downturn. Therefore, the recovery will need to pay particular attention to the most vulnerable groups and actively implement anti-discrimination policies.

04
Student work and diversity

04
Key elements
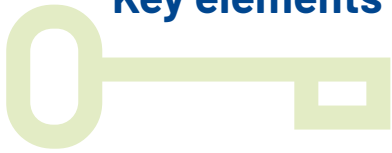
Student work and diversity

Of the **total population of young people** aged 15 to 24, 508,131 had student jobs in 2019, i.e. 38.9%. People of Belgian origin are proportionally the most numerous, followed by those of Sub-Saharan African and Maghreb origin. People of Near/Middle Eastern, EU-13 and North American origin have the lowest proportions.

The people who do **the most student work** are those living in Flanders, women, 18-19-year-olds, and people who have been Belgian citizens for 5 years or less.

In **Flanders**, people of Belgian origin have the highest share. In **Wallonia** and **Brussels**, it is young people of Sub-Saharan African origin.

The differences between 18-19- and 20–24-year-olds are less marked in Brussels and Wallonia than in Flanders, and the differences between the three regions regarding student work participation of 20–24-year-olds are smaller than those of the other two age groups. The phenomenon of student precariousness could be a plausible explanation.

The 20–24-year-olds most likely to be in student employment are those of **Sub-Saharan African origin**, followed by those of Maghreb origin. If they are higher education graduates, it is those of Sub-Saharan African and South/Central American origin (over 50%). Students with a bachelor's degree work more than those with a master's degree.

The two largest **fields of study** for 20–24-year-olds with a high level of education are 'social sciences, business and law' and 'health and welfare', and the largest proportions are 'humanities and arts' and 'social sciences, business and law'. For people of Sub-Saharan African origin, it is 'social sciences, business and law'. For people of South/Central American origin, it is 'engineering, manufacturing and production' (59.1%).

The **most popular sector** for students is employment-related activities (including temporary work), especially for those originating from an EU candidate country, Other European country, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Maghreb, or the Near/Middle East. This is followed by the food service sector and the retail trade sector. People of Sub-Saharan African and Belgian origin are over-represented in public administration, and those from EU candidate and Maghreb origin are over-represented in the landscaping sector, especially in Brussels.

People of Maghreb, EU candidate, or Other European origin are **over-represented among students** who have worked more than 500 hours over 3 years, especially women and young people aged 20 to 24 (more than 50% for the latter). Among those with tertiary degrees, these and Sub-Saharan African origin are around 60%.

Working during studies seems to confer a slight advantage overall in terms of **access to employment** (+1.8 percentage points), especially for those of foreign origin (especially EU-13 and Other European countries and to a lesser extent those Near/Middle Eastern, Sub-Saharan African, and EU-14, although their employment rate remains low).

Women of Near/Middle Eastern origin improve their employment rate significantly more than men, but do not reach the employment rate of men without a student job, and they still have the lowest employment rate of all origins. Women of EU candidate origin also have a more improved employment rate, but their rate remains well below that of men, as well as that of women of Belgian origin.

In Brussels, people of Other European origin **improve** their **employment rate** so much (+22.4 points) that they go from one of the lowest rates to one of the highest, close to that of the Belgian origin. This is also true in Wallonia (+12.3 points). In Flanders, the best improvement is seen among the EU-13 origin, from 65.6% to 80.6%, but far behind the 91.9% of people of Belgian origin.

In this chapter, we will focus on a younger audience, that of students and, in particular, those who have a student job in parallel with their studies. This employment is regulated[1] and is aimed at people for whom studying is the main activity and working is considered as an accessory activity. Excluded from this definition are, for example, workers or jobseekers who are in training or study, as they are not students in their main occupation. A student employment contract can, at the earliest, be concluded by a student who has reached the age of 15 (if he or she is no longer subject to full-time compulsory education) or who has reached the age of 16 (in any case).

In the past, young people worked for their relatives, sometimes in undeclared work. In order to regulate these situations, legislation was introduced allowing students to work during the summer holidays with reduced social security contributions and exemption from withholding tax. This legislation was gradually extended to allow students to work at different and longer periods. In 2005, students could work 23 days during the summer holidays and 23 days during the school year. In 2012, the total number of days allowed increased to 50, regardless of the period. Finally, in 2017, the number of days system was changed to a total number of 475 annual hours. This last change meant that students who did not work full days were no longer penalised[2]. Rules for remaining fiscally dependent on the parents[3] and for continuing to receive child benefits[4] are also laid down, depending on several factors such as the duration of the contract, the amounts received, the tax status of the parents, the number of hours worked and the region of residence.

The motivation leading students to work can take various forms, but is mainly financial, before the content of the job itself, and is strongly linked to the student's level of dependence on their parents[5]. The money earned in this way may be essential for the pursuit of studies, which is particularly the case for students of modest social origin (the percentage of students receiving a grant or loan being low in Belgium compared to neighbouring countries[6]), or it may simply be considered pocket money for relatively privileged students. Nevertheless, the resulting work experience can possibly be a stepping-stone to the traditional labour market after graduation. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate whether the same mechanisms apply as for the traditional labour market and whether the first professional activity represents an equivalent asset for all national origin groups.

Firstly, we will examine who these working students are and whether access to student jobs is the same regardless of origin, migration background, gender, region, age, education level or field of study.

Secondly, we will look at the intrinsic characteristics of student employment: the sector in which it is carried out and the intensity. Do students work more occasionally, for example to earn some pocket money for going out, regularly for larger needs, or very intensively, possibly as an income to finance studies and daily life? In which sectors do they work and is there a link with their field of study? These characteristics will also be cross-referenced with demographic variables where possible.

Finally, a brief analysis of the labour market trajectories of former job seekers will be carried out in a third part to determine whether having worked as a student is an asset when entering the labour market.

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1   https://emploi.belgique.be/fr/themes/contrats-de-travail/contrats-de-travail-particuliers/contrat-doccupation-of students.
2   https://www.ufapec.be/nos-analyses/2718-jobs-etudiants.html#:~:text=By%20the%20suite%20in%202012,that%20 3%20hours%20for%20example.
3   https://finances.belgium.be/fr/particuliers/famille/etudiant/a_charge.
4   https://www.studentatwork.be/fr/allocations/conserver-mes-allocations.html.
5   See Cabinet of the Minister of Higher Education, Research and Media (April 2019), 'Etude sur les conditions de vie des étudiants de l'enseignement supérieur de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles - Rapport final', p. 51.
6   *Ibid*, p. 175-176.

1. Demographic characteristics

To better target the population concerned by the possibility of working as a student and given that we were unable to identify in the available data which individuals were actually registered as students, we focused our analysis on the population of 15–24-year-olds. For each of these young people, we looked in the four quarters of the year of analysis to see if they had a student job. We then compare the number of student job seekers with the total population for each available variable to eliminate demographic effects.

We find that, in 2019, 508,131 young people aged 15 to 24 meet this definition, which corresponds to 38.9% of the total population in this age group. The largest share of working students is of Belgian origin; this is also the origin that has the largest percentage of the total population of the same origin (43.1%). The other origins vary between 30 and 40%, with people from Sub-Saharan Africa (40.2%) and the Maghreb (38.6%) in the lead, while people from the Near/Middle East (24.8%), the EU-13 (20.2%) and North America (18.3%) lag behind. The low participation of the latter can be explained, for example, by a lower financial motivation, but also by a possible higher recourse to undeclared work, which is invisible in our data.

GRAPH 66: **Share of student job seekers in the total population by origin (15–24 years, 2014–2019)**
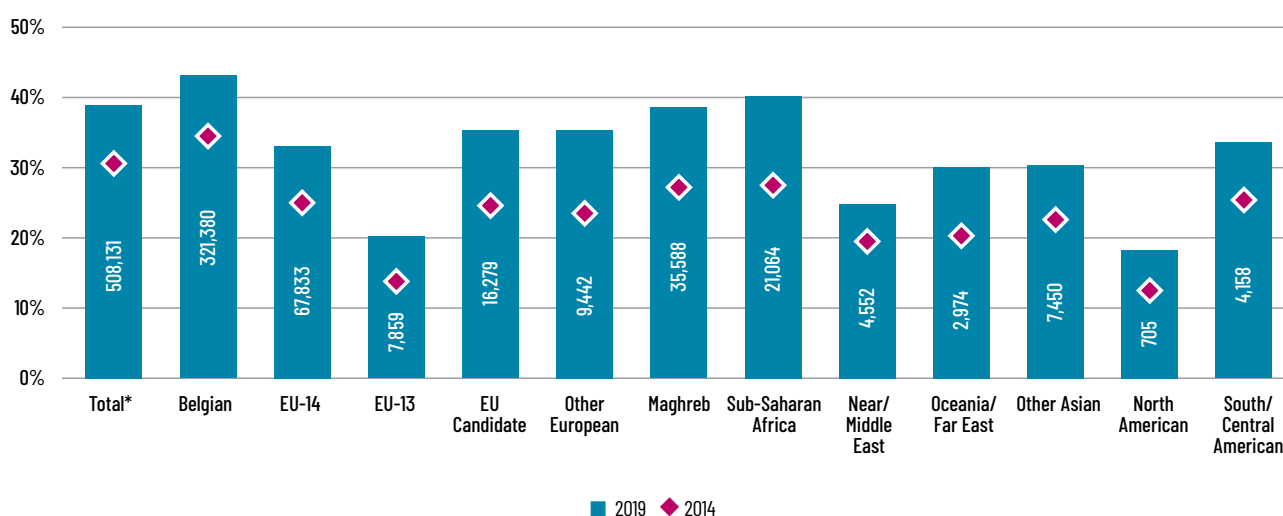
* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

These different proportions have all increased since 2014 (+8.3 percentage points), slightly more for most people of foreign origin, especially for people from an EU candidate country, Other European country, the Maghreb, or a Sub-Saharan African country (increase of 1.5 percentage points). This is less the case for people from the Middle East (+5.3 points), North America (+5.8 points) and the EU-13 (+6.4 points) which already had proportionally fewer student job seekers in their ranks. The gap with Belgians of origin has therefore increased for the origins mentioned. However, the trend for people from the Near/Middle East is different, as a notable decrease in their share of student workers can be observed between 2014 (19.5%) and 2015 (15.3%)[7], which is in fact the result of a strong increase in their total population without the number of student workers having increased in proportion. Between

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7   All the data mentioned in this chapter are available in the annexes.

2015 and 2019, an accelerated growth in the number of students working and the resulting share (+9.5 points in 4 years) suggests that, if it continues, the situation will catch up.

When we break down these data **by region** in the following table, we see that people living in Flanders do more student work than those living in the other two regions. This is true for all origins, but the difference with Flanders is less marked in Wallonia for people from the EU-13 and from Oceania/Far East. A few exceptions aside, the differences between people of foreign and Belgian origin are the smallest in Wallonia of the three regions.

In Flanders, people of Belgian origin have the highest share. In Wallonia and Brussels, on the other hand, young people of Sub-Saharan African origin are proportionately more likely to work as students than people of Belgian origin. The same three origins as for Belgium as a whole, i.e. people from the EU-13, the Near/Middle East and North America, are under-represented in all three regions, but the rate of student workers is particularly low in Brussels for people from the EU-13 and North America, with only slightly more than one young person in ten working as a student.

TABLE 24: **Share of student workers in the total population and changes since 2014 by origin and region (15-24 years, 2019)**

	Brussels		Wallonia		Flanders	
	Share	*Evolution*	**Share**	*Evolution*	**Share**	*Evolution*
Total*	27.9%	7.3	32.1%	7.9	45.3%	8.8
Belgian	34.1%	6.6	34.0%	8.1	**48.2%**	9.2
EU-14	22.6%	5.1	30.7%	7.6	40.8%	9.6
EU-13	**11.9%**	4.7	**22.8%**	5.3	23.7%	7.1
EU Candidate	31.4%	9.2	25.8%	8.7	40.3%	11.7
Other European	24.7%	9.3	26.7%	9.1	42.4%	13.1
Maghreb	33.4%	9.8	33.3%	10.4	47.2%	13.1
Sub-Saharan Africa	**35.3%**	11.7	**36.3%**	11.9	46.6%	12.8
Near/Middle East	16.3%	**2.5**	18.1%	**1.4**	30.9%	7.3
Oceania/Far East	20.9%	8.4	**29.4%**	10.3	33.2%	9.9
Other Asian	21.3%	7.5	21.6%	**1.9**	35.1%	8.8
North American	**10.8%**	5.7	17.3%	4.6	22.7%	5.5
South/Central American	27.9%	8.9	26.4%	4.8	40.2%	8.3

* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

Since 2014, the shares of student job seekers have increased in all regions and for all origins, but these increases are generally highest in Flanders. The smallest increases are visible for people from the Near/Middle East in Brussels and Wallonia and for people from other Asian countries in Wallonia. For the former group, we note the same discontinuity in all regions between 2014 and 2015 as mentioned above - due to the sudden increase in the total population of 15-24-year-olds of this origin but the

acceleration in the growth of the number of student job seekers is more visible in Flanders (+152.6%) than in the other two regions (+103.4% in Wallonia and +86.4% in Brussels). For the latter, a sharp increase between 2014 and 2016 in the population of this origin can be observed in Wallonia and Flanders, but the growth in the number of student workers is not as fast in Wallonia as in Flanders, which explains the imbalance.

The **gender-disaggregated** data also provide many insights. While there are fewer women in the total population, more women than men are employed as students during their education. This results in a 7.5 percentage point higher share of female students in employment compared to men. This is true for all origins, although the difference is much smaller for people from the Near/Middle East (1.1 percentage points) and the Maghreb (2.7 percentage points).

For these two origins, the difference is at the level of the 18–19-year-olds, an age group for which men are proportionately more likely to hold a student job, and also at the level of the 15–17-year-olds for people from the Near/Middle East. Developments since 2014 are mostly in favour of women as well, with the exception of people from the Near/Middle East and Oceania/Far East.

TABLE 25: **Share of student workers in the total population and changes since 2014 by origin and gender (15-24 years, 2019)**

	Men		Women	
	Share	*Evolution*	**Share**	*Evolution*
Total*	35.3%	7.7	42.7%	8.9
Belgian	38.8%	8.1	47.6%	9.2
EU-14	29.8%	7.6	36.4%	8.7
EU-13	17.7%	5.6	22.7%	7.3
EU Candidate	32.5%	9.7	38.2%	11.7
Other European	33.5%	11.4	37.3%	12.4
Maghreb	**37.2%**	10.2	**40.0%**	12.6
Sub-Saharan Africa	36.8%	11.8	43.6%	13.6
Near/Middle East	**24.3%**	5.9	**25.4%**	4.6
Oceania/Far East	27.2%	10.1	32.4%	9.4
Other Asian	26.5%	7.1	36.4%	9.4
North American	15.3%	3.8	21.1%	7.7
South/Central American	31.4%	7.9	35.7%	8.5

* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

However, there are some nuances to the above findings, depending on the region. In fact, the differences between men and women are almost systematically less marked in Brussels. In total, the difference between men and women concerning the share of student workers is only 3.4 percentage points in this region. It is even practically zero for people from the Near/Middle East (0.8 points) and Oceania/Far East (0.1 points) and slightly inverted for people of Maghreb origin (-0.3 points). It is also almost zero in Flanders for people of Near/Middle Eastern origin (0.3 points).

There seems to be a preferred age for employment as a student. Indeed, if we detail the data **by age group** presented in the table below, it is obvious that 18–19-year-olds seem to be more likely to participate in the labour market while studying. The explanation for these high rates is a little more complicated. As regards 15–17-year-olds, there are some targeted protective measures that may hinder access to work for under 18s, including strict limitations or even bans on night work or work on Sundays and public holidays[8]. This may lead employers, particularly in sectors more concerned with these forms of work (such as, for example, the hotel and catering industry, a sector highly favoured by students,

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8 https://emploi.belgique.be/fr/themes/reglementation-du-travail/jeunes-travailleurs.

as we shall see below), to favour a student who is legally an adult, who will therefore be more flexible. For the 20–24-year-olds, the explanation lies rather in the fact that more young people in this age group have completed their studies, and are therefore no longer students, and therefore no longer authorised to work under this type of contract.

However, this finding must be qualified by region. The differences between the age groups (especially between 18–19-year-olds and 20–24-year-olds) are less pronounced in Brussels (8.6 percentage points) and Wallonia (13.6 points) than in Flanders (28.7 points), and the differences between the three regions concerning the participation of 20–24-year-olds in student work are smaller than those of the

other two age groups. A plausible explanation could be the phenomenon of student precariousness, which affects Brussels and Wallonia more than Flanders and which would push students in these regions to work more to finance their studies. According to the January 2019 figures of the social integration barometer[9], 10,496 students were bound by a student PIIS contract (individualised social integration project[10]) with a Brussels PCSW, i.e. 8.68 per thousand inhabitants of Brussels. This is almost double the 4.66 student PIIS per 1000 Walloons and 8 times more than the 1.08 student PIIS per 1000 Flemish people. And these are only the figures of the PCSWs, which are only a fraction of the reality.

TABLE 26: **Share of student workers in the total population and changes since 2014 by origin and age group (2019)**

	15-17 years		18-19 years		20-24 years	
	Share	**Evolution**	**Share**	**Evolution**	**Share**	**Evolution**
Total*	30.7%	7.0	57.7%	10.0	36.4%	8.2
Belgian	36.3%	8.2	62.8%	10.1	39.3%	8.1
EU-14	24.6%	6.3	49.7%	10.2	31.4%	8.1
EU-13	17.9%	5.9	36.0%	9.1	16.3%	**5.4**
EU Candidate	**26.8%**	9.2	**56.7%**	14.1	31.8%	10.1
Other European	**26.6%**	8.6	53.1%	13.5	33.7%	12.7
Maghreb	23.8%	7.8	**59.5%**	14.3	**40.5%**	13.3
Sub-Saharan Africa	22.6%	9.2	55.3%	16.6	**45.2%**	13.7
Near/Middle East	17.9%	6.2	38.2%	9.2	23.7%	**3.6**
Oceania/Far East	22.5%	8.0	46.1%	13.2	29.2%	9.8
Other Asian	22.6%	6.6	48.1%	14.1	28.2%	6.8
North American	12.6%	2.9	23.8%	5.1	19.1%	7.6
South/Central American	21.1%	4.6	47.7%	11.6	35.1%	8.9

* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

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9   https://stat.mi-is.be/fr/dashboard/piis_etudiants?menu=drilldown.

10 The Individualised Social Integration Project (ISIP) is a contract between a PCSW and a beneficiary of the Right to Social Integration (RSI). It establishes the means to be implemented by the different parties (beneficiary, PCSW, possible partner) in order to achieve the objectives related to the social and/or professional integration of the beneficiary. It can take the form of a study project (for young people under 25 who wish to start, resume, or continue their studies).

Apart from these general considerations, the other findings that we can draw from this distribution are similar to those already obtained for the 15-24 age group as a whole. We note, however, that the people most likely to have a student job are those from a Sub-Saharan African country, and then those of Maghreb origin for the 20-24 age group (their shares are even higher than those of people of Belgian origin). Concerning the 18–19-year-olds who work as students, after those of Belgian origin, we find people of Maghreb origin, followed by an EU candidate country. The latter take the lead among 15-17-year-olds, closely followed by people of Other European origin, but still after Belgians of origin.

With the trend towards longer periods of higher education, one would expect a stronger increase in student work for 20–24-year-olds. However, the shares have increased more strongly for 18–19-year-olds since 2014. In some cases, they have even increased more for 15–17-year-olds than for 20-24-year-olds. This is the case for people from the Near/Middle East and the EU-13, who have the smallest increases for 20–24-year-olds.

Breaking down the share of student job seekers by **degree level** proves to be a difficult exercise for this chapter. Firstly, this variable is very strongly correlated with age. Students aged 15 to 17 who already have an upper secondary or a higher education degree are the exceptions, so most of them will probably have a lower secondary degree at most, and the analysis will therefore be limited to examining this age group as a whole, which we have already done above. For the 18-19- and 20–24-year-olds, the methodology we have developed to capture the level of education[11] has a significant bias due to misclassification or lack of data. The data available for the French Community only includes higher education degrees, the 2011 Census is too old to include young people up to the age of 24 (those who are included are mostly classified as having at most a lower secondary degree, although they may have improved their level of qualification in the meantime), and the PES data only include the fraction of students who have completed or dropped out of school. As a result, people with at most a secondary (lower or higher) education degree in the Walloon and Brussels regions are overwhelmingly classified as having a degree level 'unknown' (in Brussels 38.4% of 15–24-year-olds have an 'unknown' level of education, in the Walloon region 34.8% and in the Flemish region only 4.3%). And it is even worse for students who have a job at the same time as their studies (50.6% are classified as having an 'unknown' degree level in Brussels, 54.1% in Wallonia and 2.2% in Flanders.) The analysis we could make on this incomplete and distorted basis would therefore be completely inaccurate.

To draw some lessons, we will therefore focus on 20–24-year-olds with a higher education degree, which should then all be in the administrative databases, at least if they have studied in Belgium. This degree can be already acquired (e.g. when a student obtains his or her Bachelor and continues his or her master's studies while working as a student, or is still working as a student in the summer months after graduation) or in the process of being acquired (when a student worked as a student in the first half of the year and obtains his or her degree shortly afterwards). We should keep in mind that we will unfortunately miss in this analysis all students in the first years of Bachelor who have graduated from upper secondary school but have not yet obtained a higher education degree. As the data for 2019 are still incomplete at the time of writing this chapter, we will analyse here the data for 2018. The current methodology will also not allow us to analyse developments since 2014.

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11   See FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Unia (2020), "Socio-economic monitoring: Labour market and origin - 2019".

GRAPH 67: **Share of student workers in the total population by tertiary education level (20-24 years, 2018)**

■ Bachelor ■ Master ◆ Total**
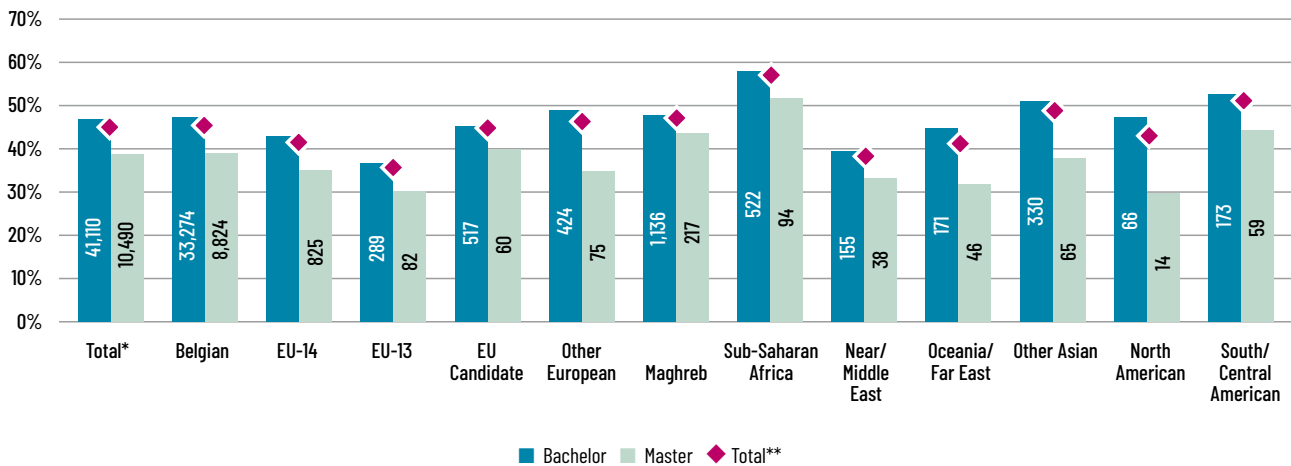
* Including unknown
** Including PhD and undefined

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The overwhelming majority of higher education graduates are of Belgian origin, and this is also the case for those who work in parallel with their studies. However, the students most likely to have a student job compared to their total population are those from a Sub-Saharan African country and South or Central America, with shares above 50% (57.0% and 51.1% respectively).

Regardless of origin, students with a bachelor's degree, whether employed or not, are more numerous than students with a master's degree, and the shares of students with a bachelor's degree who are employed are higher than those of master's graduates. We find that the difference is particularly pronounced for people of North American origin

(with a small population), Other European origin, Oceania/Far East and other Asian origin, and small for people of Maghreb and EU candidate origin.

Together with the high level of education already acquired or in the process of being acquired in 2018, we have determined a **field of study**. The two largest fields of study for 20-24-year-olds with a high level of education are 'social sciences, business and law' (22,253 persons) and 'health and welfare' (14,570). However, the field of 'humanities and arts' is the largest in terms of proportion, with more than half of the student workers (53.6%). This is followed by 'social sciences, business and law'(51.7%). However, there are differences in this situation by origin.

TABLE 27: **Share of student workers with tertiary education in the total population by origin and field of study (20-24 years, 2018)**

	Education	Humanities and Arts	Social sciences, Business and Law	Science, Mathematics and Computing	Engineering, Manufacturing and Production	Agriculture and Veterinary	Health and Welfare	Services	Unknown
Total*	33.5%	**53.6%**	**51.7%**	37.3%	40.6%	34.9%	44.3%	46.9%	33.7%
Belgian	33.7%	54.7%	52.2%	37.5%	40.9%	34.7%	45.3%	48.3%	34.9%
EU-14	31.5%	50.3%	48.8%	35.0%	35.6%	33.1%	37.7%	38.6%	39.4%
EU-13	27.9%	39.7%	39.1%	30.8%	35.9%	:	36.3%	:	:
EU Candidate	39.2%	57.3%	48.9%	41.0%	40.0%	:	40.7%	:	:
Other European	33.3%	57.0%	53.3%	30.3%	40.7%	:	41.4%	:	:
Maghreb	34.2%	48.5%	52.3%	40.5%	50.5%	51.6%	44.4%	52.2%	34.0%
Sub-Saharan Africa	39.5%	51.3%	**64.6%**	**53.5%**	49.5%	:	**53.5%**	45.9%	26.8%
Near/Middle East	:	52.2%	43.5%	30.8%	25.0%	:	40.9%	:	:
Oceania/Far East	38.7%	41.5%	47.4%	30.4%	30.5%	:	49.5%	:	:
Other Asian	41.9%	49.5%	53.2%	40.2%	40.2%	:	55.7%	57.1%	:
North American	:	54.8%	44.4%	:	:	:	43.2%	:	:
South/Central American	:	56.8%	53.8%	:	**59.1%**	:	54.3%	:	:

Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

People of Sub-Saharan African origin are particularly active in the student labour market when they are studying or have studied in the fields of "social sciences, business and law" (64.6%), "health and welfare" (53.5%) and "sciences" (also 53.5%). People of South/Central American origin are more likely to be in the field of 'engineering, manufacturing and production' (59.1%). However, the small numbers mean that we should be cautious about interpreting the figures in this table.

Some interesting lessons can also be drawn from the observation of the data broken down **by migration background**. Firstly, we can see that people who have been registered in the National Register for 5 years or less are very unlikely to be working as students, this is the case for just under one in five people. People of Sub-Saharan African origin, whose shares are the highest in all categories, stand out with 30.3% of working students who have been registered in the National Register for 5 years or less. The category with the highest share of student jobbers is the category of people who obtained the Belgian nationality 5 years or less ago. This is certainly true for people of EU-14 (38.6%), EU-13 (37.3%), Other European (42.2%), Near/Middle Eastern (41.1%) and South/Central American origin (45.1%). The share of people from an EU candidate country or the Maghreb is higher when they are second generation with parents who have obtained the Belgian nationality (38.9% and 41.4% respectively). As for people from Oceania/Far East, a Sub-Saharan African country and another Asian country, it is in the category of people who have had the Belgian nationality for more than 5 years that we find a higher tendency to work as a student (49.1% for the first two origins and 41.8% for the last).

TABLE 28: **Share of student workers in the total population by origin and migration background (15–24 years, 2019)**

	Belgian parents born abroad	Parent(s) of foreign nationality	Nationality obtained > 5 years	Nationality obtained ≤ 5 years	Registration NR > 5 years	Registration NR ≤ 5 years
EU-14	38.1%	35.8%	29.0%	**38.6%**	30.2%	21.9%
EU-13	36.8%	31.9%	27.5%	**37.3%**	19.7%	12.6%
EU Candidate	**38.9%**	33.1%	28.2%	37.2%	28.7%	18.1%
Other European	40.9%	36.2%	33.1%	**42.2%**	29.7%	18.6%
Maghreb	**41.4%**	35.4%	37.1%	36.2%	38.8%	24.6%
Sub-Saharan Africa	44.0%	40.3%	**49.1%**	48.8%	43.2%	**30.3%**
Near/Middle East	34.8%	28.0%	33.0%	41.1%	32.6%	15.4%
Oceania/Far East	40.1%	30.9%	**49.1%**	31.7%	29.5%	13.2%
Other Asian	39.7%	36.0%	**41.8%**	**41.1%**	37.1%	18.6%
North American	32.3%	27.1%	:	:	19.0%	4.7%
South/Central American	41.7%	35.4%	40.7%	**45.1%**	29.9%	20.1%

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

While the shares of students in employment have increased since 2014, all origins and migration histories taken together (by 9.8 percentage points on average), the shares of those who obtained the Belgian nationality five years or less have increased the most (by 13.1 percentage points on average).

per cent). It is this development that has reversed the balance of power, since in 2014, people of EU-14, EU-13, Sub-Saharan African and South/Central American origin were more frequently employed when they were second generation with parents of Belgian nationality.

2. Characteristics of student work

This section will focus on student employment itself, and its intrinsic characteristics. For this purpose, we have selected only the population of students who worked during their studies in 2019 and we will examine in which sector this work was carried out. As a student may have worked in several sectors in the past year, we chose the sector of the last student job. Then, based on the same sub-population we will add the students' hours worked in the past year and the two previous years to determine the student work intensity.

We will first examine how working students are distributed across all economic **sectors**, and then we will focus on the 10 most important sectors to see if there are differences related to origin and other demographic factors.

FIGURE 2: **Distribution of student workers by sector of activity (15–24 years, 2019)**
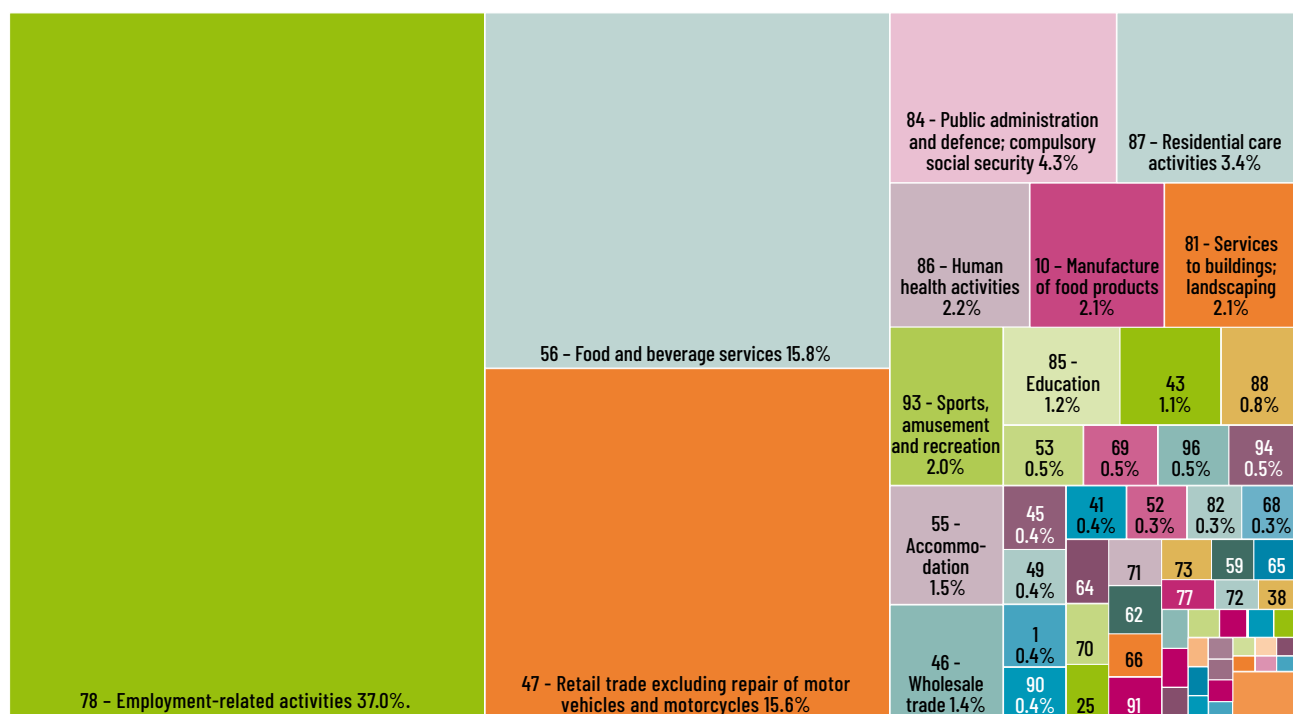
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The most popular sector for students to work in is "78 - Employment-related activities". 37.0% of them are in this sector. This is quite logical since this sector includes temporary work, which is an important gateway to student employment. According to Federgon[12] figures, up to 196,633 students in the third quarter of 2019 went through a temp agency to find a job. Temping is of course not the sector in which they do their work but, unfortunately, we do not have the sector in which the work is actually done.

Catering and retail sectors are next in line (15.8% and 15.6% respectively). The other sectors each account for less than 5%. It should be noted that this distribution is fundamentally different from that of the total employed population. Indeed, for example, the sector with the most workers in 2019 is the public administration with 10.1%, which is much higher than the 4.3% of students working there. The 'employment-related activities' sector accounts for only 3.5% of all workers. In the retail trade and ca-tering sectors, only 7.5% and 3.3% of workers are employed. This is a first indication that students do not necessarily choose to work in a sector related to their field of study or the sector in which they will pursue their future career.

Since 2014, the sector in which temporary employment agencies are found has grown in importance as far as student work is concerned[13]. That year it was already the most popular sector for students, but only with 28.9% (so it has grown by 8.1 percentage points in 5 years). The retail sector came next with 25.4%, much higher than the 15.6% of 2019. This does not necessarily mean that students are turning away from this sector, but is probably more a result of the fact that students are more likely to access this sector through temporary work.

It should also be noted that the public administration sector was also more popular with students in 2019 than in 2014, with an increase of 3.9 points, but this significant growth is probably more the result of the

12 https://federgon.be/fr/centre-de-connaissances/chiffres.
13 This sector has also grown as a whole. See the chapter on labour market developments by national origin.

integration of NSSO-PLA data[14] from 2017 onwards, which from this year onwards adds the information for an extra number of student job seekers in sector 84 "Public administration and defence", which was not included in the previous data.

Let us now look at the top 10 sectors to see if students' opportunities are the same regardless of background. These sectors alone account for 86.0% of student work.

