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Brussels Studies fact sheet. The need for teachers in the Brussels Region by 2020

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1. More children, more classes, more teachers

1. For over a decade the population of the Region's youngest residents has been rising steadily. After the preschool years, the increase has now reached the primary and secondary school ages. This growth generates additional needs in infrastructure, but also in teaching staff. Although education is not one of its explicit competences, the Brussels Capital Region has had to become involved in this area. Its interest can be justified by the multiple direct and indirect effects that problems in the realm of education can have on areas of regional competence¹. More importantly however, the Region can help solve the staffing problems thanks to its competences relating to the jobs market.

2. In this context of demographic growth, thus the need to adapt school offerings, beyond the question of infrastructure (figure 1), this synopsis² aims to describe the tensions between the supply and demand of staffing by the 2019-2020 schoolyear.

2. Estimating supply and demand: methodology

3. The demand is estimated by evaluating the needs in teachers based on the expected population of students in the Brussels Capital Region in 2019-2020. A school enrolment rate in Brussels along with a breakdown by linguistic Community, level and stream of education are applied to the number of school age children as seen in population forecasts. The study estimates that from 2013-2014 to 2019-2020 the school population in Brussels will grow by about 24 000 students, that is nearly 20 000 on the French-speaking side and some 4 000 on the Dutch-speaking side. The numbers will increase particularly in the age group of 6 to 16 years, with the highest number aged 9 to 13. The estimated need for teachers is based on applying the 2013-2014 teaching staff rates (full-time equivalent – FTE – per student) to the number of students foreseen in 2019-2020.

4. The supply is estimated by evaluating the number of teachers still working in 2019-2020 together with those entering the profession from now until then, and assuming that the new teachers will be hired in accordance with the same dynamics as those observed recently. The

¹ For a presentation on education in the Brussels Capital Region, see WAYENS, Benjamin, JANSSENS, Rudi and VAESEN, Joost, 2013. BSI synopsis. Education in Brussels: complex crisis management. *Brussels Studies*. 2013. N° 70, pp. 128. Available online at www.brusselsstudies.be

² The methodology and the results were presented and discussed in detail in MARISSAL, Pierre, VERMEULEN, Sofie, QUITTELIER, Benoit, JANSSENS, Rudi, DELVAUX, Bernard and WAYENS, Benjamin, 2016. *Besoin d'enseignants en Région bruxelloise (Need for teachers in the Brussels Region)*. Brussels: IRIS editions, Brussels Institute for Statistics and Analysis. Les cahiers de l'IBSA/Cahiers van het BISA, 5. Available online at http://statistics.brussels/files/publications/cahiers-de-ibsa/cahiers_de_l_ibsa_n_5_juin_2016

study also takes into account the fact that not all teachers receiving a salary are actually working. They may be on business travel, illness or maternity leave, sabbatical and so on. The supply estimate also integrates an average teacher presence rate to enable a comparison with the demand.

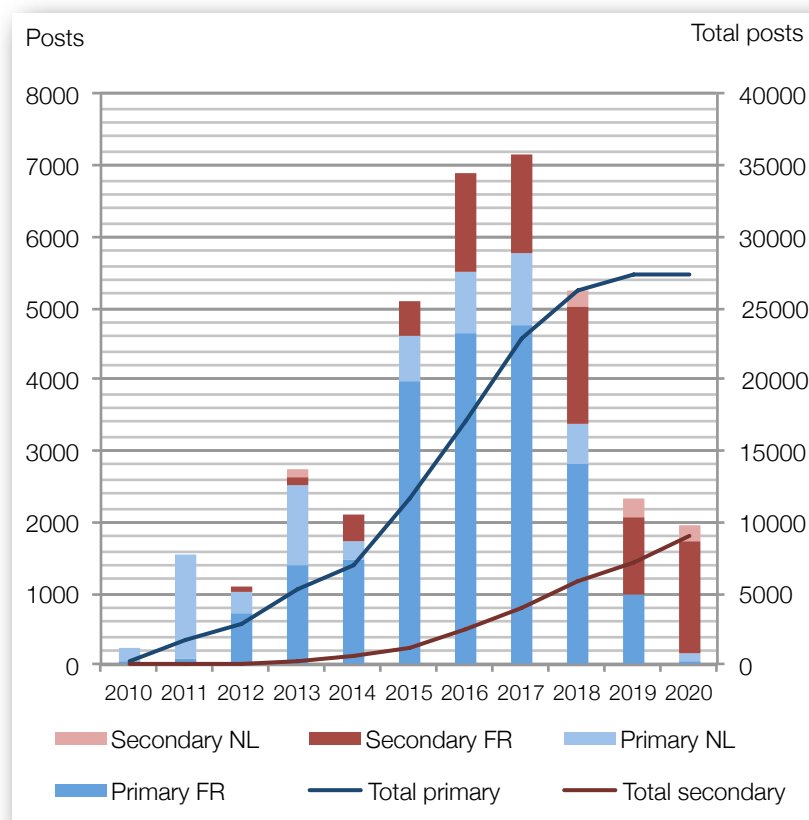


Figure 1. Evolution of school posts created and planned in the Brussels Capital Region from 2010 to 2020. The posts created represent the number of posts actually created between 2010 and 2015. The planned posts represent the number of posts foreseen to create between 2016 and 2020. Source: ADT-ATO, 2016.

3. Unmet needs at stable trends

5. The coverage of needs is evaluated by comparing the supply and the demand, thus making it possible to estimate needs that are not met. Two methods were followed to establish the tensions between supply and demand, the first aiming to establish the maximum and the second the minimum tensions (table 1).

6. The maximum estimate of deficits' in covering needs assumes that the students in all classrooms have a teacher every day: the figures for the 2019-2020 supply and demand are simply compared. Under this method, there is an estimated need for 2 164 additional FTE, 1 822 FTE in the French Community and 342 FTE in the Flemish Community. This ideal example, however, does not correspond to the current reality and is thus an illusion: no organisational system is able to attain an objective that assumes that each teacher absent just one day can