GRAPH 68: **Distribution of student workers by origin and top 10 sectors (15–24 years, 2019)**
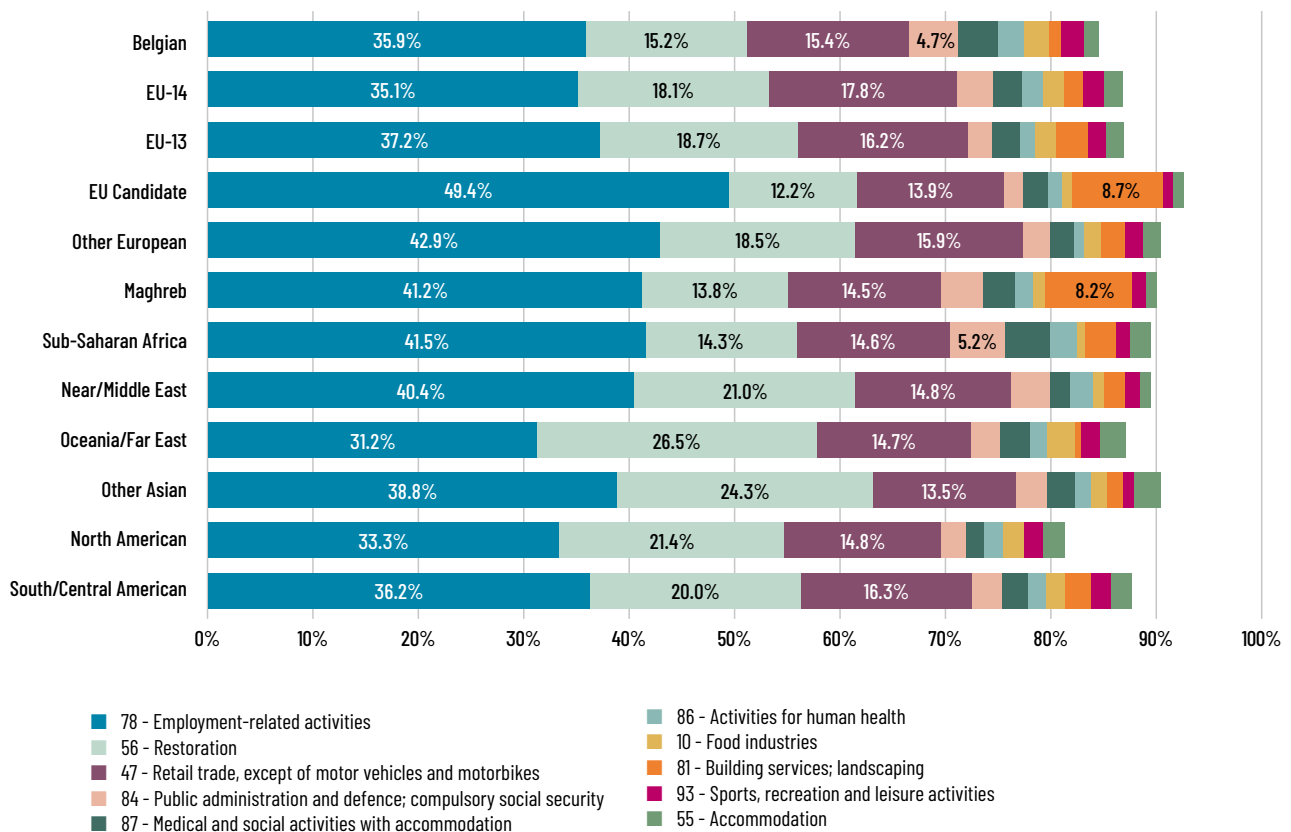
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

As far as the employment-related activities sector is concerned, we immediately notice that it is a greater provider of student jobs for people from an EU candidate country (almost 50%), but also for those from Another European country, a Sub-Saharan African country, the Maghreb, or the Near/Middle East (between 40 and 43%). The more or less fair distribution between retail and catering is true for many origins, but we note a marked preponderance of the catering sector for people from Oceania/Far East (26.5%), other Asian countries (24.3%), North

America (21.4%), the Near/Middle East (21.0%) and from South/Central America (20.0%). For the first two origins, this is a sector in which they are also strongly over-represented in the total population (21.0% and 15.0% respectively). Finally, we observe an over-representation of people of Sub-Saharan African origin (5.2%) and of Belgian origin (4.7%) in public administration - which is also true for all workers of these origins (12.9% and 11.0% respectively) - and of people from an EU candidate country (8.7%) and from the Maghreb (8.2%) in the landscap-

14   National Social Security Office for Provincial and Local Government. As of 2017, the NSSO has taken over from the NSSO-PLA/ORPSS the collection of social security contributions of employees working for the provincial and local public services. Consequently, the data on employment with the provincial and local public services are integrated from that moment on in the NSSO files that are transmitted to the Labour Market and Social Protection Datawarehouse.

ing sector. In the total population, the latter sector tends to attract people from the EU-13 and South and Central America. Thus, some links between the student work sector and the sector of activity of all workers are true for a range of origins, but this is not systematic.

These data broken down **by region** again tell a somewhat different story. In Brussels, the sector that includes temporary work remains the first sector (24.2%) of all origins, but it is followed closely by the retail sector (21.5%). After catering (17.5%), the landscaping sector comes in fourth place (7.7%). It is even the second most important sector after tempo-

rary work for people from an EU candidate country, and the third for people of Maghreb origin, after temporary work and retail trade. In Brussels, the catering sector is the sector that recruits the most students from North America (33.3%), Oceania/Far East (31.4%), another Asian country (25.5%) and the EU-14 (23.7%). For people of Belgian, EU-13, Other European, Near/Middle Eastern and South/Central American origin, the preferred sector for student work is retail trade, while the temporary work sector is the first sector only for people of EU candidate, Maghreb, and Sub-Saharan African origin.

GRAPH 69: **Distribution of student workers by origin and top 10 sectors in Brussels (15–24 years, 2019)**
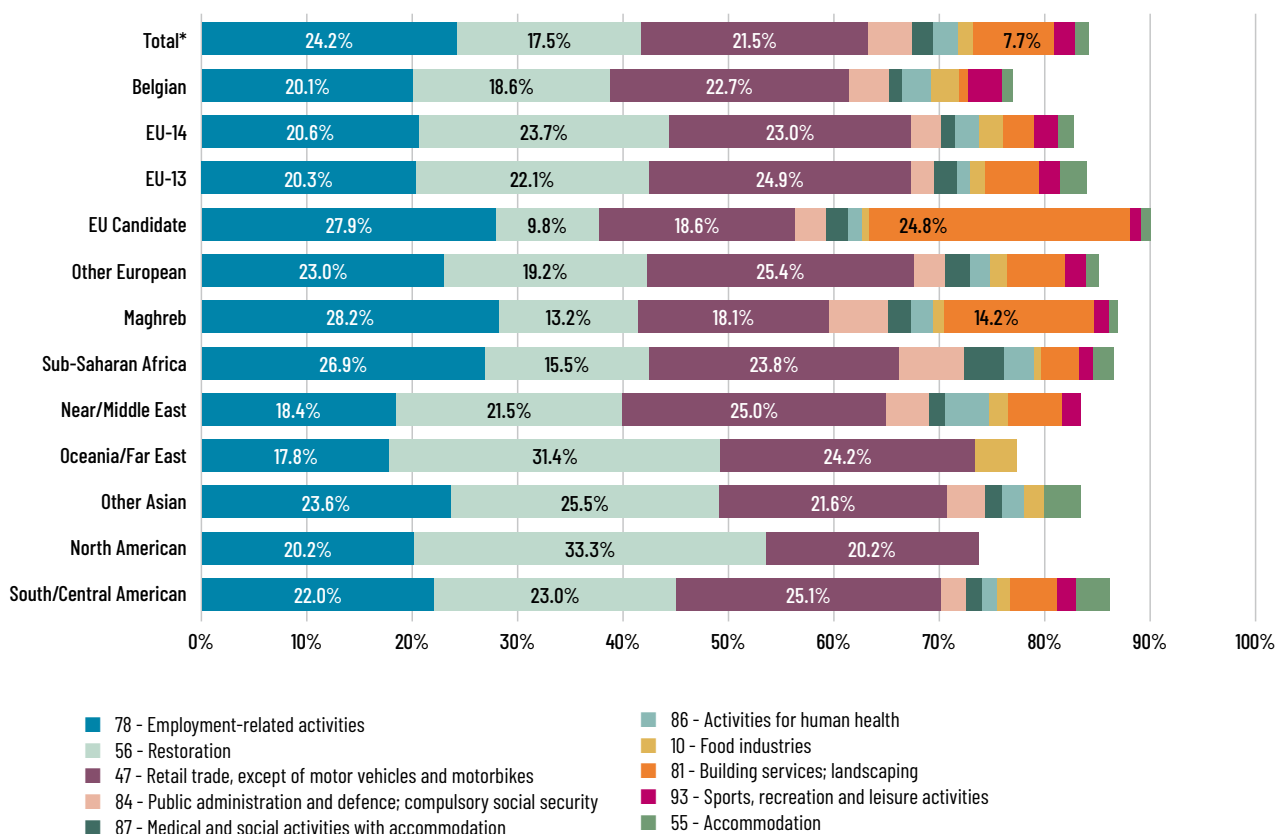
Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

In Wallonia and Flanders, the picture is quite similar to the overarching situation, although we find, for example, a high proportion of people from the Near/Middle East (9.4%) and from a Sub-Saharan African country (7.8%) working in public administration in Wallonia.

Finally, if we compare the proportions of **women** with those of **men**, we observe that men of all origins are slightly more likely than women to use a temporary employment agency to find a student job. In the other sectors, we find proportionally much more young female students than young male

students in the medical and social activities with accommodation sector (especially for people from an EU candidate country and the Maghreb origin) and in the food industry.

The distribution **by age group does** not tell us anything in particular. The sectors that are more favourable to student work do not vary and the same origins are over-represented in certain sectors, whatever the age group. The **level of education** for 20–24-year-olds also does not seem to fundamentally change the distribution between origins and between sectors and the small group sizes caused by the multiplicity of categories make any attempt at analysis very uncertain.

It would have been interesting to know whether there is a link between the choice of **field of study** for 20–24-year-olds and the sector in which the student works. Unfortunately, here too, the results are littered with small groups, which makes interpretation difficult, and the publication of details by origin is often simply not possible for reasons of confidentiality. Nevertheless, we can make a few observations for the year 2018. On the whole, whatever the origin and whatever the field of study, the same three main sectors always come up: employment-related activities (including temporary work), catering and retail trade. At first glance, therefore, there does not seem to be a link between field of study and sector. However, some results stand out. In the field of study of science, the third sector, after that of employment-related activities and retail trade, is education (followed by horeca). The numbers of people of foreign origin are too small to verify whether this is true for all origins. In the health field of study, we also find a greater presence of student workers in the sector of human health, medical and social activities with accommodation. This sector comes second (22.8%) for almost all origins, with high proportions for those from a Sub-Saharan African country (27.0%), an EU-14 country (25.0%), South or Central America (25.0%) and another Asian country (24.5%).

The last variable to examine is that of **migration background**, for which the problem of small numbers also arises, so few conclusions can be reasonably drawn. We found that the employment-related activities sector attracted a higher proportion of students from an EU candidate country. This is the case for all categories of migration background for this origin, and up to 50.4% for those of the second generation whose parents have the Belgian nationality. For people from Other European and Near/Middle Eastern countries, who were also over-represented, it was more often the first generation. Taking all origins together, we find over-representations in the employment-related activities sector of people of non-EU origin who have been registered in the National Register for more than 5 years (44.2%), or who have obtained Belgian citizenship for 5 years or less (43.2%, EU and non-EU), over-representations in the catering sector of people of EU origin who have obtained Belgian citizenship or who have been registered in the National Register for more than 5 years (23.8% and 22.5% respectively), as well as people who have been registered in the National Register for 5 years or less (of EU and non-EU origin, 21.9% and 22.4% respectively), or the over-representation of second-generation people whose parents are either Belgian nationals and born outside the EU (6.1%) or non-EU nationals (5.8%) in the building services and landscaping sector. These are likely people of an EU candidate country and Maghreb origin who are residents of the Brussels Capital Region and whose overrepresentation has been discussed earlier.

We now turn to the second part of this analysis. The **work intensity** we have defined consists of examining, for all young people who worked under the student scheme in 2019, the number of hours they have worked cumulatively over the last three years, i.e. since 1 January 2017. These total hours are then grouped into three categories: 250 hours or less, more than 250 hours but 500 hours or less, and more than 500 hours. This classification will allow us to determine whether the student work was done occasionally, regularly or quite intensively.

For the years 2016 and earlier, we unfortunately do not have the number of hours worked, only days. We therefore converted days into hours by multiplying them by 7.6 (based on a 38-hour week), but this calculation has the weakness of biasing the results. Indeed, the number of hours may be artificially inflated as many students only work a few hours per day and will be erroneously considered as having worked a full day. For the years 2014 and earlier,

we do not even have the number of days worked. We will therefore only publish in our annexes the data for the years 2017 (cumulative hours/days from 2015-2016-2017), 2018 (cumulative hours/days from 2016-2017-2018) and 2019 (cumulative hours from 2017-2018-2019), and we will avoid comparing these years with each other to avoid misinterpretation.

TABLE 29: **Distribution of student workers by origin and work intensity (15–24 years, 2019)**

	0 ≤ 250	250 ≤ 500	> 500
Total*	41.6%	26.8%	31.5%
Belgian	41.6%	28.1%	30.3%
EU-14	43.4%	25.3%	31.2%
EU-13	44.0%	24.7%	31.3%
EU Candidate	38.6%	23.7%	**37.6%**
Other European	40.7%	23.9%	**35.4%**
Maghreb	38.5%	23.3%	**38.1%**
Sub-Saharan Africa	40.7%	25.2%	34.1%
Near/Middle East	**49.6%**	23.2%	27.2%
Oceania/Far East	**46.7%**	25.6%	27.6%
Other Asian	39.7%	25.6%	34.6%
North American	**50.6%**	24.1%	25.2%
South/Central American	43.5%	24.1%	32.4%

* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

We note immediately that the largest share of student job seekers worked 250 hours or less in the last three years (41.6%). Amongst them, a large proportion of young people aged 15 to 17 were technically not able to work many hours (see analysis by age below). Secondly, we observe that the share of students who have worked more than 500 hours is higher than those who worked between 250 and 500 hours (31.5% compared to 26.8%). This distribution according to the number of hours worked is the same for all origins, but some differences in the orders of magnitude are remarkable. Thus, people from the Maghreb (38.1%), from an EU candidate country (37.6%) or from Another European country (35.4%) are particularly overrepresented among students who worked more than 500 hours over 3 years. In contrast, people of North American (50.6%), Near/Middle Eastern (49.6%) and Oceania/Far Eastern origin (46.7%) are over-represented among students with occasional jobs (250 hours or less). People of Belgian origin are slightly over-rep-resented among student contract workers who worked between 250 and 500 hours.

These observations can be extended **to the regions**, with some exceptions. Firstly, in Brussels, more people from EU candidate countries worked more than 500 hours than those who worked less. They are therefore even more strongly over-represented in this category (39.4% compared to 32.0% for all Brussels students). The same observation can be made in Flanders (39.0% for people from an EU candidate country compared to 33.2% for all Flemish students), but people of Maghreb origin (42.4%), Another European country (38.5%) and a Sub-Saharan African country are also concerned (37.9%). In Wallonia, students are proportionally more likely to work short hours, but the differences between people of foreign origin and native Belgians are generally much smaller.

TABLE 30: **Distribution of student workers by origin, region and work intensity (15–24 years, 2019)**

	Brussels			Wallonia			Flanders		
	0 ≤ 250	250 ≤ 500	> 500	0 ≤ 250	250 ≤ 500	> 500	0 ≤ 250	250 ≤ 500	> 500
Total*	42.3%	25.6%	32.0%	46.8%	25.6%	27.5%	39.3%	27.4%	33.2%
Belgian	47.2%	26.7%	26.1%	46.9%	26.2%	26.9%	39.4%	28.8%	31.7%
EU-14	46.8%	25.4%	27.6%	45.8%	25.5%	28.6%	40.2%	25.1%	34.7%
EU-13	43.0%	24.5%	32.5%	46.2%	27.4%	26.2%	43.5%	23.8%	32.6%
EU Candidate	34.8%	25.6%	**39.4%**	46.5%	23.5%	29.9%	37.7%	23.2%	**39.0%**
Other European	40.0%	26.4%	33.6%	50.3%	23.5%	26.0%	37.9%	23.5%	**38.5%**
Maghreb	38.6%	24.8%	36.6%	46.0%	23.2%	30.7%	35.2%	22.3%	**42.4%**
Sub-Saharan Africa	38.7%	27.3%	33.9%	46.8%	24.6%	28.5%	37.6%	24.6%	**37.9%**
Near/Middle East	54.2%	21.1%	24.7%	56.1%	23.8%	20.1%	47.1%	23.5%	29.3%
Oceania/Far East	50.8%	24.2%	24.8%	51.3%	26.1%	22.4%	43.8%	25.7%	30.5%
Other Asian	42.0%	29.2%	28.7%	48.6%	25.9%	25.3%	37.8%	25.0%	37.1%
North American	52.5%	29.3%	18.2%	48.1%	23.3%	28.6%	51.3%	23.3%	25.4%
South/Central American	43.5%	24.7%	31.8%	50.9%	22.0%	26.9%	41.2%	24.5%	34.4%

* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

These data broken down **by gender** show that women who, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, are proportionately more frequently employed as students than men, also work a greater number of hours. 33.6% of them have worked more than 500 hours compared to 29.1% of men. For both men and women, people from the Maghreb (39.2% for women and 37.0% for men), from an EU candidate country (39.0% for women and 35.9% for men), from another Asian country (37.8% for women and 31.8% for men) and from Another European country (37.8% for women and 32.8% for men) are strongly overrepresented in this intensity of student work compared to people of Belgian origin.

TABLE 31: **Distribution of student workers by origin, gender and work intensity (15-24 years, 2019)**

	Men			Women		
	0 ≤ 250	250 ≤ 500	> 500	0 ≤ 250	250 ≤ 500	> 500
Total*	43.6%	27.2%	**29.1%**	39.9%	26.4%	**33.6%**
Belgian	43.7%	28.7%	27.6%	39.8%	27.6%	32.6%
EU-14	45.6%	25.2%	29.0%	41.6%	25.4%	32.9%
EU-13	47.0%	25.1%	27.8%	41.6%	24.4%	34.0%
EU Candidate	40.2%	23.7%	**35.9%**	37.2%	23.6%	**39.0%**
Other European	43.6%	23.5%	**32.8%**	38.0%	24.2%	**37.8%**
Maghreb	39.2%	23.7%	**37.0%**	37.8%	23.0%	**39.2%**
Sub-Saharan Africa	42.3%	25.8%	31.9%	39.4%	24.6%	36.0%
Near/Middle East	50.4%	23.0%	26.5%	48.6%	23.3%	28.1%
Oceania/Far East	49.0%	25.2%	25.5%	45.1%	25.9%	29.0%
Other Asian	42.1%	26.0%	**31.8%**	36.9%	25.2%	**37.8%**
North American	54.3%	21.3%	24.5%	48.2%	26.0%	25.8%
South/Central American	44.7%	25.2%	30.0%	42.4%	23.1%	34.5%

* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

As mentioned earlier, the legal age limit at which a student can sign an employment contract has an impact on the number of hours worked in the previous three years **by age**. In the following graphs we observe a shift in the hours categories from the lowest intensity category to the highest as age increases. Nevertheless, the tendency to work more hours (250 hours or more) is already marked at the age of 15 to 17 for people from an EU candidate country (27.4% compared to 24.0% in total) and from Another European country (26.5%), but

also for people of other Asian countries (28.0%) and Near/Middle East origin (26.1%). Their under-representation in the total age groups then takes place in the two upper age groups. As far as the 20-24 age group is concerned, we find that three origins exceed the 50% of people who have worked more than 500 hours in the last three years. These are people of Maghreb origin (57.0%), from an EU candidate country (55.9%) and from Another European country (53.3%).

GRAPH 70: **Distribution of student workers by origin, age group and work intensity (2019)**
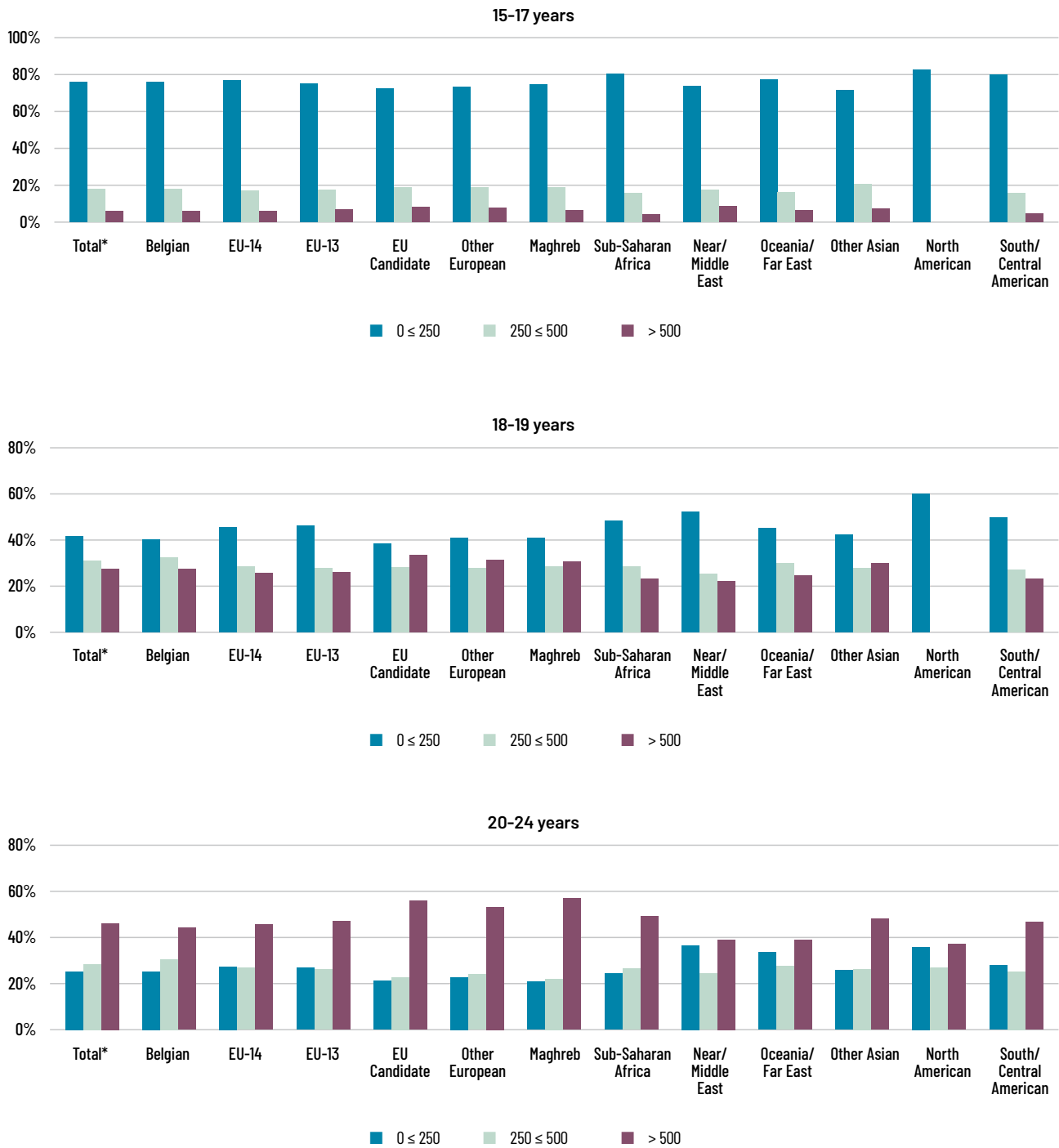
15–17 years

Legend: ■ 0 ≤ 250   ■ 250 ≤ 500   ■ > 500

18–19 years

Legend: ■ 0 ≤ 250   ■ 250 ≤ 500   ■ > 500

20–24 years

Legend: ■ 0 ≤ 250   ■ 250 ≤ 500   ■ > 500

* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

If we focus on students aged 20 to 24 who already obtained a **higher education degree** (2018), we observe that the tendency to work a very high number of hours is even more important. Six origins exceed 50% and, among them, four are around 60%. These are people from Another European country (60.6%), the Maghreb (60.2%), a Sub-Saharan African country (59.7%) and an EU candidate country (58.4%). This work intensity for these origins is striking, as working a significant number of hours while in full time edu-

cation risks jeopardising the success of the studies[15] and thus widening inequalities on the labour market.

In the population as a whole, we see that people of Maghreb, an EU candidate country and a Sub-Saharan African country origin have low shares of tertiary graduates and are the only ones to have a lower share of masters than native Belgians[16]. It should also be kept in mind that this reality is prob-ably underestimated as many students also work without being declared. According to a Randstad study[17], 19% of students were working without a con-tract in 2019, and this percentage was increasing despite the easing of measures concerning them. Some employers are also pushing students to work during school hours, which may not only be detri-mental to their success, but also cause them to lose their student status.

TABLE 32: **Distribution of student workers with tertiary education by origin and work intensity (20–24 years, 2018)**

	0 ≤ 250	250 ≤ 500	> 500
Total*	22.2%	31.1%	46.6%
Belgian	22.4%	32.3%	45.3%
EU-14	23.0%	28.7%	48.3%
EU-13	21.0%	27.3%	51.7%
EU Candidate	17.0%	24.6%	**58.4%**
Other European	18.2%	21.0%	**60.6%**
Maghreb	17.4%	22.3%	**60.2%**
Sub-Saharan Africa	15.8%	24.4%	**59.7%**
Near/Middle East	**34.3%**	26.2%	39.5%
Oceania/Far East	**27.1%**	28.7%	44.2%
Other Asian	21.5%	26.1%	52.4%
North American	**27.2%**	31.5%	41.3%
South/Central American	20.6%	30.6%	48.8%

Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

Taking all origins together, students in the **migration background** category "obtaining Belgian nationality" and of non-EU origin work the most hours (39.5% if they obtained Belgian nationality more than 5 years ago and 42.2% if they obtained it 5 years ago or less). This is true for most origins. In addition to the above, there is also a large number of people who have been registered in the National Register for more than 5 years who are from Oceania/Far East (46.3%), another Asian country (42.5%), the Near/Middle East (42.1%), South/Central America (37.2%), the EU-14 (36.0%) and the EU-13 (35.4%). In contrast, people who have only been in the National Register for 5 years or less are more likely to work occasionally, which is logical since some of them have been registered for fewer years than the three reference years used to calculate the intensity and therefore have not been able to accumulate a large number of working hours.

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15   See Cabinet of the Minister of Higher Education, Research and Media (April 2019), "Etude sur les conditions de vie des étudiants de l'enseignement supérieur de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles - Rapport final", p. 51 : « 27.3% des étudiants pratiquant une activité rémunérée considèrent que celle-ci a un impact négatif sur leurs études. Les étudiants qui ont déclaré travailler car « cela leur est indispensable pour vivre » sont un sur deux à estimer que cela affecte négativement leur cursus. »

16   See chapter Demography.

17   https://www.randstad.be/fr/propos-nous/nouvelles/nombre-record-detudiants-au-travail.

3. Labour market trajectory

Once we have explored all the available characteristics of students who combine study and work, and now that we have been able to see that some origins do more student work than others (people of Belgian, Maghreb, Other European, EU candidate and Sub-Saharan African origin) and that, among the latter, some work more hours (people of Maghreb, EU candidate and Another European origin), we will see whether this student work can be a stepping-stone to the traditional labour market. To do so, we selected students aged 18-24 who had a student job in 2014, observed their trajectories one year later (i.e. in the fourth quarter of 2015) and then 5 years later (i.e. in the fourth quarter of 2019) and compared them to the trajectories of students who did not work in 2014. We also improved the socio-economic position determined by the CBSS by identifying young people enrolled in work placements as inactive and reclassifying them as job seekers.

By observing the trajectories only one year after the work experience as a student and given that we were not able to filter the young people according to their status as a regularly enrolled student or not, we note that we are likely to find heterogeneous situations within each group. Indeed, among the young people who did not have a student occupation contract in 2014, there are young people who were studying but did not work, but also young people who were no longer students and were perhaps already employed, unemployed, or in one of the multiple inactive positions. The latter are likely to have a low level of educational attainment and therefore lower chances on the labour market, as we have repeatedly found in previous reports[18]. In the group of young people who worked as students in 2014, we will then find young people who have finished their studies and are entering the labour market and young people who are still studying. This diversity of situations is clearly visible in the table below.

TABLE 33: **Labour market position of young people in 2015 according to whether or not they had a student job in 2014 (18–24 years)**

	Employment	Unemployment	Professional integration period	Inactivity	of which social integration income	of which child with child benefit
Not employed in 2014	44.9%	6.2%	3.1%	45.8%	3.8%	22.8%
Student worker in 2014	28.8%	1.1%	4.1%	66.0%	2.2%	56.9%

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The lower employment rate of young people who have already had work experience in parallel with their studies goes hand in hand with a higher share of young people who are still receiving child benefit and are therefore probably still students. We cannot therefore conclude that this low employment rate is undesirable, nor that having worked as a student has any relation to this finding. On the other hand, the share of unemployed among those who were not student workers is much higher than the share of those who had a job student, while the share of young people in a professional integration period is slightly lower. This suggests that these young people are already further away from their studies than others. However, their share of recipients of child benefit remains relatively high, which shows that several situations exist within this sub-population.

As regards the trajectories with a 5-year perspective, we can estimate that the risks that the

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18 See in particular chapter 8 "Young people on professional integration period", FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Unia (2020), "Socio-economic monitoring. Labour market and origin - 2019".

population analysed is still studying are greatly reduced. In the table below, we can see that the proportion of young people still receiving child benefits has decreased, even if it remains twice as high for those who have worked while studying. The employ-ment rate of the latter has become higher than that of young people who did not work under this regime in 2014, and their share of unemployed and inactive is lower.

TABLE 34: **Labour market position of young people in 2019 according to whether or not they had a student job in 2014 (18–24 years)**

	Employment	Unemployment	Professional integration period	Inactivity	of which social integration income	of which child with child benefit
Not employed in 2014	64.4%	5.1%	1.4%	29.2%	2.4%	4.2%
Student worker in 2014	74.6%	2.6%	1.3%	21.5%	1.0%	8.1%

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

Unfortunately, there is still a major obstacle to a true analysis of the impact of student work on access to the labour market 5 years later: student workers may have a higher probability of having improved their level of education than others, since they are the only ones for whom we are sure that they were still studying in 2014. It may therefore be their degree level that improves their chances of getting a job, and not the fact that they have already worked hours as student workers. As we are not sure of the evolution of the level of degree between 2014 and 2019, we must then, in order to carry out the most relevant analysis possible, reduce the observed population to those who were already identified as having a higher education degree in 2014, and who have therefore necessarily kept this level of degree in 2019[19], which we cannot certify for lower levels of qualification. Thus, we will compare these two cohorts at equal levels of education.

This gives us a population of 189,982 young people, including 80,606 students who worked while they were in full time education. A very small percentage of them (0.2%) are still receiving child benefits in 2019 (excluding induction training), so we can assume that there are very few students left in this sub-population. As the numbers in many categories are quite low (young people in professional integration period, inactivity sub-categories, and even total unemployment), the detail by origin is difficult or impossible to analyse; we will therefore stick to the employment rate. Similarly, given the small numbers and the bias of non-identification of workers in the organisations, we will not analyse the trajectories of people of North American origin.

Working with the 2014 population forces us to look at the context of that year, with stricter legislation and somewhat different demographics of student jobbers. Thus, for 18-24-year-olds with a tertiary degree, the people most likely to have a student job were those from Sub-Saharan Africa (57.4%), the Maghreb (46.9%) and South/Central America (45.8%). People from the Near/Middle East (36.8%), the EU-13 (36.9%), and other Asian countries (40.3%) have the lowest shares. Although the figures have changed between 2014 and 2019, the ordering of the origins is not fundamentally different. As regards labour intensity, as we were unable to calculate it for the years before 2015, we cannot check whether the picture we have presented above was different, nor can we use it as a comparative variable.

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19   However, it is possible that they have increased their chances of accessing the labour market by switching to a more promising field of study.

GRAPH 71: **Employment rate by origin and whether or not working as a student in 2014 (18–24 years with tertiary education, 2019)**
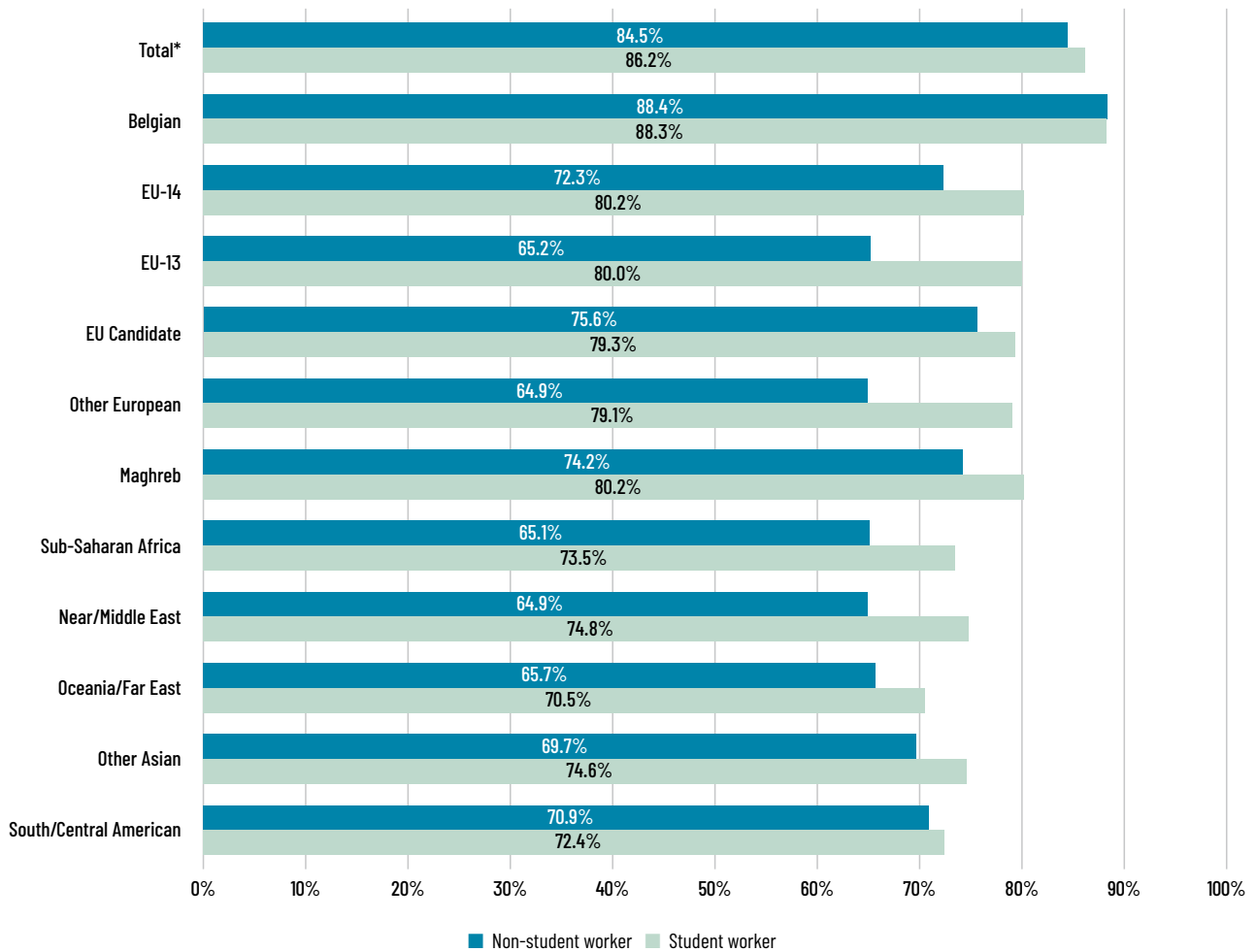
Total*
84.5%
86.2%

Belgian
88.4%
88.3%

EU-14
72.3%
80.2%

EU-13
65.2%
80.0%

EU Candidate
75.6%
79.3%

Other European
64.9%
79.1%

Maghreb
74.2%
80.2%

Sub-Saharan Africa
65.1%
73.5%

Near/Middle East
64.9%
74.8%

Oceania/Far East
65.7%
70.5%

Other Asian
69.7%
74.6%

South/Central American
70.9%
72.4%

■ Non-student worker   ■ Student worker

* Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

We observe that the fact of having worked during studies seems to confer a slight advantage overall in terms of access to employment (+1.8 percentage points). However, this advantage seems to benefit people of foreign origin more than people of Belgian origin. It must be said that the latter, as we saw in the previous report[20], when they have a higher education degree take only 3 months to find their first job when they register for a professional integration period, whereas it takes between 6 and 9 months for other origins. They therefore already have a clear advantage that is becoming difficult to overcome. The improvement is obvious for people from the EU-13 (+14.7 points) and from Another European

country (+14.2 points), who see their employment rate rise from a low 65% to 80% or almost. This improvement is also interesting for people from the Near/Middle East (+9.9 points), from a Sub-Saharan African country (+8.4%) and from the EU-14 (+8.0%), even though their employment rate thus increased remains low compared to that of Belgians of origin (especially for the first two origins). It should also be noted that people of South/Central American origin do not seem to benefit from a real added value of a past student work experience (only +1.5 points).

The numbers for some origins are quite low (Near/ Middle East, Oceania/Far East, Other Asia, South/

20   See chapter 8 "Young people in professional integration period", FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Unia (2020), "Socio-economic monitoring. Labour market and origin – 2019".

Central America). Below we will give a picture of the situation broken down by a number of characteristics (gender, region and migration background), but we will be careful to be cautious with the conclusions that are drawn, and we will not always present the results for these origins.

While there does not seem to be a general difference **by gender**, this is not true for all origins. For example, women from the Near/Middle East improve their employment rate significantly more than men (+13.2 points compared to +6.6 points), but their employment rate when they have not been job seekers is so low that even when they have had a student job their employment rate does not exceed that of men of the same origin who have not been job students, and they remain the ones with the lowest employment rate of all origins. Women from

Oceania/Far East also have a greater advantage in the labour market due to their pre-professional experience (+6.0 points), while this does not change for men of the same origin (who had and still have a lower employment rate than women), but their employment rate also remains well below that of women of Belgian origin. As for women from an EU candidate country, their employment rate is also more improved than that of men (+4.6 points against +1.5 points), but their rate remains well below that of men and women of Belgian origin. Conversely, men from Other European countries fared slightly better than women of the same origin (+15.2 points against +13.8 points). As a result, their employment rate after having worked as a student is almost equal to that of women who also worked as students.

TABLE 35: **Employment rates by origin, gender and having worked as a student or not in 2014 (18–24 years with tertiary education, 2019)**

	Men			Women		
	Non-student worker	Student worker	Difference	Non-student worker	Student worker	Difference
Total*	83.6%	85.3%	1.7	85.0%	86.7%	1.7
Belgian	86.9%	87.2%	0.3	89.4%	88.9%	-0.5
EU-14	71.1%	78.1%	7.0	72.9%	81.3%	8.4
EU-13	67.9%	81.9%	14.0	64.1%	79.0%	14.9
EU Candidate	81.3%	82.8%	1.5	73.1%	77.7%	**4.6**
Other European	63.9%	79.1%	**15.2**	65.4%	79.2%	13.8
Maghreb	78.4%	83.2%	4.8	72.4%	78.5%	**6.1**
Sub-Saharan Africa	62.7%	71.0%	8.3	66.6%	74.8%	8.2
Near/Middle East	72.2%	78.7%	6.6	58.9%	72.1%	**13.2**
Oceania/Far East	62.7%	62.7%	0.0	67.2%	73.3%	**6.0**
Other Asian	68.3%	72.5%	4.2	70.6%	75.5%	4.9
South/Central American	64.7%	65.3%	0.6	74.9%	75.9%	1.0

Including unknown

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

At the **regional** level, the impact of a pre-professional experience as a student seems to be more pronounced in Brussels. It is very weak in Flanders. But, again, this differs according to origin. In Brussels, people from Another European country improve their employment rate so much thanks to

a student employment contract (+22.4 points) that they go from one of the lowest rates to one of the highest rates, close to that of the Belgians of origin. This is true in Wallonia (+12.3 points) but to a lesser extent, and while the improvement is also interesting in Flanders (+9.5 points), other origins do better.

In Flanders, it is then the people from one of the EU-13 countries who show the best improvement (+15.0 points), moving from 65.6% to 80.6%, but still lags far behind the 91.9% employment rate of Belgians of this origin. In Brussels (+16.5 points) and Wallonia (+10.0 points), the increase in the employment rate of people of this origin is also high. Nevertheless, in Brussels, there may be a bias for people of EU-13 and EU-14 origin (12.2 points increase for the latter), cre-

ated by the lack of data on European civil servants, which may artificially reduce the employment rate of one group or the other by an unknown proportion. Finally, it should be noted that, strangely enough, having worked in parallel with studies seems to reduce the chances of access to the labour market for people of Belgian origin living in Flanders, a phenomenon we cannot explain.

GRAPH 72: **Employment rate by origin, region and having worked as a student or not in 2014 (18–24 year olds with tertiary education, 2019)**
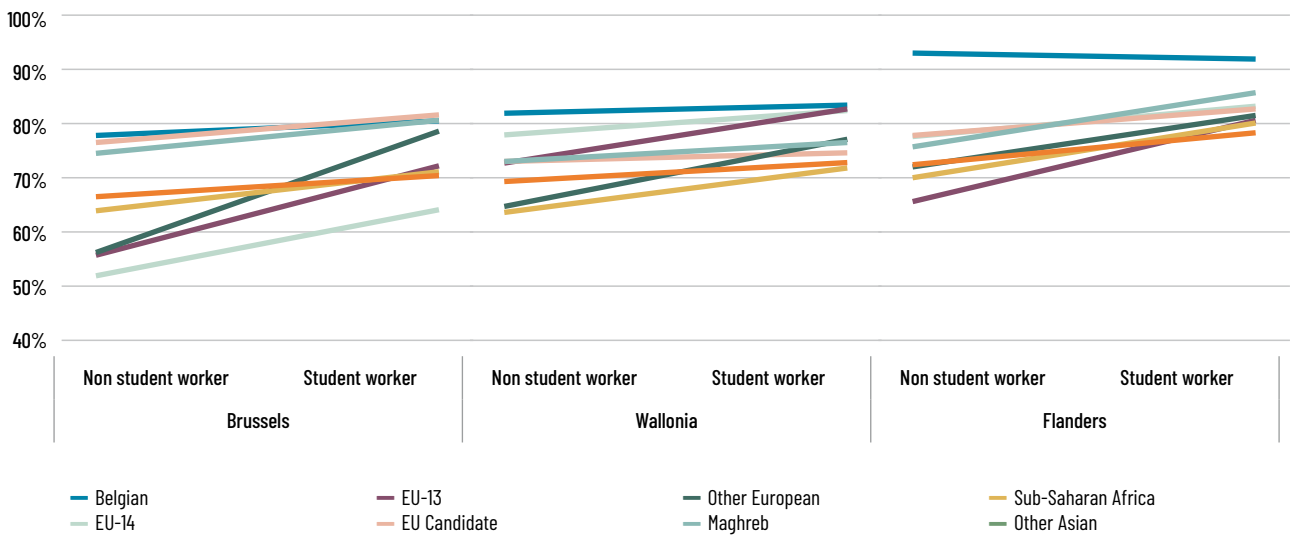
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

Finally, the employment rates broken down **by migration background** tell us that the people with the largest difference in employment rates with and without student job experience are those of non-EU origin who have been registered in the National Register for 5 years or less (+13.9 points) or for more than 5 years (+13.1 points). Again, this

mainly concerns people of Another European country origin. The low rates for persons of EU origin who have been registered for 5 years or less can again be explained, among other things, by a large number of workers from the European institutions who are wrongly classified as inactive in the CBSS, which leads to an underestimation of these rates.

TABLE 36: **Employment rates by origin, migration background and whether or not working as a student in 2014 (18–24-year-olds with tertiary education, 2019)**

			Non student worker	Student worker	Difference
Belgians born Belgian	**Belgian parents**	EU	84.1%	84.5%	0.4
		non-EU	75.7%	78.4%	2.7
	Nationality of parent(s)	EU	80.4%	82.6%	2.3
		non-EU	74.2%	79.3%	5.1
Belgians born foreigner	**Nationality obtained > 5 years**	EU	70.6%	81.8%	11.2
		non-EU	71.8%	75.9%	4.1
	Nationality obtained ≤ 5 years	EU	68.6%	75.0%	6.4
		non-EU	68.2%	74.8%	6.6
Non-Belgians	**Registration NR > 5 years**	EU	66.1%	75.8%	9.7
		non-EU	68.7%	81.8%	13.1
	Registration NR ≤ 5 years	EU	40.8%	50.1%	9.2
		non-EU	52.0%	65.9%	13.9

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

4. Conclusion

We have seen throughout this chapter that it is not easy to understand student work and its characteristics, as many problems related to missing data, changes in data coding methodology, changes in legislation or small numbers of students can interfere and cause biases that make interpretation difficult. Nevertheless, we were able to isolate some phenomena and to draw some relevant lessons.

First of all, in 2019, in the whole age group examined (15 to 24 years) and for the whole of Belgium, people of Belgian origin are more often under a student employment contract than people of other origins, but in Brussels and Wallonia, people of Sub-Saharan African origin outnumber them. In all regions, people of EU, Other European, Maghreb and Sub-Saharan African origin are the most common foreigners to work as a student, while people from the EU-13, the Near/Middle East and the Oceania/Far East are the least common. The 18–19-year-olds work more frequently as students than the 15-17- and 20–24-year-olds, but these differences are more tenuous in Wallonia and especially in Brussels, per-

haps a sign of greater student insecurity. Moreover, for 20–24-year-olds with a higher education degree, people from an EU candidate country, Another European country, the Maghreb, a Sub-Saharan African country, another Asian country and South/Central America far outnumber those of Belgian origin.

People of EU candidate, Other European, Maghreb and Sub-Saharan African origin aged 20 to 24 with a tertiary qualification, who are therefore more likely to work alongside their studies, also work more hours. Although we were not able to establish a direct link between student work intensity and the 5-year employment rate, we can see that it is not necessarily those backgrounds that work the most that increase their future chances on the labour market. The simple fact of having worked during their studies, regardless of the intensity, seems to have a real added value in terms of access to the labour market for people of foreign origin aged 18 to 24 (especially for those from the EU-13 or Another European country), even if they still do not reach the

employment rate of the Belgians of origin, despite a similar level of qualification. On the other hand, people from EU candidate countries and Maghreb origin, who work more hours, seem to improve their chances less than the other origins. Working a lot of hours as a student, and possibly having this job overlap with class time, could then become a problem if it interferes with the successful completion of a master's degree, for example.

Women from all backgrounds are proportionately more likely to be employed as students and they are more likely to work longer hours. Again, those who improve their employment rate the most compared to men are not necessarily those who were proportionally more employed as students nor those who worked the most hours. When they improve the most (women from the Near/Middle East or from an EU candidate country), it is because their employment rate without this prior experience is low, and they still fail to reach the employment rates of men of the same origin or of women of Belgian origin.

The analysis of student work sectors and fields of study showed us that students do not necessarily work in a sector related to their field of study, nor in the sector in which they will work later on. Indeed, the sectors preferred by students are employment-related activities, including temporary work, especially for people of EU candidate, Other European, Sub-Saharan African, Maghreb or Near/Middle Eastern origin, followed by the catering and retail trade sectors. Finally, there are also over-representations of people from EU candidate countries and Maghreb origin in the landscaping sector, especially in Brussels. The only links we found between the student work sector and the work sector of the total population were in the catering sector (people from Oceania/Far East and another Asian country) and in the public administration sectors for people of Belgian and Sub-Saharan African origin. with regard to field of study, we found a disparity of situations, except for a more obvious link between the field of study "health care" and the sector of activities for human health, medico-social and social care with accommodation for persons of Belgian, EU-13, EU candidate, Other European, Sub-Saharan African or Near/Middle Eastern origin.

In summary, student work does seem to be a stepping-stone to employment in general and it is undeniable for people of foreign origin, but it is only the fact of having pre-professional experience that seems to have an impact, and the other parameters (number of hours worked and sector in which the job is done) seem to have little influence, or even a negative influence in the case of hours worked.

05

Grade Repetition

05
Key elements

Grade Repetition

In the context of this chapter, **grade repetition assesses the delay in relation to the legal school age** and is measured at the time of graduation from upper secondary education. This means that a person will not be behind in schooling at the time of graduation from upper secondary education if he or she obtained it at or before the age of 18 (age on 31 December). A person will be behind in schooling if he/she is older than 18 years of age when he/she graduates from upper secondary education.

In 2018, 67.3% of 20–34-year-olds graduated from upper secondary education without having repeated a grade. The other 32.7% were behind in their schooling, mainly by one year (23.5%) and 9.2% were two years or more behind. People of Belgian and EU-14 origin have **the highest shares** of people with no delay in obtaining their upper secondary education, with 72.4% and 61.6% respectively. The lowest shares (less than 40%) of people with no grade repetition are observed for people of Other European (33.5%), EU candidate (34.8%), Sub-Saharan African (37.0%) and Maghreb (39.7%) origin.

The **share of men** who have repeated a grade is higher than that of women. In fact, in 2018, 38.5% of men aged 20-34 are behind in their schooling when obtaining an upper secondary degree, compared to 27.5% of women. The gap between men and women in the share of grade repeaters is largest for people of Belgian origin (11.8 percentage points), EU-14 (11.5 points), Sub-Saharan (11.4 points) and Other Asian (11.2 points) origin.

The data seem to indicate that the delay acquired during schooling is an **obstacle in access to higher education (universities or colleges)**. Indeed, 61.1% of the persons with no delay in obtaining an upper secondary degree are higher education graduates, while only 26.7% of the persons with a delay in obtaining an upper secondary degree have obtained a similar degree. The barrier is the most pronounced for Belgians of origin, and this barrier increases with the length of the delay. For people of Other Asian and South/Central American origin, the barrier is also important, while it is lower for people of EU candidate, Other European and Sub-Saharan African origin. The barrier is somewhat higher for women than for men. This is particularly the case for people of EU candidate, Other Asian and Belgian origin, but the opposite is true for people of EU-13 and Near/Middle Eastern origin.

The **employment rate** of people aged 25-34 who never repeated a grade at the time of graduation from upper secondary school is, regardless of origin, higher than that of grade repeaters. The highest employment rate is observed for people of Belgian origin without grade repetition (91.6%) and the lowest for people of Sub-Saharan origin who did repeat a grade (59.5%). The employment rate of grade repeaters of Belgian origin is higher than the employment rate of other origins who never repeated a grade. The difference in the employment rate between people who have and have not repeated a grade is more pronounced for people of Sub-Saharan, EU-14 and Maghreb origin. The more frequent the grade repetition, the lower the employment rate.

The **breakdown according to the type of higher education degree** obtained (bachelor versus master's degree) shows that, in general, for both those with a bachelor's and a master's degree, the employment rate decreases in grade repetition although it appears to be a larger setback for graduates with a master's degree.

According to 2019 OECD data[1], the percentage of grade repeaters in lower and upper secondary education (general programme) in Belgium is among the highest in the OECD and the EU. In lower secondary education, it is 5.8% in Belgium, compared to the EU average of 2.2% and 1.9% for the OECD average. This rate increases with the level of education; in upper secondary education, grade repeaters represent 7.7% of the school population in Belgium, compared to 3.3% for the EU average and 2.9% for the OECD average. In the OECD countries for which data are available, boys are overall more likely to repeat a grade than girls. Moving between levels of education allows young people to access higher levels of education and to benefit from better labour market opportunities throughout their careers. On the other hand, dropping out of school or repeating a grade can lead to a complete break in education and reduce the employability of young people. Boys and students with a migrant background are more likely to repeat grades; socio-economically disadvantaged students are also more likely to repeat grades than advantaged students, which may perpetuate socio-economic inequalities. Success rates are generally lower for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (first generation immigrants as well as those with poorly educated parents).

The Council of the European Union mentions in its conclusions on "Reducing early school leaving and promoting success at school" that "those who drop out of education or training prematurely are more exposed to unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion. Investing in helping young people succeed at school can then help break the cycle of lacking opportunities and the intergenerational transmission of poverty and inequality. Dropping out of school is usually the result of a range of often interrelated personal, social, economic, cultural, educational, gender and family factors, and is associated with situations of cumulative disadvantage, often originating in early childhood. Socio-economically disadvantaged populations are more often affected and drop-out rates are particularly alarming for certain groups, such as children with a migrant background (including newly arrived migrants and foreign-born children) and those with special educational needs[2]. Indeed, Eurostat Labour Force Survey data on school dropouts indicate that the drop-out rate for people of Belgian nationality in 2021 is 5.9%, compared to 11.9% for those of EU-27 nationality and 23.5% for those of non-EU nationality[3]. The IBSA 'Education' data on school careers[4] indicate that, for the school year 2020-2021, 46.5% of students in Brussels[5] in ordinary secondary education had repeated a grade compared to 37.8% for Walloon pupils and 23.1% for Flemish pupils.

In the light of these findings reported by the OECD and the Council of the European Union, this chapter will attempt to measure the impact of educational disadvantage on one's labour market position by origin.

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1   OECD (2021), Education at a Glance 2021: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/5077a968-en.

2   Council Conclusions - Reducing early school leaving and promoting success at school (2015/C 417/05) - https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52015XG1215(03)&from=EN.

3   The drop-out rate for people born in Belgium is 5.8% in 2021, compared to 10.8% for those born in an EU-27 country and 14.9% for those born in a non-EU country.

4   https://ibsa.brussels/themes/enseignement/parcours-scolaires.

5   Place of residence.

1. Grade repetition

In the context of this chapter, grade repetition is an assessment of the delay in relation to the legal school age and is measured at the time of graduation from upper secondary education. Thus, a person will not be behind in schooling at the time of graduation from upper secondary education if he or she has graduated at or before the age of 18 (age on 31 December). A person will be behind in schooling if they are older than 18 when they graduate from upper secondary education.

To approximate grade repetition, the LED, CRef and Saturn[6] databases are used via the variable "date of graduation from upper secondary education". There are some limitations to the use of these data:

› The absence of data on compulsory education in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation means that data on the graduation from upper secondary education is not available for those who have completed their education in schools in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. This lack of data was partly filled by using data on higher education in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, namely the CRef and Saturn databases.

› Due to the time periods covered by these various databases[7], we will focus on 20–34-year-olds as this is the group for which grade repetition is best captured.
› The analysis focuses exclusively on persons with at most an upper secondary education degree or a higher education degree since school grade retention is measured at the upper secondary education degree.

The table below shows data on Grade repetition for three years: 2011, 2013 and 2018[8]. In 2018, 33.7% of 20–34-year-olds had not repeated a grade when they graduated from upper secondary school, 16.4% did repeat a grade at least once, and for the remaining 50.0% information is not available. Although these data, for reasons linked to the construction of the variable, do not make it possible to show the evolution of grade repetition, they do however make it possible to show that the quality of the grade repetition variable improves over time. Indeed, whereas data was missing for 68.4% of 20–34-year-olds in 2011, that percentage dropped to 50.0% in 2018. However, the share of missing data is particularly high for foreign origins.

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6   See chapter 1 of the Monitoring 2017 and 2019 reports for a full description of these databases.
7   See chapter 1 of the Monitoring 2017 and 2019 reports.
8   Due to their small group size, people of North America origin are not included in the analysis.

TABLE 37: **Grade repetition of the population by origin (20-34 years, 2011-2018)**

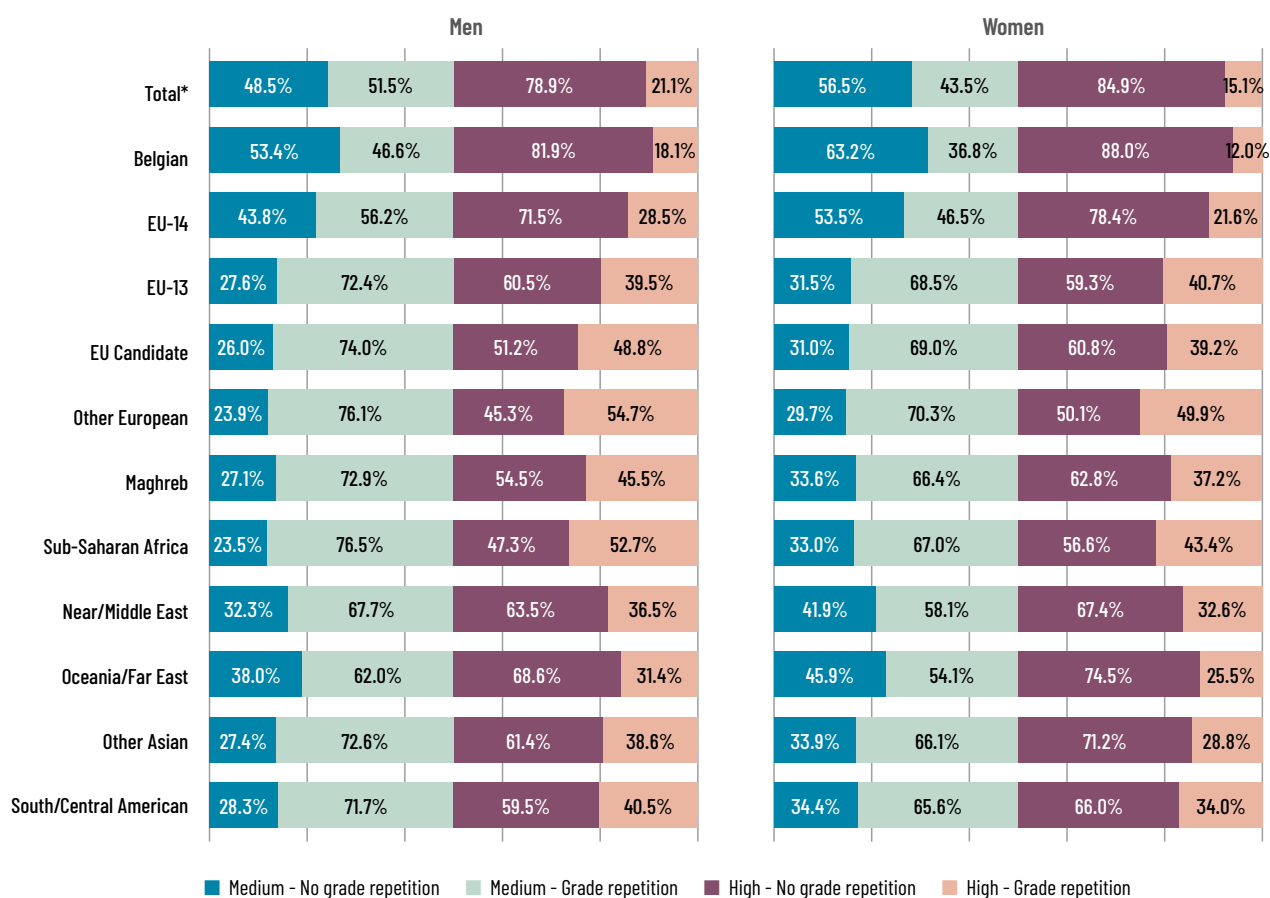|	2011			2013			2018		
	No grade repetition	**Grade repetition**	**Unknown**	**No grade repetition**	**Grade repetition**	**Unknown**	**No grade repetition**	**Grade repetition**	**Unknown**
Total*	20.6%	11.0%	68.4%	24.5%	13.0%	62.4%	33.7%	16.4%	50.0%
Belgian	27.6%	12.1%	60.3%	33.4%	14.4%	52.2%	47.9%	18.3%	33.8%
EU-14	13.2%	8.4%	78.3%	15.0%	9.7%	75.4%	18.6%	11.6%	69.8%
EU-13	3.7%	4.8%	91.4%	3.9%	5.4%	90.8%	4.7%	6.7%	88.5%
EU Candidate	5.3%	10.8%	83.9%	6.9%	14.0%	79.1%	11.7%	21.9%	66.4%
Other European	3.8%	9.0%	87.2%	4.9%	12.0%	83.1%	9.2%	18.2%	72.6%
Maghreb	6.8%	11.1%	82.1%	8.1%	13.4%	78.5%	12.1%	18.3%	69.6%
Sub-Saharan Africa	5.5%	11.6%	82.9%	6.5%	13.0%	80.5%	8.5%	14.6%	76.9%
Near/Middle East	8.6%	8.4%	83.0%	10.1%	10.5%	79.5%	8.5%	9.3%	82.2%
Oceania/Far East	8.1%	7.1%	84.8%	9.0%	8.2%	82.9%	11.4%	9.4%	79.3%
Other Asian	7.6%	8.3%	84.0%	8.5%	10.5%	81.0%	10.5%	14.4%	75.1%
South/Central American	8.9%	10.3%	80.8%	10.0%	12.2%	77.8%	11.2%	14.6%	74.1%

* Including unknown and North American origin

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

There are three main reasons for these unknown shares for both Belgians of origin and other origins. The first is, as already mentioned above, the absence of data on compulsory education from the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. The level of the upper secondary education degree, for those who graduated in the Walloon-Brussels Federation, could therefore only be assessed on the basis of data from the CRef and Saturn (and therefore only for those who enrolled in a higher education institution or university, via the variable 'date of obtaining the upper secondary education degree'). The second reason is that, for a part of the population, the degree is not known. As a reminder, the degree is not known mainly for foreigners registered in the National Register for 5 years or less. And the third reason is that part of the population has not obtained a higher secondary education degree and therefore the variable school delay is not available for this group.

The first of the three reasons is far from trivial. Indeed, when the data are split up by region, the share of unknowns is particularly high in Brussels and Wallonia, with 73.2% and 76.7% respectively compared to 29.0% in Flanders. The share of unknowns is particularly high for upper secondary graduates in Brussels and Wallonia (55.8% and 80.1% respectively, compared to 18.4% in Flanders). And while this share also remains high in Brussels and Wallonia for tertiary graduates (40.5% and 43.4% respectively compared to 6.9% in Flanders), it is still much lower than for upper secondary graduates. This improvement in the data for tertiary education is due to the use of CRef and Saturn data. The data per region will therefore not be used in this analysis.

The following analysis focuses on the data for which grade repetition is available. The table below shows that in 2018, 67.3% of 20-34-year-olds were not behind in their schooling when they graduated from upper secondary education. 32.7% were behind in their schooling, mainly by one year (23.5%) and 9.2% were two or more years behind.

TABLE 38: **Grade repetition (excluding unknowns) of the population by origin (20-34 years, 2018)**

	No grade repetition	Grade repetition			
		Total	**1 year**	**2 years**	**3 years and over**
Total*	67.3%	32.7%	23.5%	6.8%	2.4%
Belgian	**72.4%**	27.6%	21.8%	4.8%	1.1%
EU-14	**61.6%**	38.4%	26.5%	8.7%	3.2%
EU-13	41.3%	58.7%	**31.9%**	17.5%	9.3%
EU Candidate	34.8%	**65.2%**	**38.0%**	**19.9%**	7.3%
Other European	33.5%	**66.5%**	**32.5%**	**21.8%**	**12.2%**
Maghreb	39.7%	**60.3%**	**33.3%**	17.9%	9.1%
Sub-Saharan Africa	37.0%	**63.0%**	28.9%	**18.4%**	**15.7%**
Near/Middle East	47.9%	52.1%	25.0%	14.9%	**12.2%**
Oceania/Far East	54.8%	45.2%	27.6%	11.5%	6.1%
Other Asian	42.2%	57.8%	27.9%	17.9%	**12.0%**
South/Central American	43.5%	56.5%	**30.1%**	16.6%	9.9%

Including unknown and North American origin

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

People of Belgian and EU-14 origin have the highest shares of people without grade repetition in obtaining their upper secondary qualification, with 72.4% and 61.6% respectively. The lowest shares (less than 40%) of people with no grade repetition are observed for people from Other European origin (33.5%), from an EU candidate country (34.8%), from Sub-Saharan Africa (37.0%) and from the Maghreb (39.7%). These are the people with the highest shares of grade repetition, with the majority being limited to repeating one year. It is important to note that people of Other European, Sub-Saharan African, Near/Middle Eastern and Other Asian origin have higher shares of at least two-year grade repeaters than of one year only. The situation of people of Sub-Saharan African origin and Other European origin is particularly striking, as the shares of those with a 2-year delay in schooling are 18.4% and 21.8% respectively; and 15.7% and 12.2% respectively for those who repeated grades in 3 years and more.

TABLE 39: **Grade repetition (excluding unknowns) of the population by origin and gender (20-34 years, 2018)**

	Men					Women				
	No grade repetition	**Grade repetition**				**No grade repetition**	**Grade repetition**			
		Total	**1 year**	**2 years**	**3 years and over**		**Total**	**1 year**	**2 years**	**3 years and over**
Total*	61.5%	38.5%	26.9%	8.6%	3.0%	72.5%	27.5%	20.5%	5.1%	1.9%
Belgian	66.3%	33.7%	25.6%	6.6%	1.5%	78.1%	21.9%	18.1%	3.1%	0.7%
EU-14	55.4%	44.6%	29.5%	11.0%	4.1%	66.9%	33.1%	24.0%	6.7%	2.4%
EU-13	38.3%	61.7%	32.1%	19.4%	10.1%	43.6%	56.4%	31.7%	16.1%	8.6%
EU Candidate	30.3%	69.7%	38.6%	22.6%	8.6%	38.4%	61.6%	37.6%	17.8%	6.2%
Other European	29.2%	70.8%	32.6%	24.1%	14.2%	37.4%	62.6%	32.4%	19.8%	10.4%
Maghreb	34.7%	65.3%	34.0%	20.4%	10.9%	43.7%	56.3%	32.7%	15.9%	7.7%
Sub-Saharan Africa	30.6%	69.4%	28.8%	21.1%	19.5%	42.0%	58.0%	29.0%	16.3%	12.7%
Near/Middle East	43.5%	56.5%	26.0%	15.9%	14.6%	52.2%	47.8%	24.0%	13.9%	9.9%
Oceania/Far East	48.8%	51.2%	30.4%	13.6%	7.1%	58.9%	41.1%	25.8%	10.0%	5.3%
Other Asian	36.5%	63.5%	29.4%	20.2%	14.0%	47.6%	52.4%	26.5%	15.8%	10.1%
South/Central American	38.6%	61.4%	30.8%	19.0%	11.6%	47.6%	52.4%	29.5%	14.5%	8.4%

* Including unknown and North American origin

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The table above shows the data on grade repetition by gender. The data confirm what is observed in the literature, namely that the proportion of boys who have repeated a year is higher than that of girls. In fact, in 2018, 38.5% of men aged 20-34 were behind in their schooling when they graduated from upper secondary school, compared with 27.5% of women. The gap between men and women in the share of those with grade repetition is largest for people of Belgian (11.8 percentage points), EU-14 (11.5 points), Sub-Saharan (11.4 points) and Other Asian (11.2 points) origin. For those who obtained their upper secondary education with one year delay, the gap between men and women is largest for people of Belgian (7.5 points) and EU-14 (5.5 points) origin. It is small for people from an EU candidate country (1.1 points) and Maghreb origin (1.4 points). Women from Sub-Saharan Africa, from Other European origin and from an EU-13 country have almost the same share of one-year grade repeaters as men. For those two years or more behind, the gap is particularly large for people from Sub-Saharan Africa (11.6 points), Other European origin (8.0 points) and the Maghreb (7.7 points).

The graph below shows that grade repetition for people aged 20-34 with an upper secondary degree is 47.8%, while among those with a higher education degree this share is 17.5%. For Belgians of origin, 42.4% of those with an upper secondary degree are late in obtaining this degree compared to 14.6% of those with a higher education degree. For people with an upper secondary degree from Other European, Sub-Saharan and EU country backgrounds, the share of those who are behind in their education is particularly high. This is also the case for tertiary graduates of Other European and Sub-Saharan origin.

GRAPH 73: **Grade repetition (excluding unknowns) of the population by origin and level of education (20-34 years, 2018)**

	Medium - No grade repetition	Medium - Grade repetition	High - No grade repetition	High - Grade repetition
Total*	52.2%	47.8%	82.5%	17.5%
Belgian	57.6%	42.4%	85.4%	14.6%
EU-14	48.5%	51.5%	75.7%	24.3%
EU-13	29.7%	70.3%	59.8%	40.2%
EU Candidate	28.6%	71.4%	57.5%	42.5%
Other European	26.7%	73.3%	48.4%	51.6%
Maghreb	30.5%	69.5%	59.5%	40.5%
Sub-Saharan Africa	28.5%	71.5%	53.1%	46.9%
Near/Middle East	36.9%	63.1%	65.6%	34.4%
Oceania/Far East	42.4%	57.6%	72.5%	27.5%
Other Asian	30.5%	69.5%	67.2%	32.8%
South/Central American	31.4%	68.6%	63.4%	36.6%

Legend: ■ Medium - No grade repetition ■ Medium - Grade repetition ■ High - No grade repetition ■ High - Grade repetition
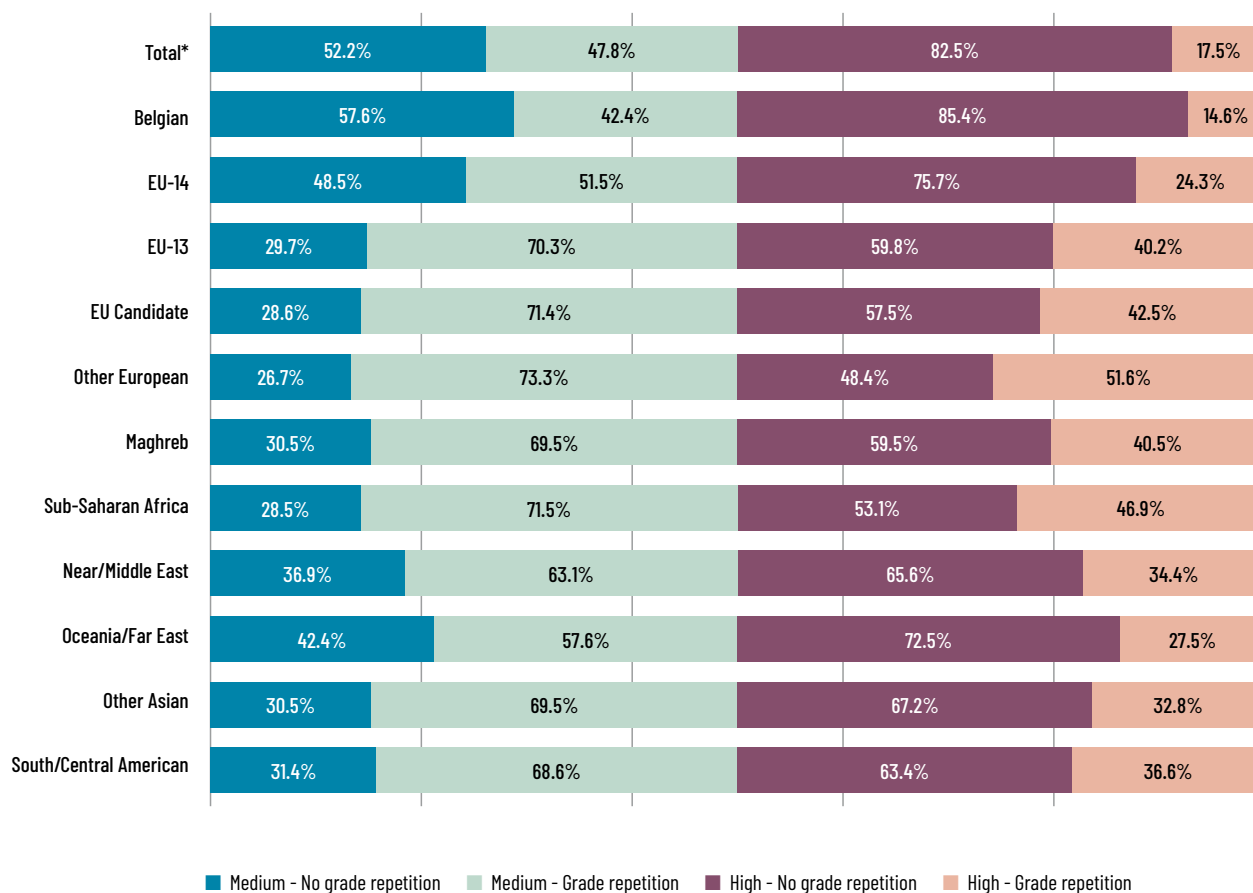
* Including unknown and North American origin

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

This seems to indicate that the delay acquired during schooling constitutes a hindrance in access to higher education (universities or colleges). In fact, according to the table below, 61.1% of those who did not have any delay in obtaining their upper secondary degree are graduates of higher education, whereas only 26.7% of those who had a delay in obtaining their upper secondary degree are graduates of higher education. The data seem to indicate that grade repetition is negatively related to obtaining a higher education degree. It should also be noted that, even when people of foreign origin do not repeat a grade, the share of higher education graduates is significantly lower than for the Belgian population. This is particularly noticeable for people from an EU candidate country, from Another European country, Maghreb origin, or from Sub-Saharan Africa. It can be assumed that a part of them is reoriented in technical or vocational sec-

ondary education and that, once graduated, they immediately enter the labour market. Similarly, the data indicate that the more times one has repeated a grade, the lower the share of tertiary graduates.

The barrier to obtaining a higher education qualification can be defined as the difference between the share of higher education graduates who never repeated a grade and the share of higher education graduates who did (see table below). This difference or gap is most prominent for students of Belgian origin, and it again increases with the duration of the delay. However, this observation must be qualified by the fact that Belgians of origin have a much lower share grade repeaters than the other origin groups.

For people from Other Asian origin as well as South/Central America, the discrepancy is also significant. On the other hand, for people from an EU candidate

country, from Other European origin and from Sub-Saharan African origin, the difference is smaller. For the latter group, the share of tertiary graduates who repeated a grade at least three times is the highest of all origins.

TABLE 40: **Share of tertiary education graduates as well as the barrier to obtaining a tertiary degree by origin and grade repetition (20–34 years, 2018)**

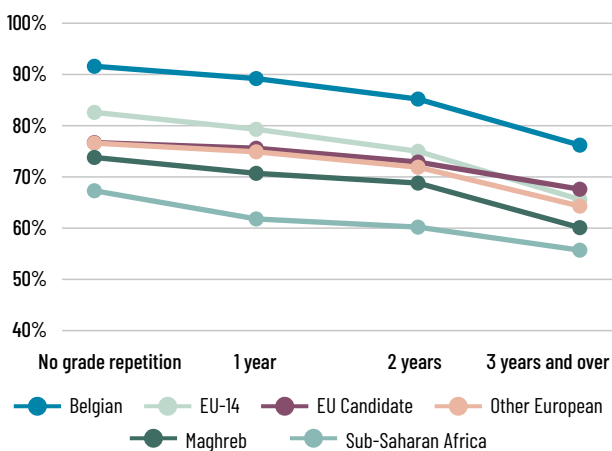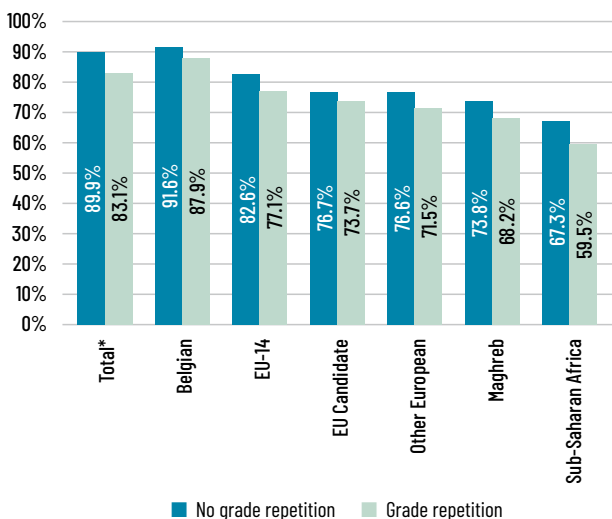|	No grade repetition	Grade repetition	*of which 1 year*	*of which 2 years*	*of which 3+ years*	Total Gap	Gap 1 year	Gap 2 years	Gap 3 years +
Total*	61.1%	26.7%	30.4%	18.9%	13.0%	34.4	30.7	42.2	48.1
Belgian	62.5%	27.9%	30.7%	18.9%	11.7%	34.6	31.8	43.6	50.8
EU-14	59.4%	30.7%	34.9%	23.6%	15.1%	28.7	24.5	35.9	44.4
EU-13	56.1%	26.6%	34.9%	18.6%	13.3%	29.5	21.2	37.5	42.8
EU Candidate	35.2%	13.9%	16.7%	10.7%	8.0%	21.3	18.5	24.5	27.2
Other European	45.5%	24.5%	30.3%	21.5%	14.4%	21.0	15.2	24.0	31.0
Maghreb	47.3%	21.1%	25.7%	17.1%	12.3%	26.1	21.5	30.2	35.0
Sub-Saharan Africa	49.4%	25.6%	31.9%	22.3%	18.0%	23.8	17.5	27.1	31.4
Near/Middle East	52.3%	25.2%	33.7%	18.9%	15.6%	27.1	18.6	33.4	36.8
Oceania/Far East	54.7%	25.2%	29.4%	19.6%	16.7%	29.5	25.3	35.1	38.0
Other Asian	50.7%	18.0%	24.2%	13.7%	10.1%	32.7	26.5	37.0	40.6
South/Central American	55.1%	24.4%	30.4%	19.4%	14.6%	30.6	24.6	35.6	40.4

* Including unknown and North American origin

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The gender analysis (see graph below) confirms that, for both men and women, persons with an upper secondary education degree have a higher share of grade repetition than persons with a higher education degree. For those who are behind in their education, the share of men with an upper secondary degree or a higher education degree is higher than that of women. Conversely, for those who never repeated a grade, the share of men with upper secondary education and tertiary education is lower than that of women – except for those with higher education from an EU-13 origin.

GRAPH 74: **Grade repetition (excluding unknowns) of the population by origin, gender, and level of education (20-34 years, 2018)**

Men

Origin	Medium - No grade repetition	Medium - Grade repetition	High - No grade repetition	High - Grade repetition
Total*	48.5%	51.5%	78.9%	21.1%
Belgian	53.4%	46.6%	81.9%	18.1%
EU-14	43.8%	56.2%	71.5%	28.5%
EU-13	27.6%	72.4%	60.5%	39.5%
EU Candidate	26.0%	74.0%	51.2%	48.8%
Other European	23.9%	76.1%	45.3%	54.7%
Maghreb	27.1%	72.9%	54.5%	45.5%
Sub-Saharan Africa	23.5%	76.5%	47.3%	52.7%
Near/Middle East	32.3%	67.7%	63.5%	36.5%
Oceania/Far East	38.0%	62.0%	68.6%	31.4%
Other Asian	27.4%	72.6%	61.4%	38.6%
South/Central American	28.3%	71.7%	59.5%	40.5%

Women

Origin	Medium - No grade repetition	Medium - Grade repetition	High - No grade repetition	High - Grade repetition
Total*	56.5%	43.5%	84.9%	15.1%
Belgian	63.2%	36.8%	88.0%	12.0%
EU-14	53.5%	46.5%	78.4%	21.6%
EU-13	31.5%	68.5%	59.3%	40.7%
EU Candidate	31.0%	69.0%	60.8%	39.2%
Other European	29.7%	70.3%	50.1%	49.9%
Maghreb	33.6%	66.4%	62.8%	37.2%
Sub-Saharan Africa	33.0%	67.0%	56.6%	43.4%
Near/Middle East	41.9%	58.1%	67.4%	32.6%
Oceania/Far East	45.9%	54.1%	74.5%	25.5%
Other Asian	33.9%	66.1%	71.2%	28.8%
South/Central American	34.4%	65.6%	66.0%	34.0%

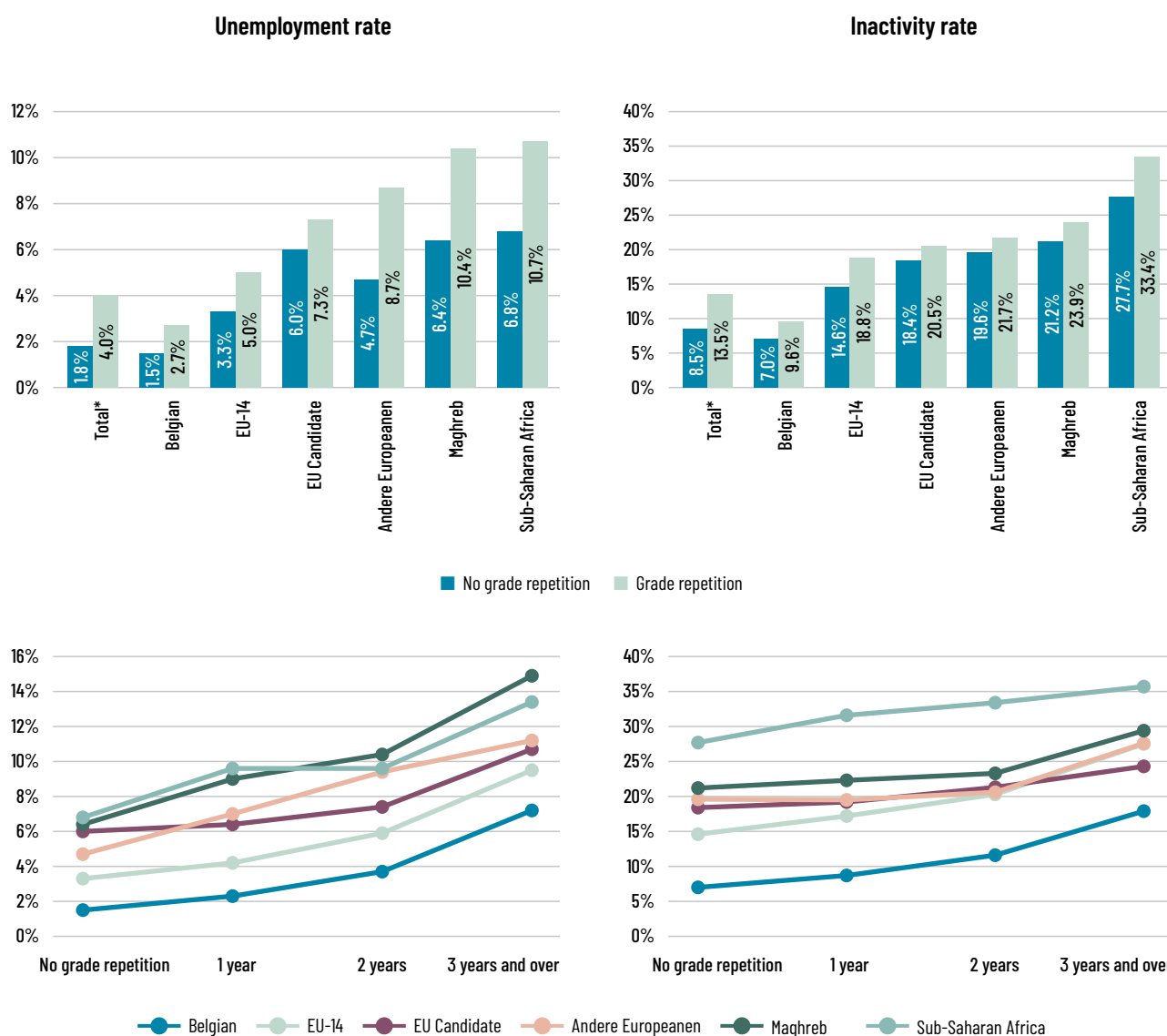Legend: ■ Medium - No grade repetition ■ Medium - Grade repetition ■ High - No grade repetition ■ High - Grade repetition

* Including unknown and North American origin
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

However, the table below shows that the proportion of women with a higher education qualification is higher than that of men, both for those with and without a delay in schooling. For both men and women, being behind in their schooling is a barrier to accessing higher education. However, this barrier is a little higher for women than for men. This is particularly the case for people from an EU candidate-, Other Asian country, and Belgian origin, but the opposite is true for those from an EU-13 and the Near/Middle Eastern origin.

TABLE 41: **Share of tertiary education graduates as well as the barrier to obtaining a tertiary degree by origin, gender, and grade repetition (20-34 years, 2018)**

	No grade repetition		Grade repetition		Rem		
	Men	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**	**Men**	**Women**	**F-H gap**
Total*	54.9%	66.0%	23.5%	30.9%	31.4	35.0	3.6
Belgian	55.9%	67.7%	24.3%	33.0%	31.6	34.7	3.2
EU-14	53.9%	63.3%	26.6%	35.4%	27.3	27.9	0.7
EU-13	51.4%	59.2%	20.9%	31.3%	30.5	27.9	-2.7
EU Candidate	28.4%	39.6%	11.7%	15.9%	16.7	23.6	6.9
Other European	38.1%	50.5%	19.0%	30.0%	19.2	20.5	1.4
Maghreb	43.4%	49.8%	19.2%	23.0%	24.2	26.8	2.7
Sub-Saharan Africa	46.1%	51.3%	22.6%	28.4%	23.4	22.9	-0.6
Near/Middle East	52.5%	52.1%	23.2%	27.5%	29.3	24.6	-4.7
Oceania/Far East	49.8%	57.5%	21.7%	28.2%	28.1	29.3	1.3
Other Asian	44.8%	55.0%	16.1%	20.2%	28.6	34.8	6.2
South/Central American	50.9%	57.9%	21.8%	27.1%	29.1	30.8	1.7

Including unknown and North American origin

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The table below focuses on tertiary graduates aged 25-34, distinguishing between those with a bachelor's degree and those with a master's degree. By focusing on 25-34-year-olds, the bias of the fact that a large proportion of 20-24-year-olds are still in education is eliminated. The table shows that 27.8% of the 25-34-year-olds with a bachelor were behind in their education at the time of obtaining their upper secondary degree, while among those with a master's degree, this share is 11.2%. For Belgians of origin, 24.0% of those with a Bachelor were behind in their schooling when they obtained their upper secondary degree, compared to 8.6% of those with a master's degree. The share of those with a Bachelor who were behind in their schooling was particularly high for those of foreign origin, especially for those from Other European countries and from Sub-Saharan Africa. For those with a master's degree from EU-13, Other European, Sub-Saharan and EU candidate countries, the share with a delay in education is particularly high.

TABLE 42: **Grade repetition (excluding unknowns) of tertiary graduates by origin and level of education (25-34 years, 2018)**

	Bachelor		Master	
	No grade repetition	**Grade repetition**	**No grade repetition**	**Grade repetition**
Total*	72.2%	27.8%	88.8%	11.2%
Belgian	76.0%	24.0%	91.4%	8.6%
EU-14	63.7%	36.3%	82.8%	17.2%
EU-13	49.6%	50.4%	60.3%	39.7%
EU Candidate	47.1%	52.9%	68.0%	32.0%
Other European	33.1%	66.9%	52.6%	47.4%
Maghreb	47.5%	52.5%	69.4%	30.6%
Sub-Saharan Africa	39.0%	61.0%	61.8%	38.2%
Near/Middle East	45.6%	54.4%	73.6%	26.4%
Oceania/Far East	56.6%	43.4%	77.7%	22.3%
Other Asian	51.5%	48.5%	76.4%	23.6%
South/Central American	47.0%	53.0%	73.6%	26.4%

* Including unknown and North American origin

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The table below allows us to explain these findings in part by the type of higher education followed with or without grade repetition. The majority of people who had not repeated a grade and went on to complete higher education have a master's degree. This is true for all origins except for those from EU candidate countries and the Maghreb. People from the Near/Middle East and South/Central America stand out with significantly higher shares of master's degrees than other origins, while Belgians of origin have a lower share of master's degrees than other origins. On the other hand, the majority of people from all origins who are behind in their schooling have a bachelor's degree. The share of persons from an EU candidate country with a master's degree despite repeating a grade is the lowest, while that

share is highest for people from an EU-13 origin. People of Belgian origin and from the Near/Middle East seem to be the most negatively affected by grade repetition in obtaining a master's degree. People from an EU-13 country and from a candidate country are the least affected. It is also interesting to note that people of Maghreb origin without grade repetition have a lower share of master's degrees than those of Belgian origin, but that share is higher compared with people of Belgian origin who have repeated a grade. The data also indicate that the more individuals repeat a grade, the lower the share of master's graduates. The decrease in this share is particularly important for people of EU-13, Sub-Saharan, Oceania/Far East, Other Asian and South/Central American origin.

TABLE 43: **Share of master's degrees and the barrier to obtaining a master's degree by origin and grade repetition (25–34 years, 2018)**

	No grade repetition	Grade repetition	Rem
Total*	52.6%	26.7%	25.9
Belgian	52.4%	24.5%	27.8
EU-14	54.5%	30.3%	24.2
EU-13	56.7%	46.0%	10.7
EU Candidate	41.3%	22.7%	18.6
Other European	57.1%	37.2%	20.0
Maghreb	48.6%	27.3%	21.2
Sub-Saharan Africa	56.8%	34.1%	22.7
Near/Middle East	67.7%	38.6%	29.1
Oceania/Far East	59.8%	35.8%	24.0
Other Asian	57.8%	31.1%	26.7
South/Central American	62.0%	34.2%	27.8

Including unknown and North American origin

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS.

Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The table below shows that 33.9% of men and 24.0% of women with a bachelor were behind in their schooling at the time of obtaining the upper secondary degree, while among those with a master's degree, these shares are 14.1% and 9.0% respectively. For both women and men of Belgian origin with a bachelor or a master's degree, the share of grade repeaters at the time of obtaining the upper secondary degree is lower than for the other origins. The share of men with a bachelor or a master's degree who have repeated a grade is higher than that of women, apart from women from EU-13 origin who have both repeated a grade and obtained a master's degree.

TABLE 44: **Grade repetition (excluding unknowns) of tertiary graduates by origin, degree level and gender (25–34 years, 2018)**

	Men				Women			
	Bachelor		Master		Bachelor		Master	
	No grade repetition	Grade repetition	No grade repetition	Grade repetition	No grade repetition	Grade repetition	No grade repetition	Grade repetition
Total*	66.1%	33.9%	85.9%	14.1%	76.0%	24.0%	91.0%	9.0%
Belgian	69.6%	30.4%	88.7%	11.3%	80.1%	19.9%	93.7%	6.3%
EU-14	57.8%	42.2%	78.5%	21.5%	67.2%	32.8%	85.9%	14.1%
EU-13	47.2%	52.8%	65.2%	34.8%	51.0%	49.0%	57.6%	42.4%
EU Candidate	39.6%	60.4%	62.1%	37.9%	51.0%	49.0%	71.4%	28.6%
Other European	31.5%	68.5%	49.3%	50.7%	34.0%	66.0%	54.5%	45.5%
Maghreb	42.1%	57.9%	62.5%	37.5%	50.8%	49.2%	74.9%	25.1%
Sub-Saharan Africa	34.9%	65.1%	54.1%	45.9%	41.4%	58.6%	67.0%	33.0%
Near/Middle East	43.5%	56.5%	72.2%	27.8%	47.3%	52.7%	74.8%	25.2%
Oceania/Far East	51.6%	48.4%	74.3%	25.7%	59.3%	40.7%	79.6%	20.4%
Other Asian	44.2%	55.8%	68.5%	31.5%	56.5%	43.5%	82.3%	17.7%
South/Central American	40.7%	59.3%	69.2%	30.8%	51.2%	48.8%	76.3%	23.7%

Including unknown and North American origin

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The table below shows that the majority of both women and men who finished tertiary education without grade repetition have a master's degree. This is true for all origins except for those from an EU candidate country and women of Belgian and Maghreb origin. Women and men from the Near/Middle East and South/Central America stand out with significantly higher shares of master's degrees than other origins. Women and men from the Maghreb and from an EU candidate country have a lower share of such degrees compared with other origins. Women and men of all origins who are behind in their schooling primarily have bachelor's degrees. The share of women of Belgian origin with a master's degree is the lowest, while the share of women with an EU-13 origin is the highest. For men from an EU candidate country, the share with a master's degree is the lowest, while it is again highest for men from EU-13 origin. Except for persons of EU-13 and Other European origin, the share of men with and without grade repetition with a master's degree

is higher than that of women. The opposite is true for those with a bachelor's degree.

Men of Near/Middle Eastern, Belgian and South/Central American origin seem to be the most negatively affected by repeating a grade in obtaining a master's degree. For women, it is those of Other Asian, Near/Middle Eastern and Belgian origin who are most affected. Men and especially women from an EU-13 country are the least affected. For both men and women, being behind in their schooling is a barrier to obtaining a master's degree. However, this hindrance is slightly higher for men than for women, except for people of Sub-Saharan African, Other Asian, Maghreb, Other European, or EU-14 origin. The data also show that for both women and men, the higher the number of repeated grades, the lower the share of master's graduates. The decrease in this share is greater for men than for women, except for people of EU-13, EU candidate, Sub-Saharan African and Oceania/Far Eastern origin.

TABLE 45: Share of master's degrees as well as the barrier to obtaining a master's degree by origin, gender, and grade repetition (25-34 years, 2018)

	No grade repetition		Grade repetition		Rem		
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Gap V-M
Total*	57.0%	49.8%	29.7%	23.7%	27.2	26.1	-1.1
Belgian	56.9%	49.4%	27.9%	20.9%	29.0	28.5	-0.5
EU-14	57.8%	52.5%	33.9%	27.1%	23.9	25.4	1.6
EU-13	58.7%	55.6%	40.4%	49.0%	18.3	6.6	-11.7
EU Candidate	44.7%	39.8%	24.4%	21.5%	20.3	18.2	-2.0
Other European	55.9%	57.8%	37.4%	37.1%	18.5	20.7	2.2
Maghreb	53.0%	46.1%	32.9%	22.8%	20.0	23.2	3.2
Sub-Saharan Africa	58.0%	56.2%	38.5%	30.9%	19.5	25.4	5.9
Near/Middle East	69.1%	66.5%	39.9%	37.5%	29.2	29.0	-0.2
Oceania/Far East	61.8%	58.8%	37.4%	34.8%	24.5	24.0	-0.5
Other Asian	60.5%	56.3%	35.7%	26.5%	24.7	29.8	5.1
South/Central American	63.0%	61.4%	34.3%	34.1%	28.8	27.3	-1.4

Including unknown and North American origin

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

2. **Grade repetition and the labour market**

This section will look at the impact of grade repetition on labour market integration. To limit the biases linked to the fact that a large proportion of 20-24-year-olds are still studying, this section will be limited to the analysis of 25-34-year-olds. Given the small size of this group, only a few origins will be analysed (Belgian, EU-14, EU candidate, Other European, Maghreb, and Sub-Saharan African). As a reminder, the level of education for this group is either upper secondary or higher education.

GRAPH 75: **Employment rate by origin and (detail of) grade repetition (25–34 years, 2018)**

The employment rate of people aged 25-34 with no grade repetition at the time of obtaining their upper secondary degree is, regardless of origin, higher than that of those who did repeat a grade (see graph above). The highest employment rate is observed for people of Belgian origin with no grade repetition (91.6%) and the lowest for people of Sub-Saharan origin with grade repetition (59.5%). The employment rate of Belgians of origin who did repeat a grade is higher than the employment rate of all other origins who did not. The difference in the employment rate between people with and without Grade repetition is larger for people of Sub-Saharan, EU-14, and Maghreb origin. The higher the grade repetition, the lower the employment rate.

The unemployment rate and the inactivity rate of people aged 25-34 with no grade repetition at the time of graduation from upper secondary education is, regardless of origin, lower than that of grade repeaters (see graph below). The unemployment rate as well as the gap in the rate between those with and without grade repetition is larger for those from Other European countries, the Maghreb, and Sub-Saharan Africa. The gap in inactivity rates between those with and without grade repetition is greater for those from an EU-14 country and from Sub-Saharan Africa. Analogously to the employment rate, a higher frequency of grade repetition is related to higher unemployment and inactivity rates.

* Including unknown and origins not included in this analysis

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

GRAPH 76: **Unemployment and inactivity rates by origin and (detail of) grade repetition (25–34 years, 2018)**

Unemployment rate

Inactivity rate

■ No grade repetition   ■ Grade repetition

● Belgian   ● EU-14   ● EU Candidate   ● Andere Europeanen   ● Maghreb   ● Sub-Saharan Africa

* Including unknown and origins not included in this analysis

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

Due to the small size of the unemployment and inactivity groups, the rest of the analysis will focus on the employment rate.

As already highlighted in Chapter 2, the higher the level of education, the higher the employment rate. This is true for all origins, whether with or without grade repetition, apart from people of Belgian origin. For people who did not repeat a grade in this latter group, the employment rate of higher education graduates is indeed higher compared with upper secondary education graduates. On the other hand, if we look at grade repeaters in this same group, the employment rates of both higher educa-

tion- and upper secondary education graduates are nearly identical.

The situation of people of Maghreb and Sub-Saharan African origin with an upper secondary degree is surprising. The employment rate of those with a one-year delay in schooling is higher than that of those with no delay. A hypothesis can be made about the type of secondary education followed by the latter. Those with a one-year delay in schooling may have been reoriented towards technical and vocational education, which makes them more employable than those who followed the general programme. Still for upper secondary graduates,

the loss of employment rate when the person has 2 or more years of schooling delay is the most important for Belgians of origin and those coming from an EU-14 country.

For higher education graduates, the employment rate decreases with additional years of grade repetition for all origins. The loss of employment rate for people with a one year of delay is the most pronounced for people of Sub-Saharan African origin. However, it is interesting to note that people of foreign origin who obtained a higher education degree

and had repeated a grade once, all have employment rates higher than that of upper secondary graduates who did not repeat a grade, which is not true for people of Belgian origin. Similarly, people of Sub-Saharan and Maghreb origin who obtained a higher education degree with a delay of two years or more have higher employment rates than secondary school graduates with no grade repetition. For those with a two-year delay, the loss of employment rate is most important for those of Belgian and EU-14 origin.

GRAPH 77: **Employment rates by origin, level of education and grade repetition (25–34 years, 2018)**
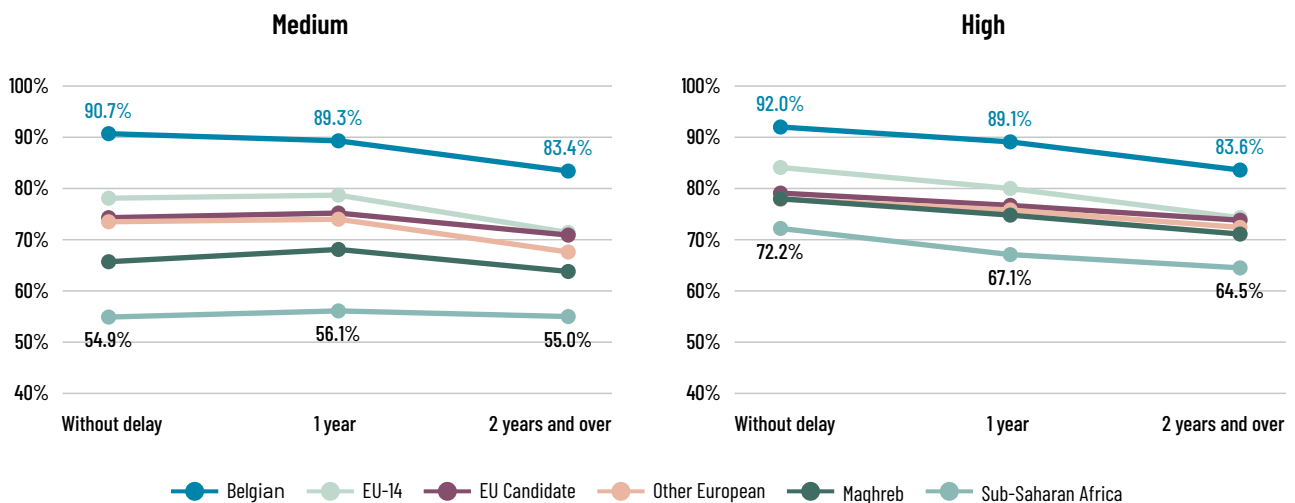
Medium

High

Legend: Belgian — EU-14 — EU Candidate — Other European — Maghreb — Sub-Saharan Africa

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The breakdown according to the type of higher education degree obtained (bachelor versus master's degree) shows that, in general, for both those with a bachelor and those with a master's degree, the employment rate decreases with the delay in education. However, the latter seems to be more penalising for graduates with a master's degree. For graduates with a bachelor, the decrease in the employment rate for grade repeaters is most significant for people of Belgian, EU-14 and EU candidate origin, whereas the decrease is very small for people of Other European and Maghreb origin. For people of Sub-Saharan origin, grade repetition does not seem to have an impact on their employment rate.

In the case of graduates with a master's degree, the decrease in the employment rate due to repeating a grade is very small for people from an EU candidate country and small for those from another EU country. The drop is much larger for people of Sub-Saharan, EU-14, Maghreb, and Belgian origin. For the latter origin, the employment rate of master's graduates is lower than that of bachelor graduates both for those with and without grade repetition. For people of EU-14 origin, this is true only for those who repeated a grade while for those from Sub-Saharan African and Maghreb origin, it is true only for those who have repeated a grade at least twice.

GRAPH 78: **Employment rate by origin, tertiary education level and grade repetition (25–34 years, 2018)**
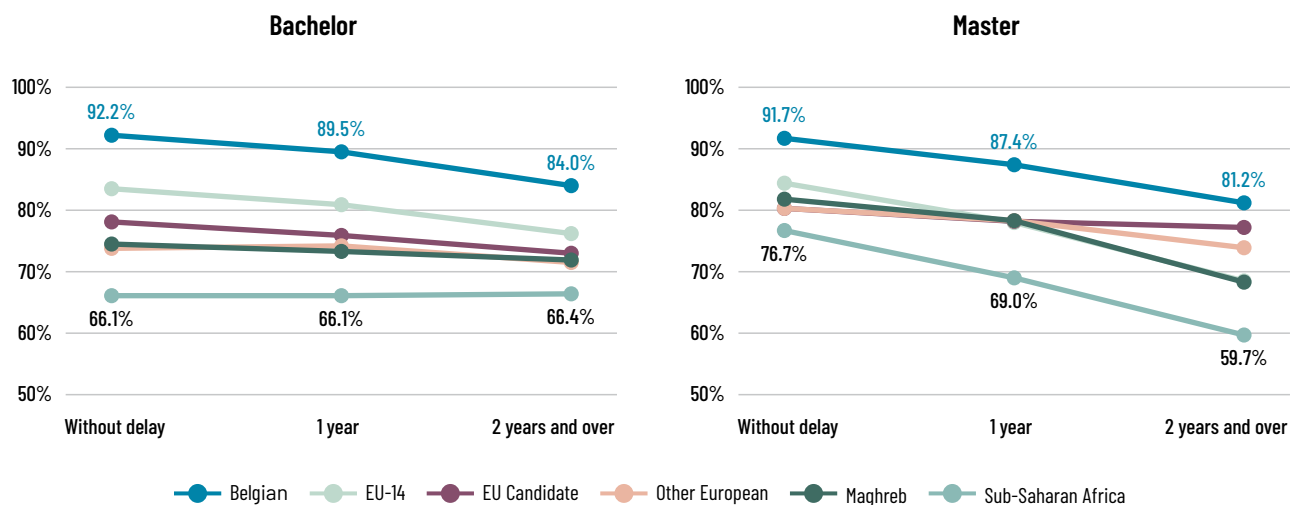
Bachelor

Master

Legend: Belgian — EU-14 — EU Candidate — Other European — Maghreb — Sub-Saharan Africa

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The chosen field of study may, perhaps, partly explain these differences. The table below shows that people from all the origins that are analysed, with or without grade repetition at the time of graduation from upper secondary school, mainly have a master's degree in 'social sciences, business and law', a bachelor's degree in 'social sciences, business and

law' and a bachelor's degree in 'health and education'. Grade repeaters from Other European origin and from an EU candidate country with a bachelor's degree, and those who did not repeat a grade from Other European and Sub-Saharan African origin with a master's degree, are over-represented in the field of "Social sciences, business and law".

TABLE 46: **Distribution between fields of study of tertiary graduates by origin and degree level (25-34 years, 2018)**

		Belgian		EU-14		EU Candidate		Other Europeanen		Maghrebijnen		Sub-Saharan Africa	
		Grade repetition		Grade repetition		Grade repetition		Grade repetition		Grade repetition		Grade repetition	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Bachelor	Education	11.3%	15.5%	8,6%	11.3%	8.0%	9.8%	6,4%	3,4%	6,6%	9,9%	2,4%	1,8%
	Humanities and Arts	2,7%	5,4%	2.8%	4,7%	1.5%	2,9%	2,9%	5,7%	2.1%	3.0%	2.1%	2,4%
	Social sciences	12.5%	20,2%	15.0%	23,7%	29.1%	37,4%	19,7%	32,9%	21,2%	27.3%	18,4%	29,7%
	Science	2,6%	4,9%	2,9%	4.3%	3,9%	3,9%	3.8%	3.1%	3.5%	4,7%	2,9%	4,2%
	Engineering	3,4%	6,7%	2.1%	3,7%	3.8%	5,6%	1,4%	3,7%	2,6%	4,7%	2.1%	4.3%
	Health	12.3%	17,9%	11,2%	16,9%	10,7%	15.5%	6.5%	10,7%	14.0%	20.0%	13.3%	20.0%
	Totaal	47,6%	75.5%	45.5%	69,7%	58,7%	77.3%	42,9%	62.8%	51,4%	72,7%	43,2%	65,9%
Master	Education	1.3%	0.5%	0,7%	0,4%	:	:	:	:	0,4%	0.3%	:	:
	Humanities and Arts	5,9%	3.8%	6,6%	3,9%	3,7%	2.1%	7,6%	4,6%	3.3%	1,9%	3.3%	1,7%
	Social sciences	22.8%	11,4%	25.5%	15.3%	22.3%	13,4%	31,7%	21,9%	25,2%	14,9%	31.0%	20.0%
	Science	2,9%	1.0%	3,4%	1,4%	1.5%	:	3,7%	1,6%	2.3%	1,7%	3,4%	2.3%
	Engineering	8.3%	3,9%	6,6%	3,6%	5.5%	3,7%	5.8%	4.1%	6.5%	3,7%	5.5%	3.3%
	Health	8.0%	2,4%	8,2%	3,6%	6,4%	2.5%	5.3%	3,4%	8.5%	3,6%	10.1%	4,7%
	Total	52,4%	24.5%	54.5%	30.3%	41.3%	22,7%	57.1%	37,2%	48,6%	27.3%	56.8%	34.1%

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

The two graphs below show the employment rate according to the level of higher education qualification, the field of study and grade repetition. For graduates with a bachelor, the employment rate generally decreases slightly with the number of times a person has repeated a grade, regardless of the field of study. The employment rate of people of Belgian origin is the highest, with or without having repeated a grade, regardless of the field of study. The loss of employment rate for people of Belgian origin is particularly low for all fields of study with two exceptions: "humanities and arts" and "education". Grade repetition has a greater impact on the employment rate of people of Sub-Saharan origin in the field of "education" and of people of Other European origin in the field of 'engineering, pro-

cessing and production'. However, it is interesting to note that for some origins, grade repetition seems to have a positive impact on the employment rate. For example, people of Other European origin who are behind in their schooling and have a bachelor's degree in "science" and "humanities and arts" as well as people of Sub-Saharan origin who are behind in their schooling and have a bachelor's degree in "science" and "health and welfare" are more likely to be employed. This may be due to the fact that those with one year of schooling delay may have been re-oriented to technical and vocational education in the same field as the bachelor, thus making them more, as they have gained more experience, than those who followed the general stream.

GRAPH 79: **Employment rate of people with a bachelor's degree by origin, field of study and grade repetition (25-34 years, 2018)**
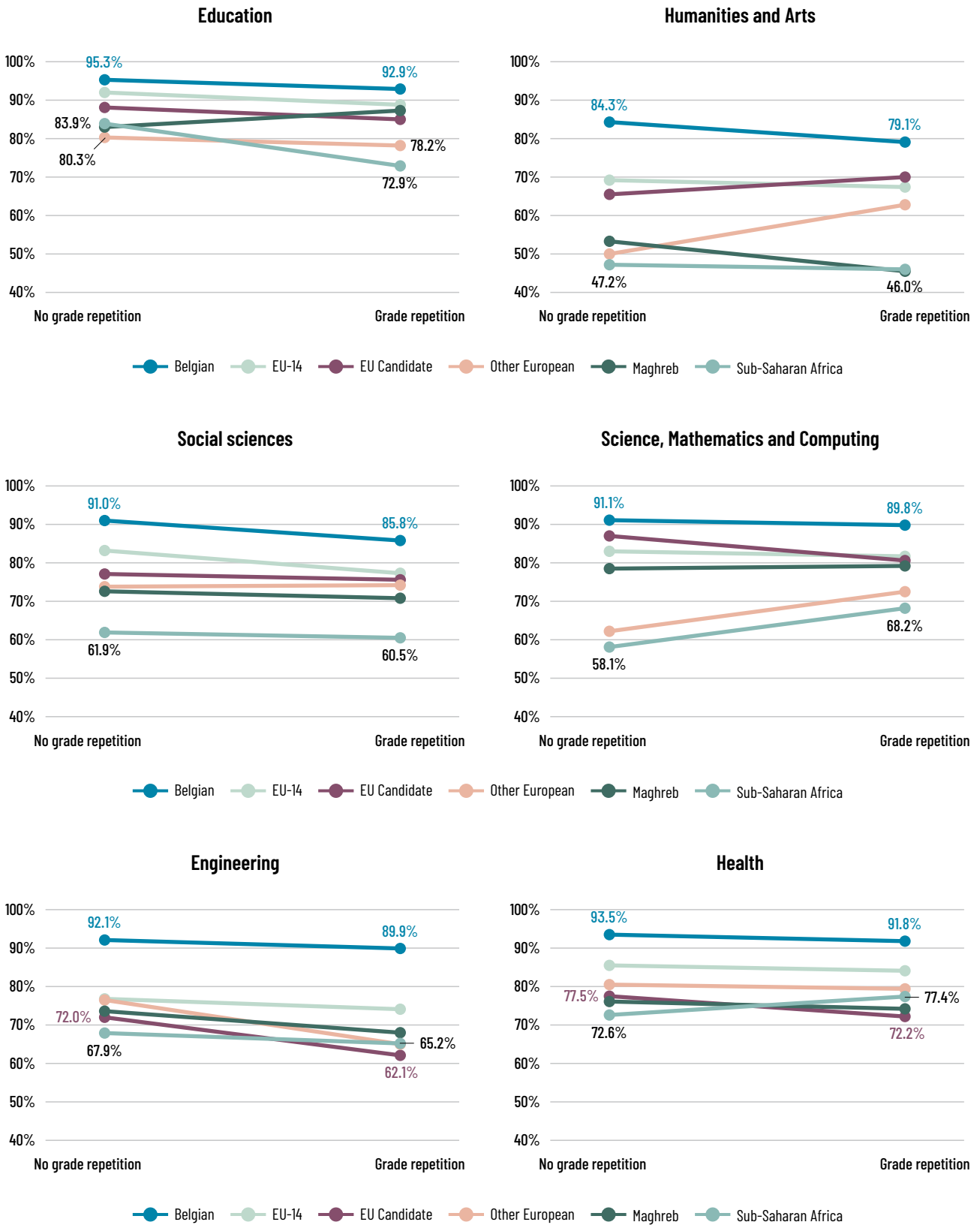
Education
Humanities and Arts
Social sciences
Science, Mathematics and Computing
Engineering
Health

Legend: Belgian, EU-14, EU Candidate, Other European, Maghreb, Sub-Saharan Africa

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.

For graduates with a master's degree, the employment rate generally decreases more strongly with grade repetition than is observed for those with a bachelor's degree (see graph below). The employment rate of people of Belgian origin is the highest, with or without grade repetition, regardless of the field of study, except for "health and welfare". The loss of employment rate for people of Belgian origin is particularly low for all fields except for the field of "humanities and arts" and "sciences". Grade repetition has a greater impact on the employment rate of people of Sub-Saharan and Maghreb origin in the fields of "science", "engineering, manufacturing and construction", and "health and welfare" as well as for masters in "social sciences, mathematics, and computing" of Sub-Saharan origin and masters in "health and welfare" of Other European origin. It is also interesting to note here that for some origins, grade repetition appears to have a positive impact on the employment rate. For example, grade repeaters of Maghreb origin with a master's degree in the field of "humanities and arts" as well as grade repeaters from an EU candidate country with a master's degree in the field of "health and welfare" have significantly higher employment rates than their counterparts who never repeated a grade.

GRAPH 80: **Employment rate of persons with a master's degree by origin, field of study and grade repetition (25-34 years, 2018)**

Education

Humanities and Arts

Social sciences

Science, Mathematics and Computing

Engineering

Health
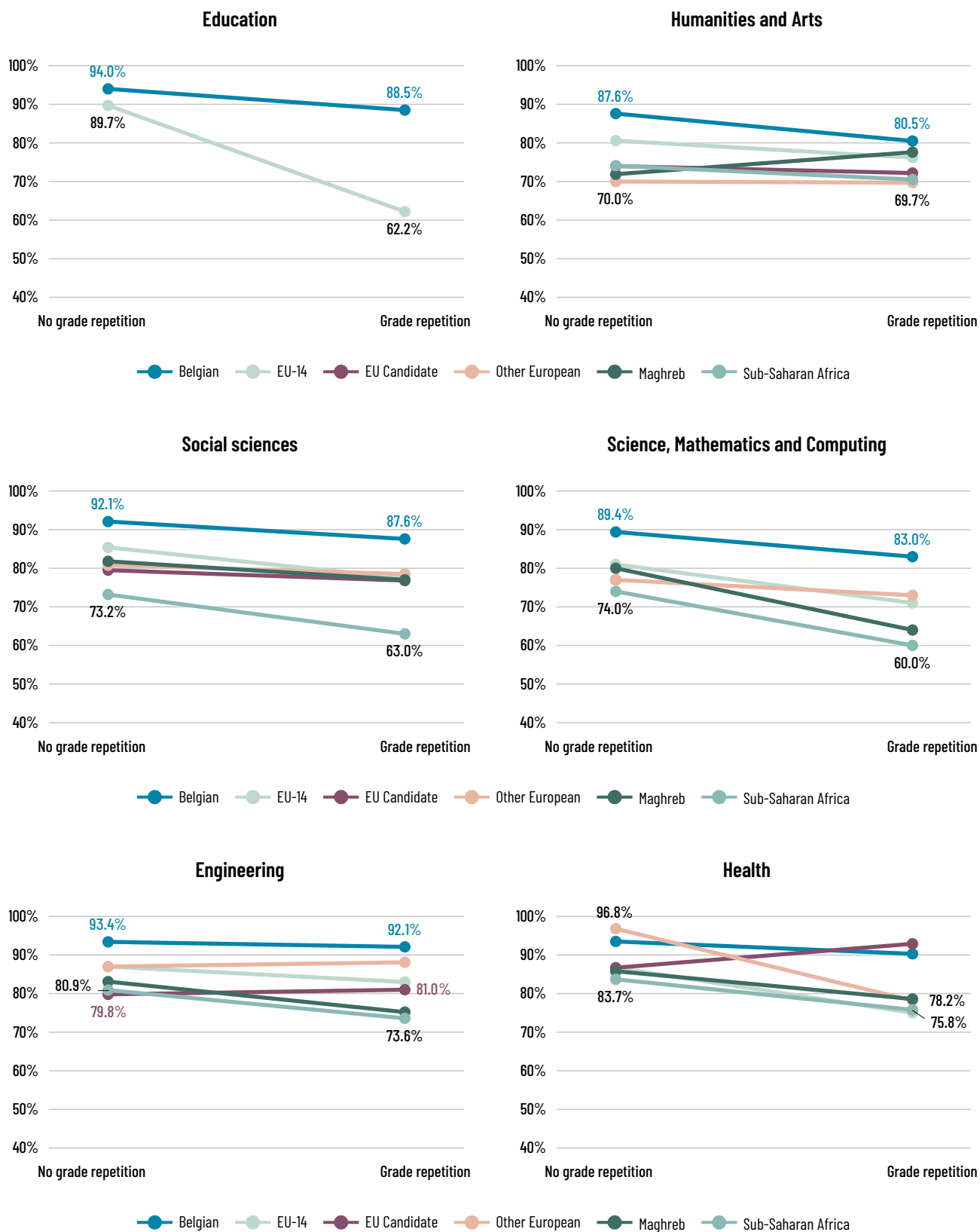
Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS. Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD.
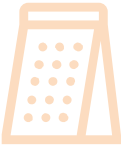
06
Posted workers

06

Key elements

Posted workers

With 697,571 **incoming postings** involving 211,640 unique persons in 2020, posting is an important channel for international labour mobility to the Belgian labour market.

Almost half of the posted workers are sent to Belgium **several times a year** and one in five postings lasts more than two months.

Incoming posting is a **diverse phenomenon**. The EU-15 (EU-14 plus Belgium) was and remains the largest sending region in 2020, with the Netherlands, Portugal, France, and Germany as the main sending countries. However, the share of EU-13 sending countries has been steadily increasing in recent years, with Poland and Lithuania being the most important sending countries. There has been a sharp decline in postings from the Netherlands, France, and Germany.

An important element of this situation is the posting of **third-country nationals** (non-EU countries), who are posted to Belgium from other Member States (mainly from the EU-13) without having to obtain an additional permit. The posting of third-country nationals is an important and fast-growing phenomenon: in 2020, 21% of postings were made by non-EU citizens, compared to 8% in 2010. It is clear that the mobility of third-country nationals through posting is an important and growing phenomenon that is fundamentally changing the scale and, in particular, the profile of labour migration to countries like Belgium.

We observe that posting is particularly important in **labour-intensive** sectors such as construction, transport, and metalworking. However, posting is more diverse, and specialised services in high value-added sectors also play an important role in the posting landscape.

1. What is posting[1]?

This contribution focuses on the extent and origin of posting to Belgium. Posting involves the temporary sending of workers employed in one EU Member State to another EU Member State to perform a service contract within the framework of the *free movement of services*. Posting is a form of professional mobility characterised by a looser link with the host country. There is no employment contract with an employer in Belgium. A posting is temporary, often of short duration, and there is no prospect of permanent residence for the worker. The employer pays the social security contributions for the posted worker in the country where he is established. Often the posting is also circular: the same people come to perform different services in the host country and then return to the sending country. This situation differs from that of EU citizens who come to work in Belgium on the basis of the *free movement of persons*: they actually migrate to Belgium, have their place of residence there and work with a local Belgian employment contract.

Over the past ten years, the importance of posting as a channel for labour mobility within the EU has increased considerably. In 2019, employers posted 2 million workers to other EU Member States for 5.8 million postings[2]. The significant increase in the posting of workers in the European mobility landscape has provoked a heated debate between

European Member States and stakeholders about the effects of posting on labour standards and markets. Indeed, as the legal situation of posted workers is 'split', with wages and social security paid by the employer in the sending country and not by the local client, posting can be a source of social fraud and other irregularities. Critical literature has pointed to the risks of posting, which can take the form of social dumping, exploitation of workers and the development of a dual labour market[3]. On the other hand, scholars warn against an overly negative presentation of posting, referring to the diversity of posting as a phenomenon, the importance of socio-economic convergence between EU member states and the benefits of posting compared to other forms of labour mobility[4].

This contribution uses administrative data to map the extent and origin of posting to Belgium between 2010 and 2020. It is important to note that Belgium is one of the main host countries for posted workers in the EU, both in relative and absolute terms[5]. Section 2 describes how we can measure posting to Belgium. Section 3 describes the (relative) size of the phenomenon. Section 4 looks at the origin of the posting via the sending country of the employer and the nationality of the worker detached. Section 5 examines how the characteristics of detachment vary by origin.

1   FPS Employment and Unia would like to expressly thank the authors of this chapter: Dries Lens (Universiteit Antwerpen - OECD), Ninke Mussche (Universiteit Antwerpen), Koen Dewulf (Myria) and Iulia Rautu (Myria).
2   De Wispelaere, F., De Smedt, L. and Pacolet, J. (2021), Posting of workers - Collection of data from the prior notification tools - Reference year 2019. European Commission - DG EMPL.
3   See in particular Cremers, J., Dølvik, J. E. and Bosch, G. (2007), Posting of workers in the single market: attempts to prevent social dumping and regime competition in the EU. Industrial Relations Journal 38(6): 524-541; Alsos, K. and Eldring, L. (2008), Labour mobility and wage dumping: The case of Norway. European Journal of Industrial Relations 14(4): 441- 459; Wagner, I. (2015), Rule Enactment in a Pan-European Labour Market: Transnational Posted Work in the German Construction Sector. British Journal of Industrial Relations 53(4): 692-710; Arnholtz, J. and Andersen, S. K. (2018), Extra- Institutional Changes under Pressure from Posting. British Journal of Industrial Relations 56(2): 395-417.
4   See in particular Alberti, G. and Danaj, D. (2017), Posting and agency work in British construction and hospitality: the role of regulation in differentiating the experiences of migrants. The International Journal of Human Resource Management 28(21): 3065-3088; Mussche, N., Corluy, V. and Marx, I. (2018), How posting shapes a hybrid single European labour market. European Journal of Industrial Relations 24(2): 113-127; Bjelinski, F. and Žeravčić, K. (2020), Posted workers in the EU: Lost between
5   Belgium is primarily a host country. Thus, the number of posted workers entering Belgium in 2020 was almost 8 times higher than the number of outgoing posted workers (De Wispelaere et al. 2021). The profile of the outgoing posting also differs strongly from that of the incoming posting in Belgium.

2. How do we measure incoming posting?

For the incoming posting to Belgium, the main source of data is the LIMOSA declaration. The obligation to make a LIMOSA declaration has been in force since 1 April 2007 for both foreign employers and self-employed persons who come to Belgium on a temporary assignment. The declaration is made online and is collected by the National Social Security Office. As an acknowledgement of receipt of the declaration, an L1 form is issued for each seconded person coming to perform a service in Belgium. Via the LIMOSA declaration, the foreign employer must provide the competent authorities with information enabling them to carry out checks at the workplace, including :

› the identity of the foreign employer (name, address, VAT number);
› the identity of the Belgian customer, if applicable (name, address, CBE number);
› the identity of the contact person for the declaration (name, address);
› the identity of the posted worker(s) related to the service to be provided (name, address, gender, age, nationality);
› the type of posting (employment status, sector where the service will be provided);
› the expected duration of the posting, with a start and end date;
› the address of the workplace in Belgium.

In terms of mapping posting to Belgium, LIMOSA has a number of important limitations[6]:
› A declaration in LIMOSA is not necessarily equivalent to an occupation. In LIMOSA, one only declares the intention to post persons to Belgium;
› Underestimation of the extent of inward posting by the fact that some categories (generally short-term postings) are exempted from LIMOSA declaration;
› Probably an incomplete picture of the posting entering the self-employed because, as of 2019, there is only a reporting obligation for 3 'risk sectors' (construction, meat and cleaning);
› The declared duration of Posting is not necessarily equal to the actual duration of posting;
› The self-reporting by the sector of occupation may differ from the actual situation. Although it is possible to report activities in 17 specific sectors, it appears that a large proportion of postings are declared in the category 'other sector'[7].

Despite these limitations, LIMOSA remains the best source to analyse posting to Belgium. This contribution is based on the LIMOSA administrative micro-data recently integrated into the Datawarehouse Labour Market and Social Protection of the Crossroads Bank Social Security (CBSS)[8]. These micro-data provide the most accurate figures on posting to Belgium between 2010 and 2020 and allow two concepts to be distinguished for the analysis:

› A posting: a period during which a foreign employer sends a detached worker to Belgium to work temporarily. A posted worker can be posted several times a year;
› A single secondee: a person who is registered in LIMOSA and who has worked at least one day during the reference year as a posted worker in Belgium. During the reference year (the year in which the service begins), a person may be detached several times but is only counted once[9].

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6   See also De Wispelaere, F., De Smedt, L., Muñoz, M., Gillis, D. and Pacolet, J. (2022), Posted workers from and to Belgium. Facts and figures. Posting-STAT.
7   In addition, details of the sectors are not available between 2013 and 2017: for this period, it is only possible to distinguish between 'construction' and 'other sector'.
8   See https://www.ksz-bcss.fgov.be/fr/dwh/source/variables/bysource.
9   An example: on 1 April, a Dutch company makes a LIMOSA declaration for 4 posted workers who are going to perform services in Belgium. On 1 October, the same Dutch company makes another LIMOSA declaration for the same 4 workers. There are therefore 8 postings and 4 unique posted workers for this company in the reference year.

3. **What is the extent of posting?**

Table 47 describes the extent of posting to Belgium for the period 2010-2020. The table shows that posting has become much more important in the Belgian labour market. Whereas in 2010 LIMOSA registered 229,559 postings (carried out by 104,621 posted workers), this number has increased to 697,571 postings (carried out by 211,640 posted workers) in 2020. The number of postings has thus tripled over the course of 10 years, while the number of posted workers has doubled. Posting to Belgium became especially more prevalent during the period 2010-2016 with an average annual increase in the number of postings of 19% and in the number of posted workers of 12%. From 2017 onwards, the annual growth slowed down and the phenomenon seems to have reached a "maturity phase". Between 2019 and 2020, both the number of postings and the number of posted workers decreased by 7% as a result of the COVID-19 crisis[10].

Posting to Belgium based on the free movement of *services* is of such a magnitude that it is interesting to compare this inflow with the annual flow of EU citizens entering on the basis of the free movement of *persons*. As we all know, the right of every EU citizen to work and live in other Member States is anchored in the European treaties. These citizens contribute to Belgian social security and also build up social security rights in Belgium, on the basis of a system of coordination between the social security systems of the various EU Member States. Note that not all these mobile EU citizens necessarily come to Belgium for professional reasons. The comparison shows that the inflow based on the free movement of persons is much smaller than the inflow of posted workers in Belgium. In 2020, 61,960 EU citizens received a first residence permit in Belgium (of which 45% for work-related reasons), compared to 211,640 people who were posted to Belgium to provide services[11].

Although this comparison clearly shows the importance of posting as an alternative channel for labour mobility to Belgium, we have to be aware that posting concerns a temporary form of mobility where workers often make circular movements between the sending and the receiving country. Table 47 shows that slightly more than half of the posted workers in 2020 performed only one service in Belgium, while only one in five was posted more than 3 times. At the same time, 46% of postings to Belgium in 2020 were for a period of less than a week, while 14% of postings lasted more than 4 months. The trend over the period 2010-2020 indicates that circularity (the same people coming repeatedly to Belgium) is increasing, while the average duration has decreased. As such, table 47 confirms that the posting to Belgium is often a very temporary phenomenon, but at the same time also a circular one.

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10 The negative effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the extent of Posting to Belgium was short-lived and strongly differentiated according to origin and sector of Posting (cf. Lens, D., Mussche, N. and Marx, I. (2021b), De effecten van de COVID-19 pandemie op arbeidsmigratie en -mobiliteit. COVIVAT beleidsnota).

11 The figures on the number of first residence permits issued to EU citizens come from the FPS Interior – Immigration Office/National Register (see https://dofi.ibz.be/en/themes/figures/access-and-stay/residency-permits-and-residence-documents/national-statistics.

TABLE 47: **Postings and posted workers registered in LIMOSA**

	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020
Number of Postings	229,559	325,190	419,045	659,185	716,630	697,571
Average duration (in days)	85	75	60	52	56	59
1-7 days	32.9%	37.1%	40.0%	42.8%	43.8%	45.7%
8-14 days	9.5%	9.6%	10.5%	10.6%	10.5%	9.9%
15-29 days	11.3%	11.2%	12.1%	12.7%	12.1%	11.6%
30-60 days	12.6%	12.1%	12.4%	12.4%	11.3%	10.7%
61-120 days	12.6%	11.5%	10.4%	9.4%	8.9%	7.8%
More than 120 days	21.0%	18.4%	14.6%	12.1%	13.4%	14.2%
Number of people Posted	104,621	131,347	150,201	204,857	222,340	211,640
1 posting	64.7%	60.6%	56.8%	52.4%	53.4%	52.5%
2 postings	16.7%	17.0%	17.1%	17.5%	17.3%	18.0%
3 postings	6.8%	7.5%	8.0%	8.3%	8.0%	8.1%
More than 3 postings	11.9%	14.9%	18.2%	21.7%	21.3%	21.4%

Note: The reference year is the year in which the reported posting starts.
Source: LIMOSA-CBSS

4. **What is the origin of posted workers?**

4.1. **The sending country**

In order to identify the origin of posting, Graphs 81 and 82 start by describing the *sending countries from which foreign employers post their workers (or post themselves) to Belgium*. Public opinion generally associates posting with labour mobility from 'cheaper' Eastern European member states to the more prosperous Western European member states. However, LIMOSA data show that over the past ten years, the EU-15 has always been the most important 'sending region' in terms of posting to Belgium. In 2020, half of the postings were made by an employer established in one of the EU-15[12] Member States, with the Netherlands well ahead (26%), followed by Portugal (7%), France (5%) and Germany (4%). Posting is thus also a matter of strong economic integration between the old EU

Member States. The importance of the EU-15 as a sending region has, however, declined sharply in recent years, while the share of postings from the new member states has increased significantly. In 2020, 45% of postings were made by an employer established in the EU-13[13], mainly Poland (18%), followed by Lithuania (11%) and Romania (7%). By way of comparison: in 2010, the share of sending states of the EU-13 in the total posting was 'only' 20%. The Netherlands and Poland are the main sending countries in 2020; together they account for 44% of postings to Belgium. But the most striking increase is registered for Lithuania, which did not yet appear in the top 10 sending countries in 2018 and which already occupies the third place in 2020. Finally, we see that only a small part of postings to Belgium are made by employers established outside the EU (5% in 2020). The share of non-EU employers re-

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12 The EU-15 includes Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Ireland, the UK, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, and Austria. This category therefore corresponds to the EU-14 group of other chapters, plus Belgium.

13 The EU-13 includes Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia.

mained relatively stable during the period 2010-2019 (with a decrease in 2020 under the influence of the COVID-19 crisis).

GRAPH 81: **Posting by sending country (aggregated), share in total**
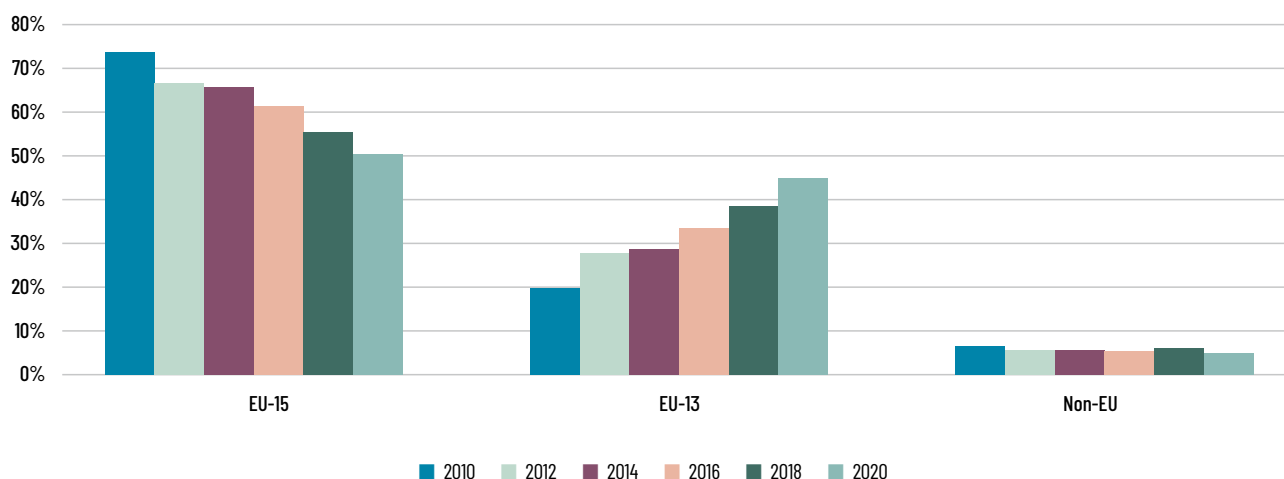
Note: Postings have been weighted according to their duration. The reference year is the year in which the reported posting starts.
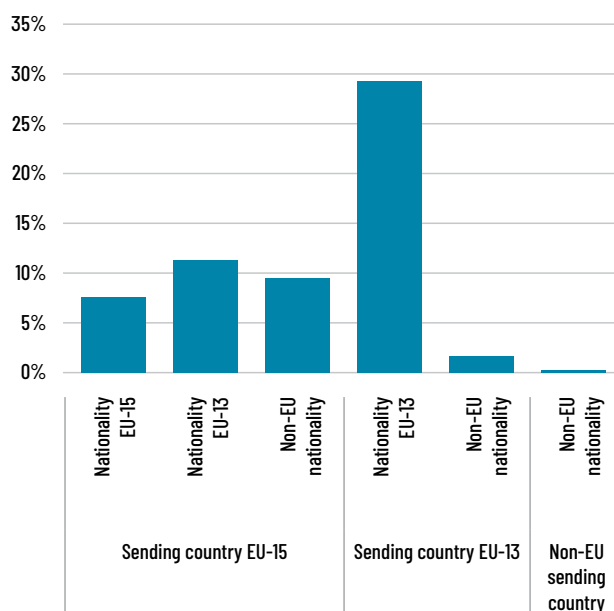*Source: LIMOSA-CBSS*

GRAPH 82: **Posting by sending country (top 10 in 2020), share in total**
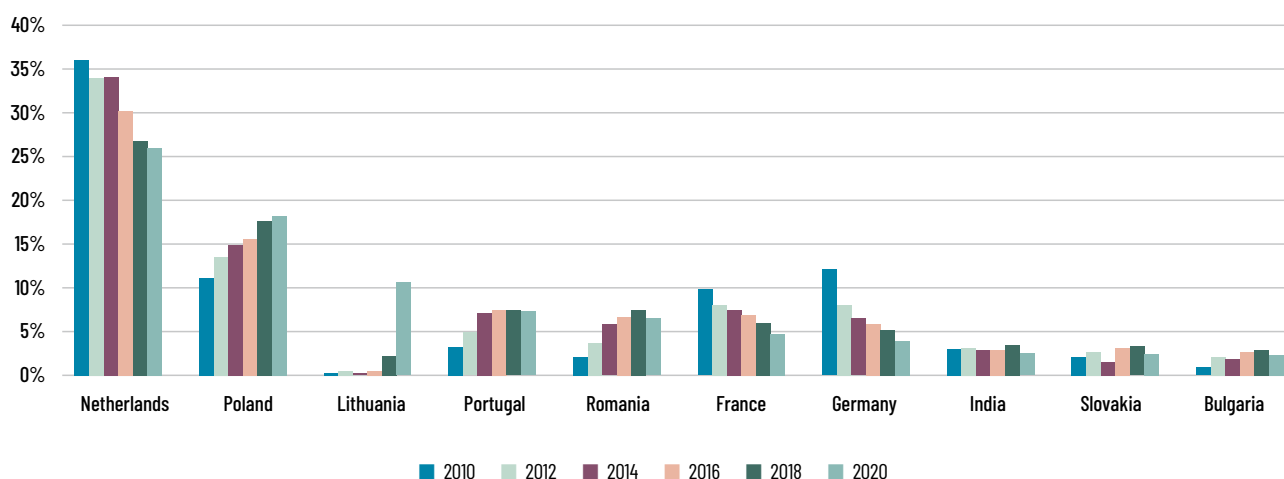
Note: The top 10 sending countries together account for 84% of postings to Belgium in 2020. Postings have been weighted according to their duration. The reference year is the year in which the reported posting starts.
Source: LIMOSA-CBSS.

4.2. Nationality

The origin of posting takes on a different face when we focus on the *nationality of posted workers* in Graphs 83 and 84. In terms of nationality, EU-15 workers accounted for 44% of the total posting flow to Belgium, with the Netherlands again well in first place as the main nationality represented, followed by Portugal, France, and Germany.

As was the case in the analysis of the sending countries, we observe a considerable decline in the share of EU-15 workers between 2010 and 2020. In contrast, the share of EU-13 workers increased from

26% to 36% between 2010 and 2020, with Poland, Romania, Lithuania, and Bulgaria being the main nationalities. In contrast to the results observed according to the sending country, we see here that the share of EU-13 workers in the posting flow to Belgium stabilised after 2016 and decreased in 2020 under the influence of the COVID-19 crisis. The most striking difference between the sending country and the nationality of the employee can be seen in the non-EU group. While 5% of the

services provided in 2020 were performed by employers established outside the EU (see Graph 81), we see in Graph 83 that non-EU citizens account for about one fifth of the postings to Belgium in the same year. Two non-EU nationalities have even made their way into the top 10 nationalities in 2020: Ukraine in fourth place (accounting for 8% of postings to Belgium) and Belarus in seventh place (3% of postings).

GRAPH 83: **Posting by nationality (grouped), share in total**
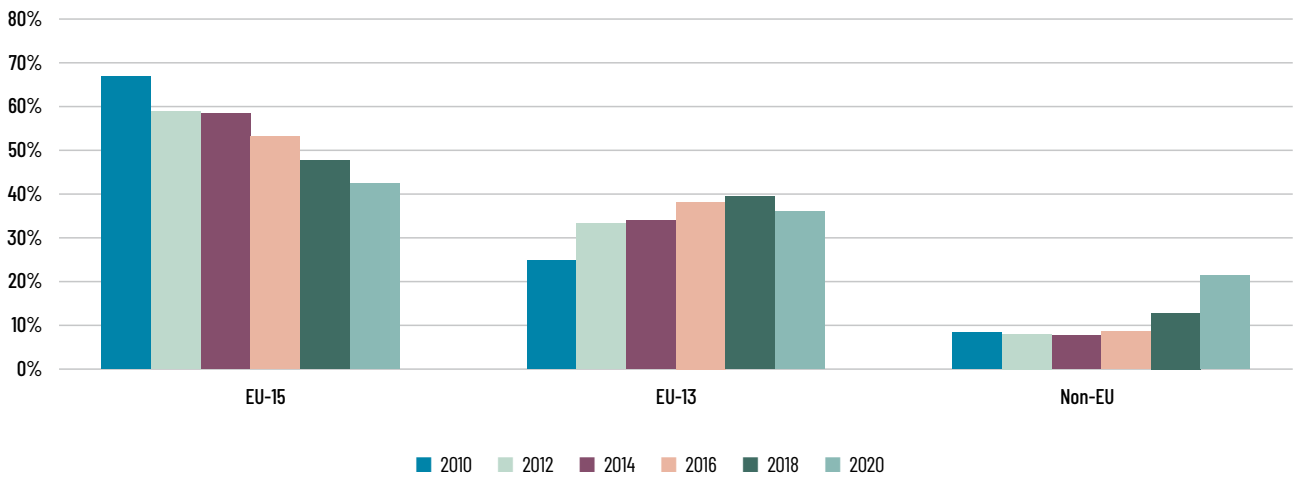
Note: Postings have been weighted according to their duration. The reference year is the year in which the reported posting starts.

Source: LIMOSA-CBSS

GRAPH 84: **Posting by nationality (top 10 in 2020), share in total**
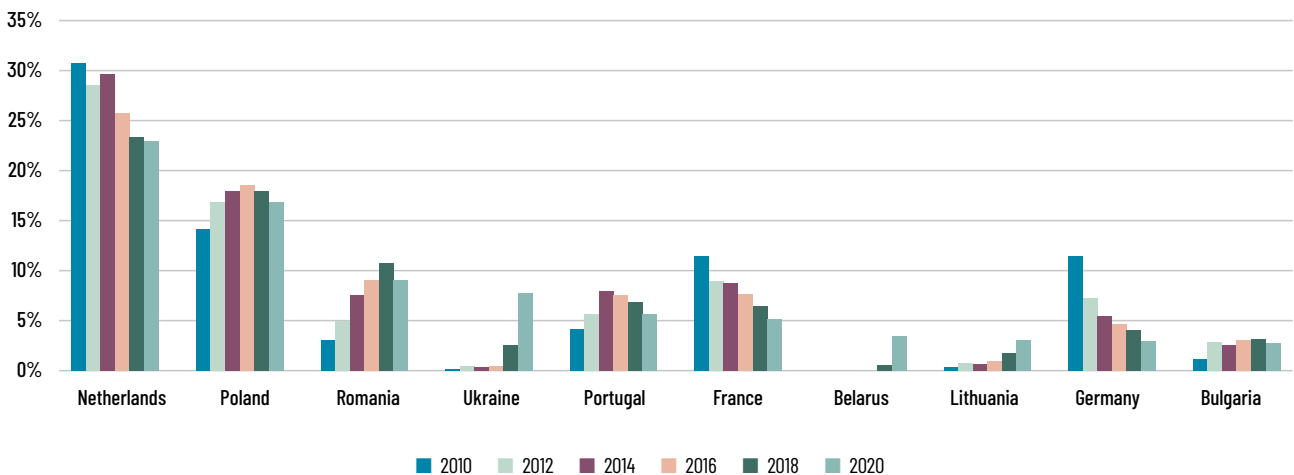
Note: The top 10 nationalities together account for 79% of postings to Belgium in 2020. Postings have been weighted according to their duration. The reference year is the year in which the reported posting starts.

Source: LIMOSA-CBSS

4.3. Link between sending country and nationality

When interpreting these figures, it is important to bear in mind that the nationality of the posted worker is not necessarily the nationality of the sending country. Thus, in 2020, 29% of posted workers had a nationality that differed from that of the country of establishment of their employer. Table 48 gives an overview of the main sending countries and nationalities for postings of workers to Belgium by companies that were not established in their country of citizenship. The Netherlands, Luxembourg and Germany were the main sending countries for non-citizens in the period 2010-2018. Employers in the Netherlands and Germany posted mainly Polish nationals to Belgium, while employers in Luxembourg posted mainly French, Belgian, and Polish nationals (see Graph 85). However, these EU-15 sending countries were overtaken in 2020 by Lithuania and Poland[14]. Furthermore, French, Belgian[15] and Polish workers were initially most often posted by employers who were not established in their country of citizenship, but by 2020 these nationalities had been overtaken by Ukrainians and Belarusians.

These two trends go hand in hand and are explained by the growing phenomenon of EU employers posting non-EU nationals to Belgium. Third-country nationals are generally associated with the 'traditional' form of labour migration, based on a single permit[16]. However, following the case law of the European Court of Justice[17], third-country nationals with a valid residence and work permit in a Member State can be freely posted to other EU Member States such as Belgium[18]. This has led to an increasing flow of third-country nationals via the intra-EU posting channel, as illustrated in Table 48. Graphs 85 and 86 show the importance of historical and cultural links in these mobility flows of third-country nationals. For example, Poland and Lithuania were the main countries sending Ukrainian and Belarusian workers, while Brazilians were posted almost exclusively from Portugal and Bosnian (but also Kosovar, Serbian, and Macedonian) workers were mainly sent from Slovenia.

These figures clearly show that the mobility of third-country nationals via posting is a substantial and growing phenomenon. Posting is a flexible alternative channel for third-country nationals who want to be active on Belgian territory without the traditional single permit. Thus, in 2020, the Regions issued 14,322 work permits/single permits to third-country workers, while in the same year 31,266 third-country nationals were sent by their European employer to Belgium to provide (temporary) services[19]. Another important observation is that the *profile of* posted workers differs strongly from the profile of workers employed in Belgium on the basis of the single permit. This is particularly true for third-country nationals posted from an EU-28 company. The vast majority of third-country nationals who enter Belgium via a single permit have a higher education degree - and if they do not have one, they are subject to a labour market test or must belong to a category of employment subject to exceptions (for example, take up a job on the list of bottleneck occupations). In contrast, for third-country nationals who enter via posting from other EU countries, there is no obligation to undergo a labour market test, neither is there an income requirement or a degree requirement. The posting of third-country nationals has become so popular that it is, in order of magnitude, equivalent or even more important

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14   Note that the posting of non-citizens remained high in the Netherlands and Luxembourg, both in relative and absolute terms.

15   Belgian workers were mainly posted by employers based in the Netherlands (41%), Luxembourg (35%) and France (9%) (2020 figures).

16   See https://www.international.socialsecurity.be/working_in_belgium/en/single-permit.html.

17   C-43/93 Vander Elst v Office des Migrations Internationales [1994] ECR I-3803.

18   Cf. Mussche, N. and Lens, D. (2019), The ECJ's construction of an EU mobility regime–Judicialization and the posting of third-country Nationals. JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies 57(6): 1247-1261.

19   The figures for the number of work permits/one-off permits (first applications and renewals) come from the FPS ELSD and the regional departments responsible for employment (Flanders: Afdeling Tewerkstelling en Competenties, Dienst Economische Migratie, Wallonia: Direction de l'Emploi et des Permis de Travail, Brussels-Capital Region: Bruxelles Économie et Emploi, Département de la migration économique, German-speaking Community: Ministerium der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft, Abteilung Ausbildung).

than 'traditional' labour migration. This is therefore a crucial dimension in the debate on labour migration. The posting of third-country nationals offers new opportunities for migration, especially for low-skilled migrant workers, who are largely beyond the control of host Member States such as Belgium. At the same time, these posted third-country nationals are very vulnerable because they combine two statuses. In the sending country, they are indeed migrant workers and are therefore highly dependent on their employer (especially for their access to the European labour market). On the other hand, they are posted (often by the same employer) to other Member States, which creates great uncertainty regarding their employment and social security rights and complicates social control[20].

TABLE 48: **Breakdown of postings of posted workers with a nationality other than that of their sending country, by sending country and nationality (top 10 in 2020)**

	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020
Main sending countries						
Lithuania	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%	3.8%	27.5%
Poland	1.3%	2.8%	3.4%	4.1%	11.2%	13.0%
Netherlands	30.7%	30.8%	29.3%	27.7%	19.3%	13.0%
Portugal	1.6%	2.7%	3.7%	4.6%	7.2%	8.1%
Luxembourg	21.9%	18.1%	20.5%	15.3%	11.2%	7.3%
Slovenia	1.4%	3.8%	2.8%	6.3%	6.5%	6.2%
Germany	12.9%	10.1%	10.7%	10.2%	8.0%	4.9%
Slovakia	1.1%	1.2%	3.1%	4.6%	6.0%	2.6%
France	4.2%	4.6%	3.0%	3.6%	2.9%	2.1%
Italy	3.5%	1.7%	2.0%	3.7%	2.6%	1.9%
Main nationalities						
Ukraine	0.6%	2.0%	1.5%	2.0%	12.5%	28.1%
Belarus	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	2.3%	12.4%
Romania	4.3%	6.1%	9.6%	13.3%	15.5%	8.9%
Poland	16.3%	19.2%	20.5%	19.8%	12.1%	7.5%
Brazil	0.9%	1.7%	2.2%	2.8%	4.6%	5.7%
Belgium	13.3%	10.0%	8.2%	7.8%	7.7%	5.0%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.9%	2.3%	1.6%	4.4%	4.5%	4.0%
France	11.8%	9.0%	9.8%	7.0%	4.9%	3.2%
Bulgaria	1.8%	3.6%	4.4%	3.5%	3.2%	2.5%
Portugal	6.1%	6.1%	8.1%	4.7%	3.9%	2.1%

Note: Postings have been weighted according to their duration. The reference year is the year in which the reported posting starts.
Source: LIMOSA-CBSS

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20 See Lens, D., Mussche, N. and Marx, I. (2021c), A hole in the wall of fortress Europe: The trans-European posting of third-country labour migrants. International Migration 60(2): 160-176.

GRAPH 85: **Breakdown of nationalities by sending country (top 5), 2020**
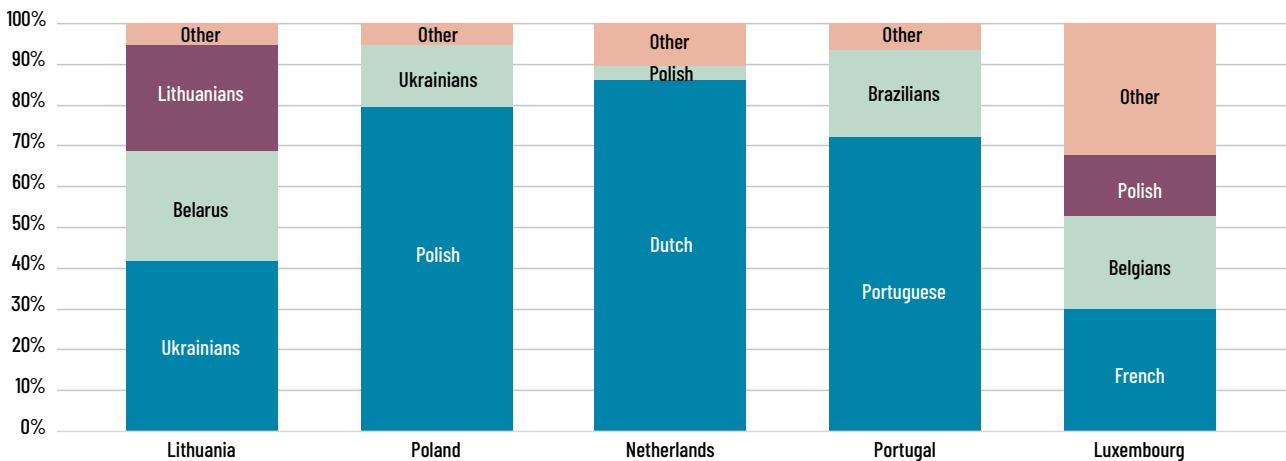
Note: Postings have been weighted according to their duration. The reference year is the year in which the reported posting starts.

Source: LIMOSA-CBSS

GRAPH 86: **Breakdown of sending countries by nationality (top 5), 2020**
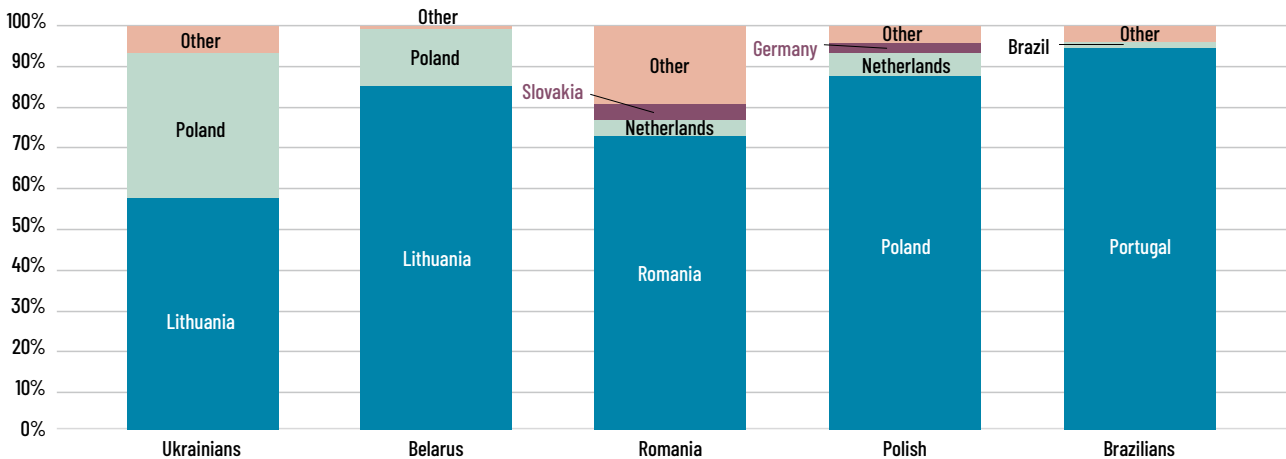
Note: Postings have been weighted according to their duration. The reference year is the year in which the reported posting starts.

Source: LIMOSA-CBSS

5. What are the characteristics of posted workers and how do they vary by origin?

In the last section, we will focus on the characteristics of posting (both the profile of the posted workers and the characteristics of the work they perform) that we can analyse using the LIMOSA data. Table 49 provides a breakdown of the occupation of posted workers by gender, age, employment status, sector, and the region of the Belgian customer, with the breakdown of regular occupancy in Belgium, for the reference year 2020. Graphs 87-91 focus on the differences in the characteristics of posting by origin, using the combination of sending country and nationality.

First, we see that posting is a mobility channel that is almost exclusively used by men: in 2020, only 4% of postings to Belgium were made by women (for comparison: women represent 47% of regular workers). There are, however, important differences according to origin, as can be clearly seen in Graph 87. The share of female employees is lowest for postings from EU-13 countries (2%). The share of women also remained below 6% for postings from the EU-15, while the share of women in postings from non-EU countries was 15%. The gender breakdown seems to be strongly correlated with the sector of employment (see below): thus, postings from outside the EU are more focused on knowledge-intensive services and less on typically male sectors such as agriculture, transport, or the metal industry.

GRAPH 87: **Gender breakdown (share of women) by origin of posting (2020)**
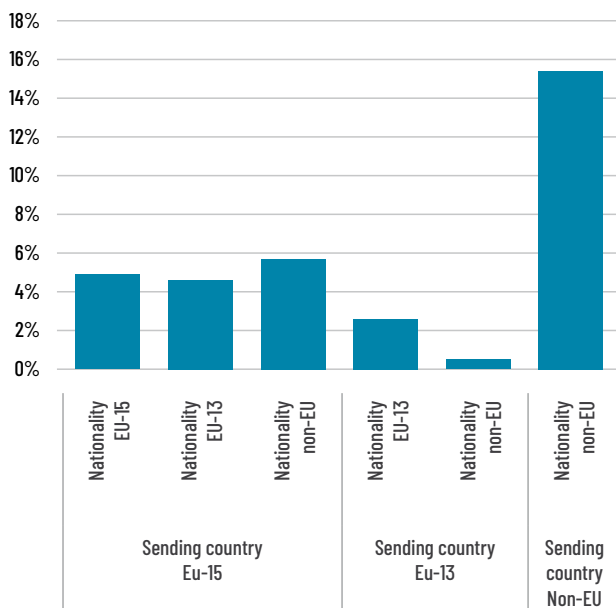
Note: Postings have been weighted according to their duration. The reference year is the year in which the reported posting starts.

Source: LIMOSA-CBSS

TABLE 49: **Characteristics of posting vs. regular occupation (2020)**

	Regular employment	Posting
Gender		
Male	53.1%	95.9%
Woman	46.9%	4.1%
Age		
18-24	5.8%	6.5%
25-34	23.5%	26.7%
35-44	24.5%	28.3%
45-54	25.0%	24.7%
55+	21.3%	13.7%
Employment status		
Employee	81.2%	86.5%
Self-employed	18.8%	13.5%
Sector		
Construction	3.5%	33.4%
Transport and distribution	2.3%	26.9%
Metal	2.8%	7.8%
Petrochemicals	3.4%	3.7%
Electrical installations	0.7%	3.4%
Meat processing	1.6%	2.0%
ICT	2.3%	1.9%
Agriculture	0.7%	1.0%
Cleaning	1.1%	0.7%
Production and distribution of electricity, gas and water	0.4%	0.6%
Wood and furniture industry	0.4%	0.5%
Financial and insurance institutions	2.4%	0.3%
Consumer goods trade	6.0%	0.3%
Health and social services	7.1%	0.2%
Horeca	2.6%	0.2%
Security	0.5%	0.2%
Other	/	16.6%
Customer's region		
Flanders	62.1%	71.9%
Brussels	8.9%	13.6%
Wallonia	29.0%	14.5%

Note: Data on the breakdown of regular occupation by gender, age, professional status is based on data from the CBSS global web application[21]. Data on the breakdown of regular occupation between sectors is based on a request for occupation statistics from the NSSO[22]. The postings were weighted on the basis of their duration. The reference year is the year in which the posting starts.

Source: LIMOSA-CBSS.

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21   See   https://dwh-live.bcss.fgov.be/fr/dwh/dwh_page/content/websites/datawarehouse/menu/application-web-chiffres-globaux.html.

22   See https://onss.be/stats/analyse-du-marche-du-travail-estimations-rapides-de-l-emploi-salarie.

If we compare the age distribution of posted workers with that of regular workers, we see that young workers are over-represented in this form of temporary service provision, while older workers (especially those aged 55 and over) are under-represented. Graph 88 shows that posted workers with an EU-15 nationality are older than EU-13 and third-country nationals, regardless of the sending country. On the other hand, third-country nationals posted from third countries are on average the youngest: almost half of them are under 35 years old.

GRAPH 88: **Age distribution by origin of posting (2020)**
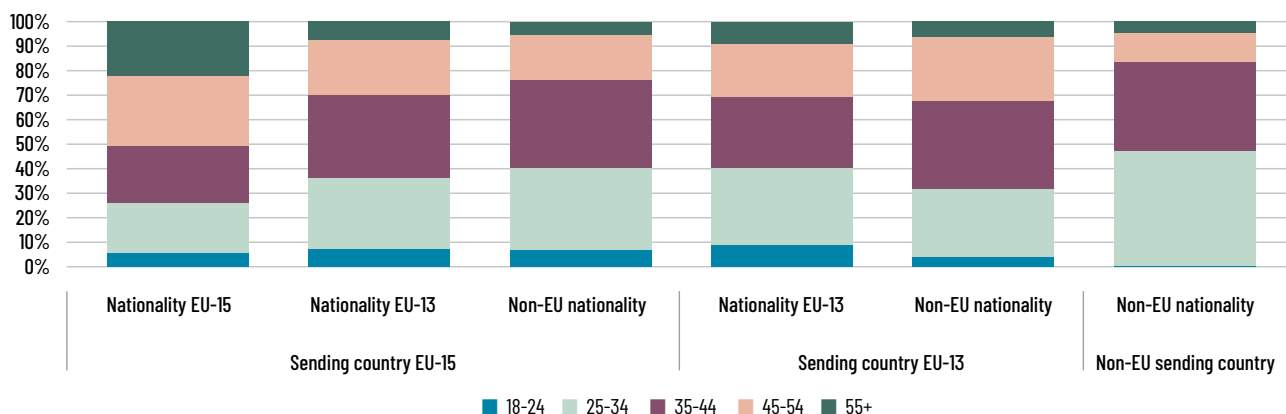
Note: Postings have been weighted according to their duration. The reference year is the year in which the reported posting starts.

Source: LIMOSA-CBSS

About 14% of postings to Belgium were made by self-employed workers, a share 4 percentage points lower than in regular employment (see Table 49)[23]. Graph 89 shows the differences according to origin. EU-13 citizens posted from EU-13 countries were clearly most often employed as self-employed posted workers (30% in 2020), while this share was significantly lower for the other groups, and certainly for non-EU nationals. Furthermore, we find that the share of self-employed was much higher in the construction sector (29%) and in the 'other sectors' (13%) than in sectors such as transport, metalworking, petrochemicals, electrical installations, and meat processing.

GRAPH 89: **Share of self-employed workers by origin of posting (2020)**

Note: Postings have been weighted according to their duration. The reference year is the year in which the reported posting starts.

Source: LIMOSA-CBSS

23 From the point of view of social law, by applying Article 12 of Regulation 883/2004, self-employed workers can also be posted.

Regarding the sector of occupation, posting is often associated in the public debate with a number of specific labour-intensive sectors. Table 49 confirms the construction sector as the main destination for the provision of services with 33% of postings in 2020. However, posting involves a wider range of economic activities, including transport and distribution (27%), metal industry (8%), petrochemical industry (4%), electrical installation and assembly (3%), meat processing (2%) and ICT (2%). In addition, 17% of the postings were recorded in the category 'other sector' and it is likely that this category captures many of the 'highly qualified' postings in the absence of a correct description of the sector concerned in the LIMOSA declaration (e.g. consultancy, offshore activities, architects, engineers, media, real estate, socio-cultural services). Thus, there is a high concentration of postings in labour-intensive services, but certainly also a considerable share of specialised and knowledge-intensive services in Belgium[24]. If we compare the sectoral distribution of posting with that of regular employment, it is striking that the construction sector and the transport and distribution sector are strongly over-represented in posting: the difference between their share in posting and their share in regular occupation amounts to 30 and 25 percentage points respectively. The metal industry and electrical installation and assembly also have a relatively higher share in posting employment, while sectors such as ICT, cleaning, financial institutions and insurance, trade, health care and social services or hotels and restaurants are under-represented.

Graph 90 shows that the distribution between sectors differs strongly according to the origin of the posting. We see a greater concentration of postings in labour-intensive sectors, such as construction and transport, for EU-13 citizens and for third-country nationals posted from EU-28 countries. EU-15 citizens, and especially also third-country nationals posted from third countries, worked relatively more often in 'other sectors' (and in ICT for third-country nationals), suggesting that they are more skilled and are used more frequently for knowledge-intensive services[25].

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24 See Lens, D., Mussche, N. and Marx, I. (2021a), The different faces of international posting: Why do companies use posting of workers? European Journal of Industrial Relations 28(1): 7-25.

25 It should be noted that third-country nationals who are posted from third countries in principle need a Belgian single permit (or work permit) to be able to provide temporary services in Belgium. Therefore, it is not surprising that they often have a higher level of education.

GRAPH 90: **Distribution across sectors by origin of posting (2020)**

Legend:
- Construction
- Meat processing
- electricity, gas and water
- Health and social services
- Transport and distribution
- ICT
- Wood and paper industry Furniture
- Horeca
- Metaal
- Agriculture
- Financial institutions and Insurance
- Security
- Petrochemicals
- Cleaning
- Trade in electrical goods consumption
- Other
- Electrical installations
- Production and distribution
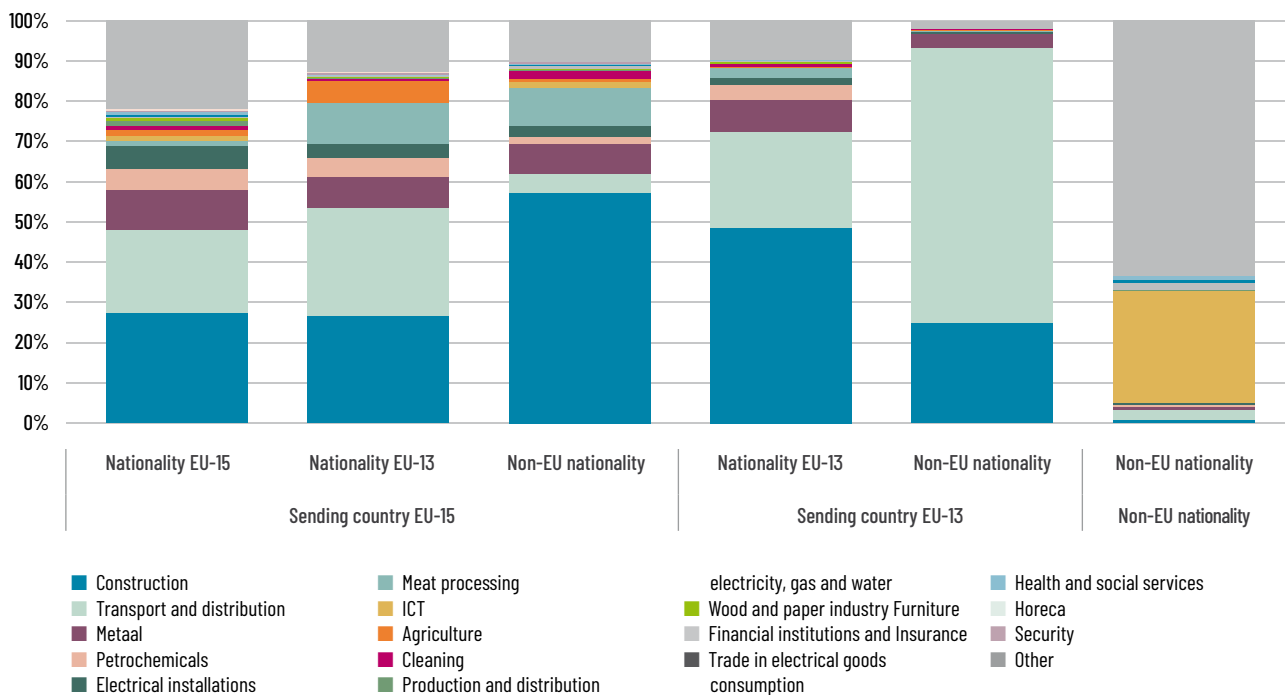
Note: Financial institutions and insurance, trade in consumer goods, health care and social services, hotels and restaurants and security have not been included in the graph as their shares are too small (<0.5% of the total). The postings have been weighted according to their duration. The reference year is the year in which the reported posting starts.

Source: LIMOSA-CBSS

Finally, Table 49 shows that Flanders and Brussels, which account for 72% and 14% respectively of posting in Belgium, have a relatively higher weight in posting employment than in regular employment. In addition, Graph 91 shows that the posting of third-country nationals from third countries was heavily concentrated in Brussels, while the posting from EU-13 countries was heavily concentrated in Flanders.

GRAPH 91: **Region of the Belgian client by origin of posting (2020)**
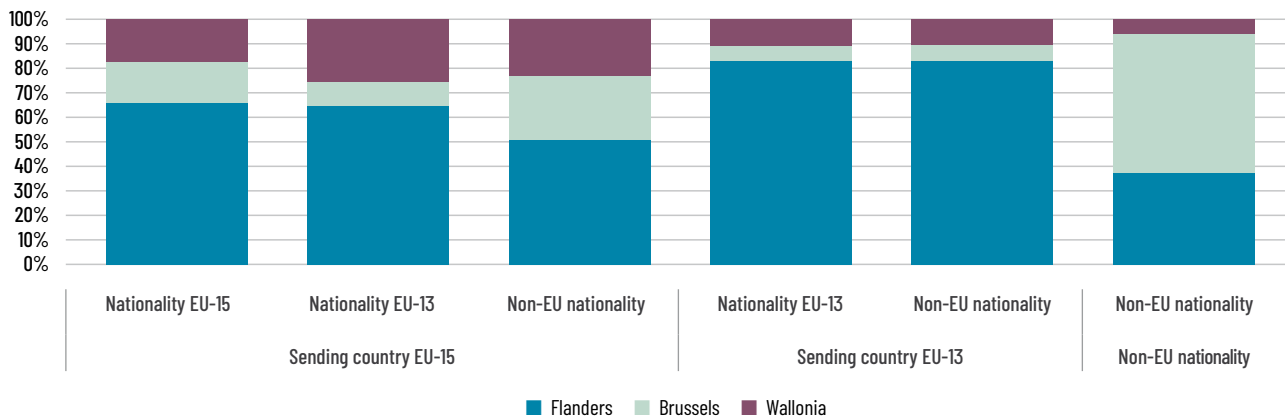
- Flanders
- Brussels
- Wallonia

Note: Postings have been weighted according to their duration. The reference year is the year in which the reported posting starts.

Source: LIMOSA-CBSS

6. **Conclusion**

With 697,571 postings by 211,640 unique persons in 2020, posting is an important channel for international labour mobility to the Belgian labour market. Although, in principle, posting concerns a temporary provision of services, posting is less temporary and more 'circular' than is often assumed. Almost half of the posted workers are indeed posted to Belgium several times a year and one in five postings lasts more than 2 months.

In this contribution, we have shown that incoming posting is a diverse phenomenon that includes both mobility flows from the 'old' EU Member States and inward flows from the 'new' Member States. The EU-15 was, and remains, the main sending region in 2020 with the Netherlands, Portugal, France, and Germany as the primary sending countries. Posting is therefore not only a phenomenon between 'poorer' and 'richer' Member States, an impression that is sometimes given in the debate on social dumping. But it is true that the share of the EU-13 countries as sending countries has been growing steadily in recent years. It is therefore quite possible that in the future the EU-13 will overtake the EU-15 or at least equal it as a sending region, with Poland and Lithuania as the main sending countries. After all, there has been a sharp decline in postings from the Netherlands, France, and Germany.

Particularly important in this respect is the *posting of third-country nationals* (non-EU nationals), who are posted to Belgium from other Member States (mostly from the EU-13), and this without additional permit requirements (unlike third-country nationals who come to work in Belgium via the classical labour migration with a single permit). The posting of third-country nationals is a substantial and fast-growing phenomenon: in 2020, 21% of postings were made by non-EU citizens; this rate was 8% in 2010. For example, Poland and Lithuania were the main countries sending Ukrainian and Belarusian workers, while Brazilians were posted almost exclusively from Portugal and Bosnian (but also Kosovar, Serbian, and Macedonian) workers were mainly sent from Slovenia. These figures clearly indicate that the mobility of third-country nationals via posting is a substantial and growing phenomenon that fundamentally reshapes the scale and especially the profile of labour migration to countries like Belgium.

Finally, we also observed that posting is most important in labour-intensive sectors such as construction, transport, and the metal industry. However, posting is more diversified and the provision of specialised services in high value-added sectors also plays an important role in the posting landscape.

07
Conclusions

Nine years ago, the FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Unia[1] published the Socio-Economic Monitoring for the first time. This is the last edition because in the future the Monitoring will be integrated into a broader report on diversity in the labour market, in which the theme of national origin will of course continue to play a central role. It is also a final edition because we encountered major difficulties in the preparation of this report. The data on which we have been working for the past 15 years - the first report required testing and preparatory work on the data - has suddenly become less accessible than before, so that it cannot be ruled out that the next reports will be much less rich in data despite greater ambitions. Hopefully, however, this will also be a new start in this respect and the ongoing discussions on strengthening and modernising the Datawarehouse Labour Market and Social Protection – the main source of data for these reports – will offer new perspectives.

At the end of each of the four previous reports, we drew conclusions. The broad outlines of these conclusions have remained valid throughout the decade, although new data and angles of approach have helped to further refine them. The inclusion of data on educational attainment in 2017, for example, was a crucial step forward. The labour market has also changed during this period. After the financial crisis we have witnessed the Belgian labour market moving to its best years ever. This report should essentially have described this development, but in 2020 a new and unknown coronavirus brought the world to a sudden standstill. This unprecedented event had a gigantic impact on the economy and the labour market and led to equally unprecedented government interventions. We cannot analyse the years 2020 and 2021 in the same way, with the same comprehensiveness and level of detail as the previous years. We hope to be able to make up for this in future editions. However, we have managed to produce a coherent report, especially thanks to the work done in the 'Social Impact COVID-19'[2] working group.

The present conclusions are, of course, based on the previous reports[3] and we are happy to refer to the supporting evidence contained therein. As we did then, we mention in this report what international institutions have reported about our country and its labour market in recent years and up to the present day[4] and we use, where possible, the results of recent academic research, in particular the research from the IMMILAB project, funded by the FPS Science Policy[5]. Finally, we include in these conclusions all lessons that can be drawn from the various chapters of this report.

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1   Still called the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism at the time.

2   See https://socialsecurity.belgium.be/fr/elaboration-de-la-politique-sociale/impact-social-covid-19.

3   FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism (2013), Monitoring socioéconomique; FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism (2015), Monitoring socio-économique. Marché du travail et origine 2015; FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Unia (2017), Monitoring socio-économique. Marché du travail et origine 2017; FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue and Unia (2020), Socio-economic monitoring: labour market and origin 2019. Only the 2019 edition and the current one are available in English.

4   See in particular the OECD Economic Surveys and the European Commission's country reports.

5   See http://www.belspo.be/belspo/brain-be/projects/FinalReports/IMMIGBEL_FinRep.pdf.

1. Slow and fragile progress that does not compensate for inequalities in the labour market

We must inevitably begin, as we did in the first edition, with the observation that our country is doing particularly poorly when it comes to the integration of people of foreign origin into the labour market. Moreover, the last ten years have taught us that, even if progress is being made, it is slow and, moreover, very fragile.

1.1. The worst performer in the European Union

The employment rate of people from non-EU countries is the lowest in the European Union; the gap with people of Belgian nationality is larger than in all other EU countries. If we consider the country of birth, only in the Netherlands the difference in employment rate is more important.

GRAPH 92: **Employment rate by country of birth (20-64 years, 2020)**
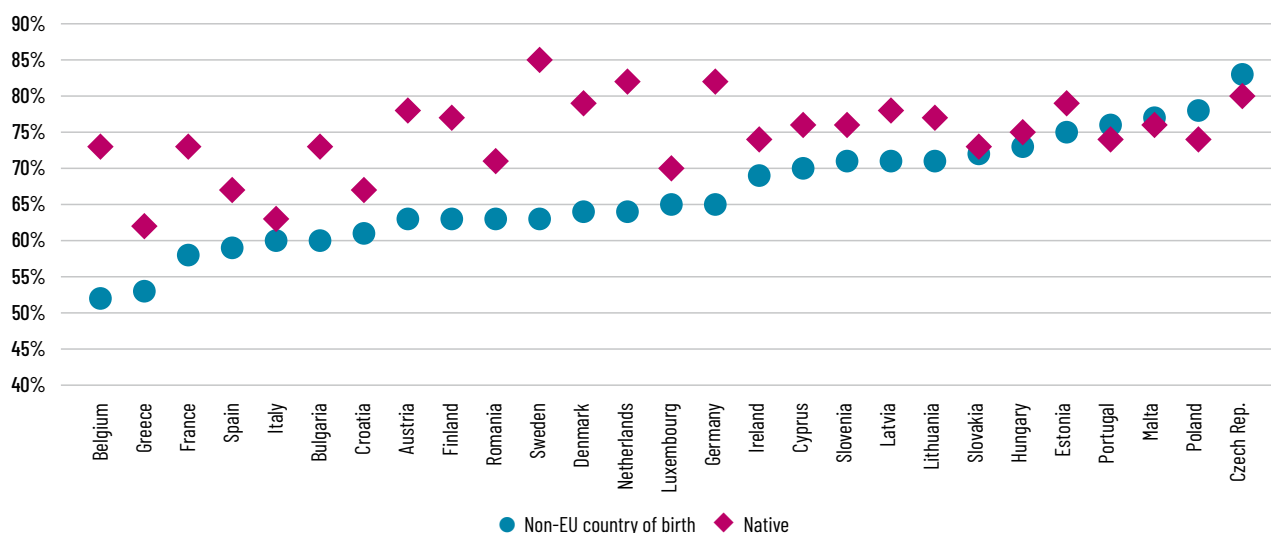
Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey. Processing: FPS ELSD.

GRAPH 93: **Employment rate by nationality (20-64 years, 2020)**
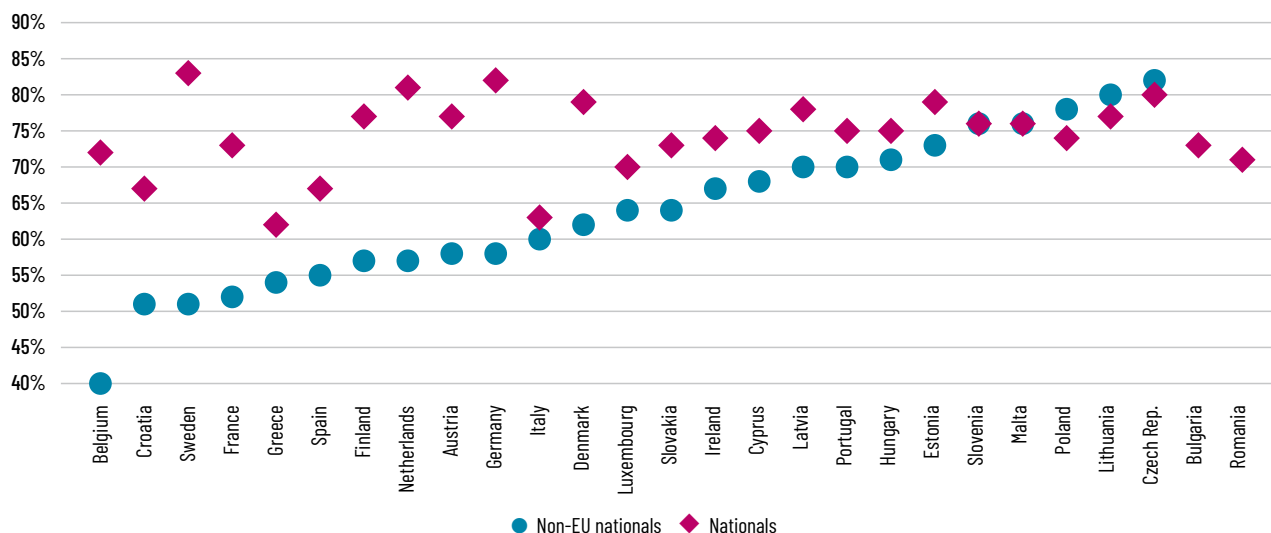
Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey. Processing: FPS ELSD.

These data are internationally comparable and are therefore based on nationality and country of birth and not on national origin or migration background. However, we know from the Socio-Economic Monitoring reports that subsequent generations also face a more unfavourable position on the labour market than people of Belgian origin. Moreover, not all EU countries that rank ahead of Belgium have good results, far from it: the integration of people of foreign origin into the labour market is also very difficult elsewhere, including in countries where it is generally accepted that the labour market is doing rather well, such as the Netherlands, Sweden, or Germany. But with the combination of a low employment rate of non-EU nationals and a large difference in employment rates between Belgian and non-EU nationals, Belgium faces a double problem. Moreover, this more unfavourable labour market position is not only quantitative: this report shows again that people of foreign origin are more often in worse jobs and contract types, with lower pay and less adapted to their qualifications.

1.2. Gradual improvement thanks to a changing economy

The situation of people of foreign origin in our labour market has nevertheless improved over the last decade, as successive reports have shown[6]. The labour market as a whole has improved, with employment rates in our country at an all-time high, and unemployment rates at their lowest level in decades. The relative position of people of foreign origin in the labour market has also improved, as Chapter 2 shows. A tighter labour market clearly offers them more opportunities and the structural change in the Belgian economy, the gradual deindustrialisation, the decrease in public employment and the shifts within the service sectors strengthen their relative position, as illustrated in graph 36.

Even in sectors characterised by a net loss of jobs, we often see job creation that benefits groups of foreign origin. Moreover, they are gradually gaining access to better jobs, although not always to the same extent, or for all origins.

However, this progress appears very fragile. At the start of the 2008 financial crisis, people of foreign origin were hit harder than people of Belgian origin. The recovery took a little longer than expected but eventually proved to be somewhat stronger. The COVID-19 crisis also seems to have followed a similar pattern: a somewhat stronger negative impact for people of foreign origin at the beginning of the crisis and a recovery that mainly benefited people of Belgian origin at first. However, as it seems that this crisis will further strengthen the shift between sectors, it can be expected that the later phases of the recovery will offer more opportunities to people of foreign origin because employment growth will probably be in sectors where, in practice, it proves easier for them to find a job, but also because bottlenecks appear and make the barriers a little lower (see graph 65). A development which, like the Echternach procession, is moving slowly in the right direction, but which is testing our patience. Not to mention all the uncertainty that Russia's invasion of the Ukraine and its consequences for our economy and labour market entail.

1.3. A booming labour market, yet...

As already mentioned, 2018 and 2019 were among the best years ever for our labour market, and this benefited people of foreign origin relatively more. In addition, the impact of COVID-19 was generally more limited here than elsewhere[7]. However, the precarious position of people of foreign origin is not the only challenge our labour market is facing.

The employment rate is still too low compared to the countries around us and certainly compared to the best-performing EU countries. And it is not only people of foreign origin who fare relatively worse: this is also the case for women, the low-skilled, older workers, people with disabilities, etc. The difference by educational attainment is more important, but the gender and age gap are less important than the origin gap. The number of people on incapacity has also increased in recent years.

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6   The inclusion of cross-border work means that the figures in previous reports are not fully comparable, but the series from 2011 onwards have been corrected in the statistical annexes.

7   OECD, OECD Employment Outlook 2022.

This is probably linked, at least in part, to the phasing out of early retirement schemes. These phenomena do not affect all origins in the same way. It is therefore necessary to reflect on a strategy to tackle these problems. For example, the aim cannot be to make people of foreign origin pay the bill for the ageing of the population, which will have to be paid at least in part by a later retirement age – as can be feared by looking at graph 29.

2. A segmented labour market and ethnostratification

The slow improvement of the labour market position of people of foreign origin takes place in a segmented labour market, divided into two parts, in which the jobs lost are in the primary segment, i.e. that of the best jobs. We therefore observe two parallel trends: a relative improvement in the position of people of foreign origin (with an increasing employment rate and a decreasing employment gap between people of Belgian and non-EU origin) and a loss of better jobs, mainly among people of Belgian origin.

Successive monitoring reports have refined the description of these two segments of the Belgian labour market, although, of course, it is still a simplified representation of reality. We know, however, that it often determines policy, where the primary labour market is seen as the "norm" on which legislation and measures are aligned. Even though the primary market seems to have been shrinking rather than growing over the years.

2.1. The primary and secondary labour market

In the primary labour market, we find full-time or 'large part-time' jobs with an open-ended contract, more often with a white-collar or civil servant contract, in the higher wage categories and often with a wage structure based on seniority, often also in large companies or in the public administration. Hard jobs can be found in this segment, but they are well paid and (like night and shift work) supported by the government. In the event of job loss, they allow access to the unemployment scheme (open-ended in our country, even if it is not always more favourable than elsewhere in terms of access conditions or benefit levels), often accompanied, for older workers, by a supplement from the employer ('unemployment with company supplement') or access to early retirement. This dismissal will most often take place in the context of a collective procedure, which opens the way for professional outplacement or other elements of a 'social plan'. Individual dismissal after a long career will offer the prospect of favourable notice and/or severance pay, also from an international perspective. In addition, during their career, people in the primary segment have the possibility of temporarily reducing their working hours through 'time credit' and career breaks. In addition, good training opportunities are offered, and stable employment offers easier access to childcare. Self-employed people in the primary labour market will sooner find themselves in the liberal professions or in consultancy jobs, although there are of course successful entrepreneurs in all sectors.

The secondary labour market is made up of temporary jobs, part-time jobs that do not offer the possibility of becoming full-time, jobs in sectors with high turnover and in which the more arduous conditions are not immediately compensated. This type of job is more likely to be found in blue-collar than in white-collar jobs, and much more rarely among statutory civil servants. These jobs lead to

interrupted and incomplete careers[8], which result in lower unemployment benefits, or even do not give access to unemployment but to social welfare benefits, a system offering fewer rights but often with as many obligations as unemployment[9]. Wage growth - for those who work - will be smaller and building up a pension more difficult[10]. These will often be jobs in smaller companies, with fewer opportunities for career breaks, formal training and promotion. Those who lose their jobs in these companies will more often have to make do with minimal severance pay and will not easily be able to claim outplacement or company supplements. The self-employed in this labour market are also in a less stable situation[11] and are more likely to run a small business, for example, retail or catering.

2.2. An imperfect springboard

Of course, there are many nuances to this picture. Indeed, the delimitation between the two markets is not always clear-cut: the construction sector traditionally belonged to the primary segment, and this may still be the case for people (often of Belgian origin) who have been working for years for a well-established construction company, but it is much less the case for people who work for a subcontractor, sometimes through a temporary employment agency. Service vouchers offer flexible and rather hard work with limited prospects for development, but in a relatively stable framework, which is obviously preferable to undeclared work, in which a large part of the cleaning sector was located before the introduction of the system. Of course, there are also many small companies that offer excellent jobs

and, conversely, even in the public administration, a good job for life is not always guaranteed. Work through temporary work agencies is also more of a secondary labour market phenomenon, but not entirely so: it too offers good, flexible jobs to those who choose to go down this route knowingly. Moreover, it offers, perhaps more than the rest of the secondary segment, a steppingstone to a better job. However, the problem is that this springboard effect seems to work better for young people of Belgian origin than for young people of foreign origin, who also find themselves in the temporary work sector at a later age, looking for a second, third, etc. springboard opportunity. The need for a steppingstone is also clear when considering student work: while for young people of Belgian origin this student work has no impact[12] on their (strong) chances on the labour market, it is a welcome help for young people of foreign origin.

By extension, this pattern applies to the whole segmentation: people of foreign origin are over-represented in the inferior segments or professions. Of course, there are also people of Belgian origin active in the secondary segment and people of foreign origin who are running large companies. However, overall, it appears that the primary segment is much less accessible to people of foreign origin. As we have already indicated in the previous report and as chapter 2 of this edition confirms, this also applies at equivalent diplomas, which are considered to be the key to our labour market. In other words, the segmentation of our labour market is closely and strongly correlated with national origin. This indi-

8   See also Lens, D. and Oslejová, J. (2018), Arbeidsmarkt-transities van immigranten in België. Tijdschrift voor Arbeidsvraagstukken, 34/4: "Multivariate duuranalyses toonden aan dat zowel de voorraad menselijk kapitaal als verschillende baankenmerken belangrijke verklaringen bieden voor de hogere kansen op baanverlies van immigranten. Het feit dat immigranten vaker werkzaam zijn in deeltijdse, tijdelijke en laaggeschoolde banen in precaire industrieën en kleine ondernemingen, verklaarde voor een groot deel waarom zij sneller dan autochtonen instroomden in de werkloosheid."

9   We have seen in previous reports that the transition to work from social welfare benefits for people with a foreign background is often quite high, which indicates that people with a higher level of employability than the social welfare system actually aims at end up in this scheme.

10   OECD (2021), Pensions at a Glance 2021, p. 138.

11   Lens D. (2022), 'Does Self-Employment Contribute to Immigrants' Economic Integration? Examining Patterns of Self-Employment Exit in Belgium', International Migration Review.

12   Or even a negative effect in Flanders, perhaps due to an inverse relationship with the socio-economic background: the more favourable it is, the more likely it is that the young person will not be economically in need of a student job; a possible network can then be built up through, for example, volunteer work, or be created from the background itself. See also: Baert, S., Neyt, B., Omey, E. and Verhaest, D. (2022), "Student work during secondary education, educational achievement, and later employment: a dynamic approach", Empirical Economics.

cates a persistent ethnostratification of the labour market which is grafted onto this segmentation[13].

In successive monitoring reports, new variables – such as level of education and field of study - were added and analysed, which allowed us to gain an ever-clearer picture of the ethnostratification of the labour market and its functioning. For example, a diploma seems to be a key to the labour market, especially for people of Belgian origin. People of foreign origin with the same degree level in the same field of study have less chance of finding a job than people of Belgian origin. On the other hand, as in the previous report, we see that people of Belgian origin can find a well-paid job with any degree. The situation is somewhat more difficult for people of non-EU origin. They mainly find well-paid jobs in the sector for which they obtained the specific diploma. This indicates a structural discrimination that reduces employment opportunities for people of foreign origin and contributes to ethnostratification.

2.3. COVID-19 confirms this segmentation

Although the COVID-19 pandemic is a typical example of an external shock, an event that does not originate from the labour market but has a major impact on it, its impact seems to follow closely the segmentation outlines. In a first phase, the closure of large parts of the economy affected all groups to the same extent, so much so that in the first quarters of 2020 the gap between the national origin groups in the labour market narrowed. After this first phase, the longer lasting closure of sectors that could not implement telework mainly affected jobs in the secondary labour market, such as the Horeca (*Hotel, restaurant, catering*) sector. Fortunately, the safety net of temporary unemployment continued to absorb many of these consequences: the deploy-

ment of this scheme in the context of the pandemic probably proved to be by far the most effective labour market measure of the last decades. This is a direct and important difference from the financial crisis: at that time, temporary unemployment mainly provided protection in the primary labour market.

However, here too people were left behind, for example because of expiring fixed-term contracts. Moreover, it appeared that 'frontline workers', i.e. workers who were absolutely necessary to keep the economy and the health sector functioning, were more often part of the less favourable side of our labour market[14]. This probably also increased the risk of contracting COVID-19, although we do not have the (Belgian) figures on this[15]. On the other hand, we dispose of an analysis of excess mortality that shows that in Belgium, too, people with an immigrant background have been hit harder[16].

As mentioned above, this is in addition to the fact that, as in the aftermath of the financial crisis, the recovery primarily benefited people of Belgian origin: not only did they lose their jobs less often, but they also found work more easily. We must therefore conclude that it is very likely that the loss of income resulting from COVID-19 was greater for people of foreign origin, which again confirms the segmentation. Let us hope that this is a temporary phenomenon.

2.4. Shortages create opportunities

As the chapter on the impact of COVID-19 in this report shows, the COVID-19 pandemic has a more negative impact on the labour market position of people of foreign origin compared to people of Belgian origin. Yet, as was the case after the finan-

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13 Ethnostratification means that people of foreign origin are more likely to end up in a specific segment of the labour market characterised by poorer employment conditions. See, among others: Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism (2012), Diversity Barometer: Employment; Martens, A., Ouali, N., Van de Maele, M., Vertommen, S., Dryon, Ph. and Verhoeven, H. (2005), Etnische discriminatie op de arbeidsmarkt in het Brussels Hoofdstedelijk Gewest. Onderzoek in het kader van het Sociaal Pact voor de Werkgelegenheid van de Brusselaars. Syntheserapport. Brussels: BGDA, Brussels Observatorium van de arbeidsmarkt en de kwalificaties, ULB, KULeuven (27-36).

14 See also OECD Employment Outlook 2022.

15 Liebig, T. and Dumont, J.C. (2020), 'What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigrants and their children?', OECD.

16 Vanthomme, K., Gadeyne, S., Lusyne, P. and Vandenheede, H. (2021), 'A population-based study on mortality among Belgian immigrants during the first COVID-19 wave in Belgium. Can demographic and socioeconomic indicators explain differential mortality?', SSM - Population Health, Volume 14.

cial crisis of 2008, the recovery could be relatively favourable for people of non-Belgian or non-European origin[17]. It does indeed appear, and this is not really surprising, that sectors facing shortages are more easily accessible for people of foreign origin, even in the primary labour market. Employers are visibly becoming a little less demanding when recruiting: while in many sectors people of foreign origin only have a chance if they have the right degree (contrary to persons of Belgian origin with a higher education degree who have a chance 'everywhere')[18], this is much less the case in sectors with labour shortages[19]. This trend is obviously even more marked in the secondary labour market. In this respect, it is even clear that shortages have the effect of attracting migration, via posting (posting is highly concentrated in the sectors with short-

ages), but also via the service voucher system, for example.

Insofar as people of foreign origin can be directed to the sectors with shortages, a tight labour market certainly offers opportunities. However, some groups seem to be better prepared than others. Almost all labour market observers agree that the greening and digitalisation of the economy will require more STEM skills[20]. As we saw in Chapter 1 on demographics, interest in this field of study does not seem to be evenly distributed between the different origin groups: young people of Asian and Maghreb origin are over-represented and those of Sub-Saharan and EU candidate origin, as well as those of Belgian origin, are under-represented.

3. A labour market with significant barriers and low mobility

In our country, the labour market is less easily accessible than in neighbouring countries. Indeed, the transition from unemployment and inactivity to work appears to be more restricted than elsewhere. This is due to obstacles on both the demand and supply sides and to restricted mobility[21]. A lack of movement creates little room for newcomers. This also poses a threat to our (still relatively high) productivity: when the right person is not in the right place, the situation is far from optimal, either for the individual or for society[22].

3.1. Unemployment and other traps

An unemployed or inactive person, whether or not receiving a social welfare or other benefit, who wants to look for a job, will naturally have to take a number of factors into account. The job, the social contacts and the social integration offered by a job are certainly good motivations, at least in the longer term: a job is by far the best steppingstone to another (better) job. However, these motivations must be balanced against other factors. For example, by taking up a job, one risks losing a possible benefit, possibly after a transition period. In our country, benefits are often linked to all sorts of other ad-

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17   See OECD, Employment Outlook 2022.

18   A phenomenon we described in the previous report as a "reverse skills mismatch".

19   It is possible that the narrowing of the wage gap between groups of different origins is related to this tension in the labour market. See also Fays, V., Mahy, B., Rycx, F. and Volral, M. (2021), "Wage discrimination based on the country of birth: Do tenure and product market competition matter?", Applied Economics, 53(13): 1551-1571: "Wage discrimination against migrants vanishes as their firm-specific labour market experience increases and tends to disappear in highly competitive product market situations."

20   ETUC (2021), European Social Partners' Project on Circular Economy - Final Report; Cedefop (2021), The green employment and skills transformation: insights from a European Green Deal skills forecast scenario; ILO (2019), Skills for a greener future: A global view based on 32 country studies.

21   FPS ELSD (2022), Etat des lieux de la mobilité professionnelle en Belgique.

22   OECD (2019), In-Depth Productivity Review of Belgium.

vantages, also at local level or outside the public administration (reductions at the cinema, lower membership fees for certain associations, etc.). Similarly, the system of the marital quotient may make it less attractive for the second earner in the household to find a job[23]. Going to work also entails costs, e.g. for transport and childcare. It obviously also takes up time, which can no longer be spent on domestic tasks, for example.

For a variety of reasons, it is not always easy to weigh up the pros and cons. For example, our unemployment system is so complicated that we must assume that financial incentives have only a limited impact[24]. The above-mentioned advantages associated with certain statuses lack transparency (also for policy makers). Despite staffing problems, childcare remains fairly accessible for those in stable employment, but less so for those seeking work or working more flexibly[25]. Availability may in principle be relatively high, especially outside cities, but in practice this can sometimes be problematic as the sector is facing a shortage of staff. Again, a strong network is needed to find one's way through the system. Information is also not always easy to find on the labour market side. Job advertisements do not always specify a salary level and it is almost impossible for the uninitiated to find the net salary to which they will be entitled in the maze of collective bargaining agreements concerning salaries, bonuses, social security contributions and tax rules.

These factors naturally apply to everyone in our labour market. However, many of them apply particularly to people of foreign origin, as they are over-represented in unemployment and inactivity.

On average, they are also more likely to have at most a secondary education (lower or higher), which implies a lower potential wage and therefore a higher relative cost of going to work. They also often have less knowledge of our system because they have not lived here as long, have a smaller network, or have a poorer command of the language. In addition, their standards in terms of purchasing power or the division of labour within the family, for example, may also be influenced by their country of origin or their environment here (see also below)[26].

3.2. Wage cost and picky employers

It is well known that the average wage cost in our country is very high, mainly due to the large wage wedge (the difference between the net wage and the final cost to the employer) which is formed by taxation and social security contributions. This leads to rather "picky" and potentially discriminating employers, unwilling to hire unless convinced that the candidate's productivity will outweigh their labour cost. However, just as the worker often has incomplete information about the job, so the employer cannot fully assess the qualities of the applicants. We see the opposite effect of the same problem in the chapter on posting. Posting is often cheaper than regular employment and this is one of the reasons for the popularity of the phenomenon in Belgium.

In a less tight labour market[27], some employers will then try to play it safe by setting the bar unnecessarily high (degree requirement, language knowledge, flexibility) or even (often probably unconsciously) by resorting to statistical discrimination[28] by giving

23 See in particular the OECD Economic Survey 2022.

24 Salvatori, A. (2022), The effect of declining unemployment benefits on transitions to employment: evidence from Belgium.

25 Biegel, N., Wood, J. and Neels, K. (2021), Migrant-native differentials in the uptake of (in)formal childcare in Belgium: The role of mothers' employment opportunities and care availability. Journal of Family Research, 33(2), 467-508. https://doi.org/10.20377/jfr-463: "Like parental leave, formal childcare was more accessible to parents with stable employment. This seems to indicate that there were strong Matthew effects, as parents with stable employment benefited disproportionately from having access to subsidised childcare (which was also tax-deductible). It also implies that the benefits of subsidised family policies were unequally distributed across the population".

26 Blau, F. (2015), 'Immigrants and gender roles: assimilation vs. culture,' IZA Journal of Migration and Development, vol. 4(1), 1-21 (https://www.nber.org/papers/w21756); Khoudja, Y. and Fleischmann, F. (2014), 'Ethnic differences in female labour force participation in the Netherlands: Adding gender role attitudes and religiosity to the explanation', European Sociological Review, 31(1), 91-102.

27 And/or in a monopsony situation. See OECD Employment Outlook 2022.

28 Statistical discrimination is a form of discrimination in which stereotypes and prejudices about a particular group of characteristics are attributed to a person solely on the basis of their membership of that group.

preference to workers belonging to a group (age group, gender, national origin, etc.) from which higher productivity is expected. Dismissal legislation and the absence of a probationary period also play a role in this respect, as the risk of having to dismiss someone is obviously considered when recruiting - which partly explains why temporary employment agencies are often used as a recruitment channel and can therefore also serve as a steppingstone.

It is not surprising that these factors also often weigh more heavily on people of foreign origin. Wage costs play a role primarily for people with lower earning potential: jobs that are created in other countries are not created here. Here again, the level of education plays a key role, as do possible higher requirements in job offers - and the difficulty of getting foreign qualifications recognised must also be taken into account. Statistical discrimination or other prejudices may also be explicitly based on origin, but even those which, for example, offer fewer opportunities to people with a lower secondary school certificate or less stable careers, are relatively more disadvantageous for people of foreign origin.

3.3. Persistent discrimination

The increasingly detailed picture of the ethnostratification of the labour market presented in successive editions of the Monitoring also points to the existence of structural and institutional forms of discrimination as factors explaining the inequalities between people of foreign and Belgian origin.

We see structural discrimination reflected, among other things, in forms of direct discrimination in the labour market. The statistical discrimination in hiring mentioned above is not the only form of direct

discrimination in our labour market. Discrimination is also often based simply on 'preferences'[29]: employers, colleagues or clients who do not want employees of a certain skin colour or origin. Statistical and 'taste-based' discrimination are different explanations for direct discrimination in employment, but the result is the same: someone is disadvantaged because of their origin. Scientific studies based on behavioural tests have highlighted these forms of direct discrimination in hiring on the labour market: with otherwise equal CVs, preference is given to people whose name suggests that they are of Belgian origin[30]. People of foreign origin are invited much less often. Moreover, situation tests conducted by Mycadis have already shown that in some service sectors clients request that employees of a certain origin be excluded[31].

Alongside these direct forms of discrimination, there are indirect variants: requirements which at first sight appear to be equal but which strongly disadvantage a certain group and therefore have discriminatory consequences. A typical example is the height requirement for police work, which will lead to a smaller number of women than men in the police force. The diploma or language requirements already mentioned may be disadvantageous for people of foreign origin, as of course is the nationality requirement as it was common practice until recently in the public sector. Although the restrictions on foreign nationals are no longer applicable on paper in most public jobs, they may still play a role in the over-representation of people of Belgian origin in the public sector. Indeed, if no specific measures are taken, closing the gap may take a long time. It is not always easy to draw the line between what is a reasonable requirement and when a requirement becomes discrimination. Indeed, authorities have to conclude that measures based on objective criteria (access to early retirement, time

29 Empirical research provides more evidence of preference-based discrimination in recruitment than statistical discrimination. See, among others: Lippens, L., Baert, S., Ghekiere, A., Verhaeghe, P.-P. and Derous, E. (2020), Is labour market discrimination against ethnic minorities better explained by taste or statistics? A systematic review of the empirical evidence. IZA Discussion Paper Series, 13523.

30 See, among others: Unia (2012), Diversity Barometer: Employment; Baert, S. (2014), "Etnische aanwervingsdiscriminatie in Flanders: evidentie, mechanismen en aanpak"; Itinera Institute (2014), It's minus one: Time for another migration and integration policy. Itinera Institute; Baert, S. (2018), "Hiring discrimination: An overview of (almost) all correspondence experiments since 2005." Audit studies: Behind the scenes with theory, method, and nuance, (2018): 63-77. Baert, S., Dalle, A., Lippens, L. and Malfait, L. (2021), Discriminatie op de Gentse arbeidsmarkt anno 2021: rapport.

31 For the report and fact sheet, see: http://docs.vlaamsparlement.be/pfile?id=1470605 and https://www.minderhedenforum.be/wat-zeggen-wij/tewerkstelling.

credit, childcare, etc.) sometimes have such a different effect on groups from different backgrounds that they also seem to constitute a form of indirect discrimination.

However, care must be taken not to reduce discrimination to the demonstrable part of it in recruitment. 'Mystery calls' or the use of fictitious CVs can prove discrimination in recruitment, but discrimination in the workplace itself is much more difficult to prove, as decades of struggle for equal pay for women have shown. The fact that discrimination in hiring covers only part of the discrimination in the labour market is also evident in Unia's cases on discrimination in the workplace[32]. Of all work-related cases in 2020, for all discrimination grounds, about a quarter concerned recruitment. The remaining cases concerned dismissal, work organisation, labour relations and bullying, and access to promotion and training.

It is therefore also important to look beyond individual cases and reports to the structural and institutional level in order to identify structural discrimination. This may mean, for example, that organisations do not achieve the same results for people of foreign origin as for the general population, due to the nature of the processes, attitudes and behaviours[33]. This is not necessarily a malicious intent, but a phenomenon embedded in the culture and systems of organisations, which only becomes visible in the resulting unfavourable outcomes for people of foreign origin, such as the unequal labour market participation by origin, which we observe again in this report. For example, in a company with no workers of foreign origin, there will, by definition, be no discrimination between workers based on national origin. And if one simply does not use any procedures for recruitment, but searches for candidates only through informal channels, it is not possible to show possible discrimination by means of discrimination tests either.

To combat discrimination and to identify these forms of institutional and structural discrimination, it is important to focus on research and data that can map the different forms of discrimination and inequality. A starting point could be to monitor the diversity of a company's workforce. Unia has published a tool that can help companies to do this: the note "Diversity monitoring: do it yourself![34]" At sectoral level, this monitoring is accompanied for the first time by joint committee info sheets, which will also be submitted to the employees' and employers' representatives in this committee[35]. After all, the social partners are best placed to promote diversity through measures tailored to their sector and to break the structural aspect of discrimination in the long term.

The data in this report also demonstrates once again the importance of an intersectional perspective, both in data and in policy. Intersectionality[36] is a conceptual framework that asserts that the social position of individuals is determined by multiple personal characteristics. Intersectionality[37] thus offers an analytical perspective that clarifies the links between different personal characteristics and the unique forms of discrimination that accompany them. It allows us to highlight invisible discrimination and to get closer to the experiences of specific groups. As will also be pointed out later in this conclusion, it appears, for example in Chapter 2, that the position of women of foreign origin differs strongly from that of men of foreign origin, but that there are also many differences within these groups, for example according to educational attainment and origin group.

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32 Approximately 24.8% of the employment cases relate to hiring issues, 22.2% to dismissal cases, 21.8% to work organisation and 13.9% to labour relations and harassment and 2.3% to access to promotion or training. This breakdown by issue remains relatively stable compared to 2019. Source: Unia (2021), Rapport Chiffres 2020, p. 33.

33 Definition by Equinet (2021), in "Tackling institutional racism: realising the potential of equality bodies".

34 Unia (2022), Note "Diversity monitoring: do it yourself!

35 See https://emploi.belgique.be/fr/statistiques.

36 Rosa vzw (website), Intersectionaliteit.

37 Ella vzw (2014), INTERSECTIONEEL DENKEN. Handleiding voor professionelen die intersectionaliteit of kruispuntdenken in de eigen organisatie willen toepassen, p. 4.

3.4. If there is no movement, no place is created

If it is difficult to enter our labour market, those who manage to do so have a good chance of not exiting quick. This is especially true for private sector jobs: those who have a good job there are likely to keep it. Of course, it is quite possible to move up in one's career, but this is rarely accompanied by a change of employer. In other words, mobility in our labour market is low, whether between labour market statuses (employed, unemployed, inactive), between companies or geographically[38]. This has disadvantages: as already mentioned, it is difficult to get the right person in the right place and this in itself also reduces accessibility. In this and previous editions of the report, we have already shown that stronger labour market dynamics create more opportunities for people of foreign origin. Of course, the aim is not to create only entry-level jobs in the secondary segment, with the risk that they open the door to a succession of short-term jobs alternating with periods of unemployment. We have to aim for a development towards quality jobs, which requires that mobility also increases in these better jobs.

3.5. The equalising aspect of long-term unemployment

The fact that, in our country, workers easily find themselves 'stuck' in a position on the labour mar- ket naturally leads to relatively high long-term unemployment. The risk of becoming unemployed is strongly influenced by national origin, but the risk of becoming long-term unemployed is much less so. The level of qualification also has only a limited impact in this respect. The probability of leaving unemployment for work decreases for all groups as the duration of unemployment increases[39]. This suggests that, on the one hand, the risk of becoming long-term unemployed is not only correlated with labour market factors and that, on the other hand, loss of employability is a determining factor in the search for a new job. The figures on the exit from the social welfare benefit[40] and, in particular, the relatively low probability of exit of people of Belgian origin from this system - which, because of the link with the periods of work required to access unemployment, functions for them more than for others as a 'last safety net' - also show that people who find themselves in long-term unemployment often have other problems outside the professional sphere, regardless of their origin[41]. The fact that we maintain not only two different benefit systems but also two different support systems (the public employment services on the one hand and the PCSWs on the other) is in this respect a very institutionalised choice which can be explained historically, but which is perhaps less adapted to reality.

4. Unequal education and the difficult position of the low-skilled

That a person's school career strongly determines the chances in the labour market, goes without saying. School careers take shape in the highly segregated education that characterises our country. The differences in the labour market largely graft on the outcome of segregation in education. Moreover, we see further polarisation in our country, with growing differences in the labour market based on education, and jobs that are currently filled by the middle-skilled slowly being taken by the high-skilled. The question of the future for people with at most a lower secondary education in the labour

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38   For a detailed analysis of mobility in the Belgian labour market, see: FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue (2022), État des lieux de la mobilité professionnelle en Belgique.

39   NEO data: Exit of fully compensated unemployed to the labour market according to the duration of unemployment.

40   See for example table 11-39 in the annexes of the Socio-Economic Monitoring 2019.

41   De Cuyper, N., Philippaers, K., Vanhercke, D. and De Witte, H. (2019), 'The Reciprocal Relationship Between Resources and Psychological Distress Among Unemployed Job Seekers', Journal of Career Development, 46 (1), 17-30.

market has already been raised on several occasions.[42] The difference between people with lower secondary school certificates or less and people with a higher education degree in our labour market is therefore even greater than the differences in national origin, and here too we are doing exceptionally badly from an international perspective[43]. In addition, our labour market is characterised by a strong skills mismatch: many shortages are caused by the lack of suitably trained candidates. This is a problem that not only reduces our employment but, like other factors already mentioned, also affects our productivity.

4.1. Less use of childcare facilities and fewer educational opportunities

People in difficult labour market situations, which is often the case for people of foreign origin, often make less use of childcare. This not only reduces their own chances of finding work, but also means that their children spend less time in childcare than their peers. These children therefore start their school career at a disadvantage[44]. This disadvantage is particularly problematic in an education system that tends to reinforce rather than eliminate inequalities[45] and thus leads to highly unequal outcomes, as successive PISA studies by the OECD [46] have shown.

4.2. Grade repetition increases the disadvantage

The phenomenon of grade repetition, linked to the cascade system whereby many pupils start secondary education in a general direction and then 'fall back' into a technical or vocational direction (often in another school), is no stranger to this. Among 15-year-olds in all OECD countries, 11.4% had doubled (at least) one year. This rate reaches 30.3% in Belgium. Within the OECD, only Colombia and Luxembourg are doing worse, with 40.8% and 32.2% respectively[47]. However, the disadvantages of repeating are often greater than the advantages[48], which is also confirmed in Chapter 5: Table 40 shows that the chances of obtaining a higher degree are reduced by grade repetition. The analysis (unique to our knowledge) carried out in the same chapter then shows that repeaters have an employment rate 6.8 percentage points lower than non-repeaters. This is true even with a degree and without distinction of origin: persons of Belgian origin who obtained a master's degree despite having repeated one or more years have a 4.3 percentage point lower employment rate.

Our figures also confirm the unequal distribution of grade repetition. It appears that boys are more often affected than girls. As the socio-economic

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42 See OECD (2020), The Future for Low-Educated Workers in Belgium; and Conseil supérieur de l'emploi (2021), Quelle place pour les personnes peu diplômées sur le marché du travail en Belgique?

43 OECD (2020), The Future for Low-Educated Workers in Belgium, OECD Publishing, Paris.

44 Biegel, N., Wood, J. and Neels, K. (2021), Migrant-native differentials in the uptake of (in)formal childcare in Belgium: The role of mothers' employment opportunities and care availability. Journal of Family Research, 33(2), 467-508. https://doi.org/10.20377/jfr-463: "The lower uptake of formal childcare among non-native parents with lower socio-economic status is problematic because the use of formal childcare has been shown to improve the development of children."

45 OECD, Economic Survey 2022: "The education systems in Belgium feature high intergenerational persistence in attainment and strong links between students' academic performance and socio-economic status. For example, the correlation between children's and parents' years of schooling is one of the strongest in the OECD, as an additional year of parental schooling is associated with more than half a year of additional schooling for their offspring. (...) Social mobility at school, as measured by the average ratio of students' position in the distribution of socio-economic status to their position in the distribution of academic performance, is also low. By this measure, Belgian schools offer the fifth lowest level of social mobility at school among the 27 OECD countries that have participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) since 2003 (Figure 2.5, Panel B). High persistence and low mobility at school point to the existence of strong intergenerational education transmission mechanisms in Belgium."

46 See also European Commission, Belgium 2022 Country Report (forthcoming): "The gap in educational outcomes is highly linked to students' socio-economic and migrant background and among the highest in the EU.

47 OECD (2020), PISA 2018 Results: Effective policies, successful schools, Volume V.

48 Idem: "The intended purpose of grade repetition is to give students a "second chance" to master the knowledge and skills appropriate for their grade level. However, evidence of the benefits of grade repetition is mixed. Short-term gains in test scores tend to disappear a few years after repetition. Students who had repeated a grade tend to perform less well in school and hold more negative attitudes towards school at age 15 than students who had not repeated a grade in primary or in secondary education. In addition, students who had repeated a grade are more likely to drop out of high school.

context or network phenomena (see below) can hardly play a role in the gender difference (the distribution of boys and girls is relatively homogenous within each origin, socio-economic group, etc.), this indicates that not only purely educational reasons, but also other factors play a role in the decision to have a pupil repeat a year[49]. We can therefore assume that the large differences in national origin also indicate that children of non-EU origin are disproportionately disadvantaged by the excessive use of repetition in our school system.

This raises the question of the relationship between national origin and guidance in secondary education[50]. The uneven effects of guidance policy and guidance practices were studied in the Diversity in Education Barometer[51]. On the basis of administrative data, the researchers analysed which certificates pupils receive (A, B, C), how this is translated into practice (field of study/type of education/repetition) and what role individual pupil characteristics (such as gender, ethnic origin, grade repetition and socio-economic status) play in this. Both socio-economic status and foreign origin played a role: these students had to change their chosen study more often or repeat their year. Further research on the motivation of teacher guidance revealed that stereotypes related to gender, origin and socio-economic status play a role and cause a social bias.

In a study commissioned by the Flemish government, people of foreign origin also stated more often than people of Belgian origin that they (or their children) had been advised to follow a study programme "below" the level they (or their children) were capable of[52].

5. The role of socio-cultural capital and networking

No one is an island in our society. Social relations, socio-cultural capital and networks together determine the opportunities people receive, including in education and the labour market. This sometimes complicates matters further for people of foreign origin, but it also offers opportunities for positive dynamics.

5.1. Limited social mobility

Those who were born in a less favourable socio-economic context do not escape it so easily, even though general socio-economic mobility, unlike labour market mobility, is similar to that in other countries. However, we know that this mobility is not as important for all groups and that it works particularly less well for people of foreign origin[53].

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49 Idem: "On average across OECD countries, a disadvantaged student was more than twice as likely as an advantaged student to have repeated a grade at least once, even if the students scored similarly in the PISA reading test. This suggests that factors other than academic performance (e.g. student well-being, misbehaviour, illness, attendance, etc.) are considered when teachers assign marks or when schools make decisions about whether a student should repeat a grade."

50 In this context, it would be extremely interesting to link data on past study advice with data on education and labour market outcomes, by analogy with what we have done for repetition in this report.

51 Unia (2018), Baromètre de la diversité : Enseignement, p. 135 for education in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and p. 249 for education in the Flemish Community.

52 Statistiek Flanders (2018), Survey Samenleven in diversiteit 2017, p. 47-58. https://samenleven-in-diversiteit.vlaanderen.be/rapport.

53 OECD, Economic Survey (2022): "However, the policies that deliver low inequality and good intergenerational mobility fail to ensure equality of opportunities, i.e., access to the same life chances irrespective of initial life conditions. Indeed, Belgium's good overall performance regarding income distribution and intergenerational mobility hides a very uneven distribution of economic opportunities. Considerable disparities exist across groups according to, notably, parental background and the country of origin. For example, the offspring of non-EU citizens, low-educated or unemployed parents, and tenants are significantly more at risk of poverty or social exclusion."

However, our reports show that patience pays off. Those who reside here longer, obtain citizenship, gain experience on the labour market, obtain a better degree, etc. have more opportunities on the labour market. Yet national origin remains a barrier: the opportunities of people with a foreign background remain smaller, even with the same degree in the same field of study[54]. This is probably largely explained by the socio-economic context, a factor that we cannot fully map. However, it is not an exogenous factor because, as already mentioned, this socio-economic background is also linked to national origin, which does not necessarily mean that they coincide.

5.2. The first, second, third generation...

The fact that origin is acquired through descent and that people often have the closest relationships with their parents, family members and their family's circle of acquaintances means that their network will often be influenced by national origin. This is also the case for those who are in no way considered by society at large to be of 'foreign origin' (except in this report), such as those who do not have distinct physical characteristics or a name that might indicate a certain national origin, and those who speak Dutch or French without an accent - or with, for example, an accent from West Flanders or Hainaut.

This has several consequences. First of all, this network will also determine the opportunities on the labour market: people looking for a job will often not only use the public employment services[55], but will also search in their own network. And employers will also search informally or formally through the network they know, even if there is a danger of indirect or structural discrimination, e.g. when student jobs are reserved for family members of their own staff[56].

The importance of this network is also demonstrated in this report, especially in the chapter on student jobs, where it is found that students are more likely to find employment in sectors where non-students of their national origin are also over-represented. In previous reports, we have observed that the 'target group' reductions[57] for first-time hires more often benefited people of national origins from whom more self-employed people are drawn, suggesting that a self-employed person recruiting someone for the first time will be more inclined to look within their own network. This is a double-edged sword: it may increase the chances of integration into the labour market, but it may also mean that one ends up in the same lower quality job as the previous generation - or, as for the previous generation, that the chances of working remain limited. The position of certain origin groups in large cities, as mentioned in the previous report[58], seems to illustrate this. In cities where a large group of a particular national origin has been present for a long time, the younger generations of these groups often find it easier to find their place in the labour market.

5.3. Network and role models

The origin can also feed certain norms or expectations (without necessarily determining them, it should be noted). What is a good degree, what is a good job? Who is supposed to work, and until what age? What should society provide, and what should I provide myself? What is the importance of entrepreneurship? How (un)acceptable is undeclared work? Inevitably, this will explain differences in the labour market for which we cannot immediately find another explanation. Why do young people of certain origins choose a certain field of study much more often, why are they overrepresented in certain sectors and not in others? Or to stay within the Belgian origin: why is there much more student

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54 For example, for master's graduates in 'health care and social protection' of Belgian origin, the employment rate remains 12.2 percentage points higher than for those of non-EU origin (94.4% compared to 82.2%), while they have the highest employment rate.

55 In our country, the VDAB, Forem, Actiris and the Arbeitsamt.

56 In order to give equal opportunities to all, Unia recommends that only a part of the available student jobs be open to family members of the staff. See: Unia (2017), 'Holiday jobs cannot be reserved for staff's family'. Unia has written a full opinion on this: https://www.unia.be/files/Documenten/Aanbevelingen-advies/NL-AVIS_190_du_26_juin_2017_(2).pdf.

57 Beneficiaries of reduced social security contributions. See: FPS ELSD and Unia (2020), Socio-economic Monitoring 2019, Chapter 2, p. 77-79.

58 FPS ELSD and Unia (2020), Socio-economic Monitoring 2019, Chapter 3: Cities.

work in Flanders than in Wallonia? Even if it remains complicated: is the greater presence of a certain group in incapacity to work due to more difficult working conditions in the sectors in which they found themselves (depending on their network...), to their age profile, or does the social acceptability of this benefit scheme in their group also play a role? And what about the supply of student jobs in the different regions?

In previous reports we have stressed the importance of strong role models. Anyone who sees people in their own network who have found a good job through successful studies, anyone who sees parents who combine a job with family life... will be motivated to do the same. Conversely, those who see that studying does not help and still leads to unemployment and small, insecure jobs will be discouraged. It is therefore often a question of breaking this vicious circle. The positive role that networks can play, the dynamics that can be set in motion, were also highlighted in the previous report, in the chapter on large cities, but they are also apparent, for example, in the over-representation of certain national origins in better paid sectors or in STEM studies[59]. This is also evident in the chapter on student work: for young people with a foreign background, it appears easier to find a student job in the sector where their origin is most strongly represented. The fact that student work also gives them a boost on the labour market is also due to a network effect. The fact that students' work also gives them a boost on the labour market more often might be due to a network effect as well.

5.4. The gender perspective

The position of women in our labour market, irrespective of their national origin, is less favourable than that of men. The gender wage gap may be relatively small in our country, but women work more often part-time, interrupt their careers more frequently and their employment rate is still lower than that of men.

However, for women in many foreign origin groups, the wage gap is much larger than on average and exceeds the sum of disadvantages related to origin and gender, revealing a certain form of intersectional discrimination[60]. Family situation plays an important role. Differences in the use of childcare services were mentioned earlier. An IMMILAB study[61] also finds that gender inequality in the distribution of paid work after the birth of a child increases more strongly in non-EU origin groups than for an average Belgian household, and that even when entitled to parental leave, mothers of Moroccan and Turkish origin make less use of it. When asked, women who participated in a VIONA survey[62] also link their chances on the labour market to their level of education, language skills and social network.

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59   On the role of the network and the environment, see also Schüller, S. and Chakraborty, T., Ethnic enclaves and immigrant economic integration, IZA World of Labor 2022: 287 doi: 10.15185/izawol.287.v2.

60   Piton C. and Rycx F., The Heterogeneous Employment Outcomes of First- and Second-Generation Immigrants in Belgium.

61   Maes, J., Wood, J., Marynissen, L. and Neels, K. (in review), The gender division of paid work over family formation: variation by couples' migration background. Advances in Life Course Research.

62   Departement Werk en Sociale Economie / Departement Binnenlands Bestuur Wegwijs naar werk, Longitudinale analyse en evaluatie van inburgerings- en activeringstrajecten in Flanders, 2005-2016. Eindrapport van de VIONA Leerstoel 'Migratie, Integratie & Arbeidsmarkt': "Vrouwen van de eerste generatie blijken hun arbeidsmarktuitkomsten en een gebrek aan motivatie te relateren aan hun beperkt onderwijsniveau, taalkennis en sociaal netwerk. Daarnaast suggereren de kwalitatieve analyses ook dat beperkte informatie met betrekking tot de arbeidsmarkt en opvangmogelijkheden struikelblokken vormen voor deze generatie. Als gevolg opteren deze vrouwen om hun tijd vaker te besteden aan de opvoeding van hun kinderen. Hoewel tweede generatie vrouwen van bij het begin onderwijs hebben gelopen in België, zien we dat zij in eerste instantie door moeilijkheden in hun schoolloopbaan sneller worden geconfronteerd met precaire arbeidsmarktposities in vergelijking met autochtone vrouwen. Factoren die door deze vrouwen zelf aangehaald worden zijn enerzijds een gebrek aan opvolging van hun eerste generatie ouders (omwille van beperkte institutionele kennis en menselijk kapitaal) en anderzijds advies dat ze krijgen vanuit het onderwijs zelf. Ook geven vrouwen aan de schoolloopbaan vroegtijdig te verlaten omwille van een precaire financiële situatie. Tot slot bleek de zoektocht naar werk ook bemoeilijkt te worden door een gebrek aan een sociaal netwerk en rolmodellen."

6. The role of migration

In previous reports, labour market participation of recent migrants was analysed according to their reason for stay. In the present report, we were also able to look for the first time at an often-neglected channel of migration: posting[63].

6.1. The effect of migration for work is rapidly diminishing

Those who come to our country to work find a job more easily than those who come for another reason[64]. The study conducted in the context of IMMILAB[65] also shows that foreign workers who migrated to Belgium with the concrete prospect of a job have more job opportunities than migrant workers who migrated to Belgium for economic reasons but without a concrete job offer, at least in the short term. In the previous report, however, we saw that this effect decreases rapidly, which again underlines the difficulty of access to our labour market. What we were not able to examine then was the role of work experience in the country of origin; in our approach this would require the use of foreign administrative data and their linkage with our own, which is beyond the limits of practical and administrative feasibility at present.

6.2. Posting

The issue of posting is a hitherto neglected issue. Posting in Belgium is a diverse phenomenon, involving both mobility flows from member states that joined before 2004 (EU-14 and Belgium) and those that joined after (EU-13). Posting is a necessary counterpart to the free movement of services in the European Union, which is also widely used by Belgian companies sending employees to other countries. It is a phenomenon that is very strictly regulated at EU level, the regulations of which

have been subject to various adjustments in recent years and the possibilities of control have been increased. Due to the nature of the phenomenon and its inherent complexity, it remains difficult to give a complete and nuanced picture.

Posting is very important in labour-intensive sectors such as construction, transport, and metalworking, but specialised services in high value-added sectors also occupy an important place in the posting landscape. Posting is therefore not only a phenomenon that occurs between 'poorer' and 'richer' Member States, an impression that is sometimes given in the debate on social dumping. It is true that the share of EU-13 sending countries has been increasing in recent years.

An important element is the posting of third-country nationals (non-EU nationals), who are posted from EU Member States to Belgium without the need for an additional permit. The posting of third-country nationals is an important and fast-growing phenomenon: in 2020, 21% of postings were made by non-EU citizens, compared to 8% in 2010.

This fundamentally changes the scale and pattern of labour migration to countries like Belgium. In the country of origin, they are, after all, migrant workers, and therefore highly dependent on their employer (for access to the European labour market, among other things). On the other hand, they are posted (often by the same employer) to other member states, which leads to a high degree of uncertainty about their social security and labour rights and difficult social control.

In chapter 6 we give a more detailed picture of posting than has been possible so far. A weak point, however, is the trajectory aspect: do people ever

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63 Posting is the temporary sending of workers employed in one EU Member State to another EU Member State to perform a service contract, in the context of the free movement of services.

64 See also Lens, D., Marx, I. and Vujić, S. (2018), Does Migration Motive Matter for Migrants' Employment Outcomes?

65 Idem: "Our results also show the importance of differentiating between labour migrants with and without a job prior to migration. The former have employment levels slightly higher than those of the native-born, whereas the latter lag somewhat behind natives, especially among males."

end up in our country via another status after their posting? Similarly, a complete mapping of employment conditions, including those of the country from which the person was posted, does not seem to be fully possible at the moment and might require a (very difficult) international linkage of the data.

Recommendations

As in previous editions, we end this report with a series of policy recommendations, addressed to the various authorities and social partners. We base these recommendations on our own findings, but we also draw on what international institutions (notably the European Commission, the OECD, and the IMF) and national bodies (such as the High Council for Employment) have recommended to our country in recent years. These recommendations do not, of course, necessarily reflect the policies of current or future governments in our country.

1. A large, mobile, and productive labour market

The Belgian federal government and the Communities and Regions[66] have set themselves the target of achieving an employment rate (20–64 year-olds) of 80% by 2030[67] in the belief that this is essential both in the context of macroeconomic and budgetary policy and to ensure the functioning of the labour market and social cohesion in our society. The objective has also been communicated to the European Commission in the context of the European Pillar of Social Rights. It can only be achieved if the groups that are at a disadvantage in our labour market start to catch up in a major way. For this reason, sub-targets have been set. Belgium commits itself, for example, to raising the employment rate of the low-skilled from 46.3% in 2019 to at least 58.4% in 2030 and the employment rate of people with a non-EU nationality from 44.2% in 2019 to 58.3% in 2030. The full overview can be found in the table below.

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66   Decision of the Interministerial Conference of 14 December 2021.
67   The same objective is also enshrined in the Federal Government Agreement and the Flemish Government Agreement.

TABLE 50: **Targets in the context of the European Pillar of Social Rights**

Headline employment targets		
	Level 2019	Target 2030
Employment rate of 20–64 year-olds	70.5%	> 80.0%
Gender gap in employment	8 pp	< 4 pp
Employment subtargets		
	Level 2019	Target 2030
Employment rate of low-skilled	46.3%	> 58.4%
Employment rate of people of non-EU nationality	44.2%	> 58.3%
Employment rate of 55–64-year-olds	52.1%	> 68.8%
Employment gap for people with disabilities	33.1 pp	< 24.5 pp
Percentage NEET 15-29	13.0%	< 8.6%
Women in management positions	36.0%	> 43.1%
Proportion of children < 3 years old in formal childcare	55.5%	> 61.0%
Gender pay gap (GPG)	5.8%	< 2.9%
Proportion of workers at risk of poverty or social exclusion	6.2%	< 4.9%
Transitions from temporary to permanent contracts (average over 3 years)	38.5%	> 40.7%
Involuntary part-time employment	5.8%	< 5.6%
Headline target in education and training		
	Level 2016	Target 2030
Participation in education and training of 25–64-year-olds	39.4%	> 60.9%
Education and training subtargets		
	Level 2019	Target 2030
Participation of 55–64-year-olds in education and training	24.6%*	> 49.8%
Participation of the low-skilled in education and training	16.3%*	> 32.6%
Early school leavers 18-24-year-old	8.4%	< 7.4%
High-skilled persons 30-34-year-old	47.5%	> 50.1%
Proportion of people with at least basic digital skills	61.0%	> 70.4%**

*2016

**Indicative target

The High Council for Employment (HCE) has calculated that this will require, in absolute terms, a total of 636,000 additional jobs by 2030, including 88,000 for low-skilled people and 36,000 for people born outside the EU[68]. To do this, the HCE used data from the Labour Force Survey and of course did not use the origin groups as we know them in this report. In the table below, we have converted the targets.

68 High Council for Employment 2022, European Pillar of Social Rights: Opinion on Belgium's national employment and training objectives.

TABLE 51: **Employment rate targets by national origin**[69]

	Level 2019	Target 2030
EU-14	63.0%	72.3%
EU-13	65.9%	73.7%
EU Candidate	53.7%	66.8%
Other European	54.1%	67.1%
Maghreb	50.5%	65.2%
Sub-Saharan Africa	52.0%	66.0%
Near/Middle East	40.6%	60.3%
Oceania/Far East	53.6%	66.8%
Other Asian	55.6%	67.8%
North American	40.1%	60.0%
South/Central American	58.3%	69.2%

Source: Datawarehouse labour market and social protection, CBSS.
Calculations and processing: FPS ELSD on the basis of the HCE 2022.

The table shows the scale of the challenge. It is clear that the solution does not lie in shifting jobs from one group of origin to another, in order to achieve a proportional distribution of the current job supply: greater proportionality should be achieved through the creation of additional jobs. On the other hand, it also appears that the objective cannot be achieved without strengthening the position of people of foreign origin, which directly means that any policy aiming at reaching the 80% will almost by definition benefit people of foreign origin. In addition to increasing the number of jobs, stronger productivity growth is needed[70]. One of the keys to achieving this is greater mobility in our labour market.

› Prioritise investments, measures and reforms that maximally expand the labour market and create a maximum of additional quality jobs.
› Further reduce taxation by shifting the tax burden away from labour, taking into account social consequences.
› Focus target group policy on low wages and consider the introduction of work-related allowances to further reduce the tax wedge.

› Strengthen mobility in the labour market[71].
› As far as possible, encourage not only the unemployed, but also inactive people (stay-at-home parents, migrants who come for reasons other than work, etc.) to find a job and direct them towards sustainable and stable jobs.
› Stop and reverse the increasing exits into incapacity to work and disability, through a stronger preventive policy, creating more suitable jobs and putting more emphasis on employability.
› Encourage business creation and entrepreneurship, including adequate support for start-up entrepreneurs.
› Make the most of job creation in the green and digital economy and opportunities to create jobs through teleworking[72] and other flexible solutions as they emerged during the COVID-19 crisis, while respecting workers' rights.
› Eliminate shortages in the labour market through an appropriate training policy and a better match between job offers and real needs of companies. Employers should check whether the high requirements set out in job advertisements are really necessary to fill the position. Consideration could be given to the introduction of certain maximum standards for educational qualifications, language skills, etc. for certain job levels.
› People of foreign origin should not have to pay disproportionately for the fact that the problem of ageing is being addressed through longer working lives and higher employment rates of 55-64-year-olds.
› Ensure that HR departments in companies put as much effort as possible in keeping every employee active in a sustainable way, both within and outside the company.
› Our country spends a lot of money on active labour market policy, but not always with the expected result. Increase the efficiency of this policy through a culture of monitoring, evaluation, and social bargaining.

69 We have developed a methodology consistent with that of the High Council for Employment. However, less detailed data had to be used, as we do not have such detailed origin groups for neighbouring countries.
70 See also OECD 2019, In-Depth Productivity Review of Belgium.
71 See also the recommendations of the FPS Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue (2022), Etat des lieux de la mobilité professionnelle en Belgique.
72 Telework can provide opportunities for people who would otherwise have difficulties in getting to work, such as people with disabilities. On the other hand, people with disabilities sometimes face more obstacles when teleworking (an adapted desk, adapted software and hardware, a Braille keyboard, etc. are not always available at home), so employers and employees should be given additional support.

> Continue efforts to map the posting of workers in as much detail as possible and fight against all abuses of the system. Continue international cooperation in this area, notably through the European Labour Authority (ELA), and integrate more strongly the issue of "third country nationals", in particular through cooperation between ELA and the third countries concerned.

2. Unravelling the segmentation

Attention should be paid not only to the quantity of work but also to the quality of work. To this end, the large difference between the primary and secondary labour market must gradually disappear. This will benefit the flows between the two, mobility and thus employment.

> Avoid unnecessary distinctions in labour legislation on the basis of the type of contract, the nature of the employer, etc. The possibilities of small and medium-sized enterprises must of course be taken into account, but without their workers being harmed.
> Harmonise as much as possible the rights to parental leave, time credit/career breaks and access to training between all statuses.
> Increase the transparency of the labour market (wages, working conditions...) and benefit systems. For different benefits, a "one stop shop" can be introduced. Integrate unemployment and social welfare benefit into one system, with support that does not focus on the nature of the benefit, but on the opportunities on the labour market.
> Ensure that for every child there is a quality, affordable, easily accessible, and flexible childcare facility. Make it as easy as possible for policies on care for the elderly, housing help, community care, etc. to be combined with the labour market.

3. More equal opportunities and diversity in the labour market

The more we describe the different factors that influence inequality in the labour market, the more obvious the role of discrimination becomes. As mentioned above, discrimination can take many different forms. The indicators presented in this report mainly reflect its structural nature. Therefore, a strong anti-discrimination policy must also be complemented by a diversity policy. Once again, this report shows that people of foreign origin do not have equal opportunities everywhere and that diversity in certain sectors or types of jobs is too low despite the fact that diversity is an economic asset.

> Focus the labour market more on skills and less on diplomas. The sectors can play a central role in this respect, by also addressing, during discussions on job classifications, the question of which requirements (language skills, diploma...) are reasonable for certain jobs and which are not.
> Quotas and numerical targets can be useful, but they can never be stigmatising. Public authorities and social partners should therefore actively promote instruments such as positive action plans[73].
> Raise awareness of existing diversity within companies and sectors to provide role models.
> With a well-developed diversity policy, companies can manage diversity in their company in an inclusive way. The starting point is to take stock of the company's situation in order to objectify the challenges, define objectives and evaluate the policy. Monitoring workforce diversity is an important part of this. This can be done

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73 Unia (2018) has published a Framework Note 'Positive Action on the Labour Market', see: https://www.unia.be/files/Documenten/Aanbevelingen-advies/Note_cadre_sur_les_actions_positives_2018.pdf.

either through administrative data aggregated at company level (compliance with the rules of confidentiality must of course be guaranteed) or through an employee survey[74]. This report contains sufficient figures to serve as a reference.

› Shortage sectors - in fact all sectors - should actively seek to leverage greater diversity (following the example of campaigns to encourage girls into STEM studies, for example) through awareness-raising measures.

› In all labour market and training measures, ensure that disadvantaged groups (including people of foreign origin) are over-represented, in order

to catch up.

› Facilitate the recognition of diplomas obtained, training courses followed, and skills acquired abroad, including in the context of individual training accounts on which the various authorities are currently working.

› Promote positive actions in companies and sectors.

› The public sector should play an exemplary role. Remove existing legal restrictions and tackle real restrictions (difficult recognition of experience acquired abroad, long recruitment procedures, privileged diplomas...).

4. **Adequately tackling discrimination**

In recent years, steps have been taken to tackle discrimination through situational testing such as 'mystery calls'. It is necessary to continue in this way, paying particular attention to those discriminations that are more difficult to detect.

› Identify and combat discrimination in hiring more effectively. Situational testing can help.

› Use datamining[75] ("big data") and artificial intelligence techniques to detect possible cases of discrimination, thus enabling inspection services to targeted controls[76]. To this end, it is necessary to have the possibility of linking the databases so that inspectorates have access to aggregated and processed data from various government databases.

› Avoid statistical and indirect discrimination through awareness-raising campaigns.

› Develop appropriate anti-discrimination policies in companies for each stage of the employment

cycle (recruitment, employment, promotion, and layoff). By carrying out a risk analysis, employers can identify the main risks of discrimination in their company and the preventive measures needed to avoid discrimination. They can rely on the support of prevention services for well-being at work. Concrete measures can then be taken to avoid discrimination.

› Strengthen targeted controls on the working and living conditions of "third country nationals" who come to our country through posting.

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74 More information can be found in the note "Diversity monitoring: do it yourself!" at www.ediv.be. Unia's online tool for a diverse and inclusive work environment.

75 Unia has developed a number of guidelines for using data mining as a warning of discrimination, see https://www.unia. be/files/Documenten/Aanbevelingen-advies/2020-11-18_Recommandation_Unia_Datamining_FR.pdf.

76 Unia has made a number of recommendations on 'Research and Monitoring of Discrimination in Labour Relations by the Federal Labour Inspectorate', see: https://www.unia.be/files/Documenten/Aanbevelingen-advies/FED_-_165_-_Opsporing_en_toezicht_door_de_arbeidsinspectie.pdf.

5. A solid education that gives opportunities to all

Education determines very strongly a person's opportunities in the labour market. A stronger education system - starting with childcare facilities - that gives everyone an equal chance, much more than is the case today, is an absolute necessity to secure our country's future.

› Improve the quality and accessibility of childcare services and promote their use.
› Make education more inclusive[77]. This requires a comprehensive approach to fight against segregation based on socio-economic status and origin that strongly characterises education in our country[78].
› Make the teaching profession more attractive, provide them with better support, and place the most experienced teachers in the most difficult schools. Reduce the cascade system, the associated practice of repetition and the impact of stereotypes in guidance.
› Revalue technical and vocational education. All types of education pathways should be offered in the same school, and transitions between all orientations (including from technical to general education) should be facilitated.
› Schools should start from a common core for all, and stereotyping and early orientation must be avoided.

› Strengthen teacher training: it should prepare teachers for the diversity in the classroom and make them actors of a more inclusive education from kindergarten onwards.
› Integrate as far as possible the combination of learning and work (dual training) in all forms and levels of education from secondary level onwards. More generally, the transition from school to work should be facilitated.
› Reassess the role of student jobs in financing education, training and gaining labour market experience.
› Accelerate the recognition of foreign degrees and make it free for all and, if necessary, set up "bridging courses" to quickly fill the gaps of a training abroad.
› Promote as much as possible the combination of work and training in the training policy of public employment services and in lifelong learning in general.
› Make more use of labour market information to inform people about study choices; further assess higher education colleges and universities about the labour market opportunities of their studies.

6. An appropriate migration and integration policy

Obviously, the integration of people of foreign origin in the labour market cannot be considered independently of a broader migration and integration policy. The focus must be placed on labour market opportunities and positive dynamics.

› Labour-oriented immigration can be an added value for both the migrant and for our society, but the labour market integration of migrants who gravitate around the migrant for work (family members) should be optimized from the outset. This is also important when it comes to attracting highly skilled migrants, who will take into account

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77 OECD, Economic Survey 2022 (forthcoming): "To prevent the transmission of disadvantages across generations, social segregation in compulsory education should be addressed, in particular through better-designed school choice policies, higher mobility between general and vocational tracks, and stronger incentives and training for teachers".
78 Unia (2018). Diversity Barometer: Education, p. 28.

the opportunities that will be available here for their spouse, children, etc.

› Even those who initially choose not to be active, should be offered employment counselling and even those who come here (initially) on a temporary basis can be mobilised on the labour market.

› It is important to have a policy towards newcomers, but, as shown once again this report, it is at most a first step and work needs to be done on a long-term follow-up.

› A strong integration policy and a strong local policy can create a positive dynamic. Cities and municipalities can be encouraged to do this by regional authorities, and an exchange of good practice between local authorities can be established.

› Create space, especially at the local level, for pilot plans and experiments involving all actors.

7. A strengthened statistical apparatus

As already mentioned, in this fifth Monitoring we came up against the limitations of the system: the data from the Labour Market and Social Protection Datawarehouse that we used to receive for analysis in our institutions must now be consulted on site at the Crossroads Bank of Social Security, a time-consuming and inflexible procedure that puts a strain on our analytical capacity. In the meantime, solutions are being sought with the Crossroads Bank and various research institutes, which are absolutely necessary for this report and other similar publications, as well as academic research on diversity, to remain possible in the future.

› Increase the capacity of the Labour Market and Social Protection Datawarehouse, both in terms of processing data requests and in terms of assisting requesters, so that they do not have to make time-consuming new requests.

› Restore access to data for processing purposes within one's own institution (e.g. via 'remote access').

› Make data protection and privacy rules sufficiently clear and predictable and continue to allow access to data for scientific analysis and policy development.

› Minimize the time of processing of data sources by the Datawarehouse.

› In the NSSO declaration, ask for information on the job category in the job classification and on the ISCO profession code.

› Make night and shift work, as well as Saturday and Sunday work, identifiable in the Datawarehouse.

› Finalise the integration of data from international institutions (in particular European institutions).

› Link missing teaching and training data to the Datawarehouse.

Annexes

The full annexes with details of the available crossings can be found on the FPS ELSD website: https://emploi.belgique.be/fr/statistiques.

List of joint committees

100	Auxiliary Joint Committee for blue-collar workers
101	National Joint Mining Commission
102	Joint Committee for the Quarry Industry
104	Joint Committee for the Iron Industry
105	Joint Committee for the Non-ferrous metals
106	Joint Committee for the Cement Industry
107	Joint Committee for the Master tailors, tailors and seamstresses
109	Joint Committee for the Clothing and garment-manufacturing industry
110	Joint Committee for Textiles Care
111	Joint Committee for metal, machinery and electrical construction
112	Joint Committee for the Garage industry
113	Joint Committee for Ceramics
114	Joint Committee for Brickworks
115	Joint Committee for the Glass Industry
116	Joint Committee for the Chemical industry
117	Joint Committee for Petroleum industry and trade
118	Joint Committee for the Food sector
119	Joint Committee for the Trade in foodstuffs
120	Joint Committee for the Textile industry and knitwear
121	Joint Committee for Cleaning
124	Joint Committee for Construction
125	Joint Committee for the Wood industry
126	Joint Committee for Upholstery and woodwork
127	Joint Committee for the Trade in fuels
128	Joint Committee for the Hides and leather business and substitutes
129	Joint Committee for the Production of paper pulp, paper and cardboard
130	Joint Committee for Printing, graphic arts and daily newspapers
132	Joint Committee for Technical agricultural and horticultural works
133	Joint Committee of the Tobacco industry
136	Joint Committee for Paper and cardboard processing
139	Joint Committee for Inland shipping
140	Joint Committee for Transport and logistics
142	Joint Committee for Companies where recovered raw materials are revalorised
143	Joint Committee for the Sea fisheries
144	Joint Committee for Agriculture
145	Joint Committee for Horticulture
146	Joint Committee for Forestry
149	Joint Committee for the Sector related to metal, machinery and electrical construction
152	Joint Committee for the Subsidised providers of independent education
200	Auxiliary joint Committee for white-collar workers
201	Joint Committee for Self-employed retailers
202	Joint Committee for White-collar workers from food retailing
203	Joint Committee for White-collar workers from the hard stone quarries
205	Joint Committee for White-collar workers from the coal mine industry

207	Joint Committee for White-collar workers from the chemicals industry
209	Joint Committee for White-collar workers from the fabricated metal products industry
210	Joint Committee for White-collar workers from the steel industry
211	Joint Committee for White-collar workers from the petroleum industry and trade
214	Joint Committee for White-collar workers from the textile industry and knitwear
215	Joint Committee for White-collar workers from the clothing and ready-to-wear
216	Joint Committee for Notary clerks
217	Joint Committee for Casino employees
219	Joint Committee for services and bodies responsible for technical control and verification of conformity
220	Joint Committee for White-collar workers from the food industry
221	Joint Committee for White-collar workers from the paper industry
222	Joint Committee for White-collar workers from the paper and cardboard processing industry
223	National Joint Committee for Sport
224	Joint Committee for White-collar workers of the non-ferrous metals
225	Joint Committee for White-collar workers from subsidised providers of independent education
226	Joint Committee for White-collar workers from international trade, transport and logistics
227	Joint Committee for the Audiovisual sector
300	National Labour Council
301	Joint Committee for the Port industry
302	Joint Committee for the Hotel industry
303	Joint Committee for the Film industry
304	Joint Committee for the Entertainment industry
306	Joint Committee for the Insurance sector
307	Joint Committee for Brokerage and insurance agencies
309	Joint Committee for Stock exchange companies
310	Joint Committee for the Banks
311	Joint Committee for the large retailers
312	Joint Committee for the Department stores
313	Joint Committee for pharmacies and dispensaries
314	Joint Committee for Hairdressing and beauty care
315	Joint Committee for Trade aviation
316	Joint Committee for Merchant shipping
317	Joint Committee for Surveillance and/or oversight services
318	Joint Committee for Family and elder care services
319	Joint Committee for Educational and housing facilities and services
320	Joint Committee for Funeral homes
321	Joint Committee for Wholesale and distribution of pharmaceuticals
322	Joint Committee for Temporary work agencies and accredited providers of neighbourhood work or services
323	Joint Committee for the management of building, real estate agents and service-providers
324	Joint Committee for the Diamond Industry and Trade
325	Joint Committee for Public lending institutions
326	Joint Committee for Gas and electricity compagnies
327	Joint Committee for Social and sheltered workshops
328	Joint Committee for urban and regional transport
329	Joint Committee for the Socio-cultural sector
330	Joint Committee for Health facilities and services
331	Joint Committee for the Flemish welfare and health sector

332	Joint Committee for the French-speaking and German-speaking welfare and health sector
333	Joint Committee for tourist attractions
334	Joint Committee for the Public lotteries
335	Joint Committee for the Provision of services and support to businesses and the self-employed
336	Joint Committee for the liberal professions
337	Auxiliary joint Committee for the non-profit sector
339	Joint Committee for recognised social housing companies
340	Joint Committee for Orthopaedic technologies
341	Joint Committee for Intermediation in banking and investment services

LIST OF NACE CODES - NACE-BEL 2008*

A. Agriculture, forestry and fishing

01	Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities
02	Forestry and logging
03	Fishing and aquaculture

B. Mining and quarrying

05	Mining of coal and lignite
06	Extraction of crude petroleum and natural gas
07	Mining of metal ores
08	Other mining and quarrying
09	Mining support service activities

C. Manufacturing

10	Manufacture of food products
11	Manufacture of beverages
12	Manufacture of tobacco products
13	Manufacture of textiles
14	Manufacture of wearing apparel
15	Manufacture of leather and related products
16	Manufacture of wood and of products of wood and cork, except furniture; manufacture of articles of straw and plaiting materials
17	Manufacture of paper and paper products
18	Printing and reproduction of recorded media
19	Manufacture of coke and refined petroleum products
20	Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products
21	Manufacture of basic pharmaceutical products and pharmaceutical preparations
22	Manufacture of rubber and plastic products
23	Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products
24	Manufacture of basic metals
25	Manufacture of fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment
26	Manufacture of computer, electronic and optical products
27	Manufacture of electrical equipment
28	Manufacture of machinery and equipment not elsewhere classified
29	Manufacture and assembling of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers
30	Manufacture of other transport equipment
31	Manufacture of furniture
32	Other manufacturing
33	Repair and installation of machinery and equipment

D. Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply

35	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply

E. Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities

36	Water collection, treatment and supply
37	Sewerage
38	Waste collection, treatment and disposal activities; materials recovery
39	Remediation activities and other waste management services

F. Construction

41	Construction of buildings; development of building projects
42	Civil engineering
43	Specialised construction activities

G. Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles

45	Wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
46	Wholesale trade excluding repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
47	Retail trade excluding repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles

H. Transportation and storage

49	Land transport and transport via pipelines
50	Water transport
51	Air transport
52	Warehousing and support activities for transportation
53	Postal and courier activities

I. Accomodation and food service activities

55	Accommodation
56	Food and beverage service activities

J. Information and communication

58	Publishing activities
59	Motion picture, video and television programme production; sound recording and music publishing activities
60	Radio and television programming and broadcasting activities
61	Telecommunications
62	Computer programming, consultancy and related activities
63	Information services activities

K. Financial and insurance activities

64	Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding
65	Insurance, reinsurance and pension funding, except compulsory social security
66	Activities auxiliary to financial services and insurance activities

L. Real estate activities

68	Real estate activities

M. Professional, scientific and technical activities

69	Legal and accounting activities
70	Activities of head office; management consultancy activities
71	Architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis
72	Scientific research and development
73	Advertising and market research
74	Other professional, scientific and technical activities
75	Veterinary activities

N. Administration and support service activities

77	Rental and leasing activities
78	Employment activities
79	Travel agency, tour operators reservation services and related activities
80	Security and investigation activities
81	Services to building and landscape activities
82	Office administrative, office support and other business support activities

O. Public administration and defence ; compulsory social security

| 84 | Public administration and defence; compulsory social security |

P. Education

| 85 | Education |

Q. Human health and social work activities

86	Human health activities
87	Residential care activities
88	Social work activities without accommodation

R. Arts, entertainment and recreation

90	Creative, art and entertainment activities
91	Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities
92	Gambling and betting activities
93	Sports activities and amusement and recreation activities

S. Other service activities

94	Activities of membership organisations
95	Repair of computers and personal and household goods
96	Other personal activities

T. Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods -and services- producing activities of households for own use

| 97 | Activities of households as employers of domestic personnel |
| 98 | Undifferentiated goods – and services- producing activities of private households for own use |

U. Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies

| 99 | Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies |

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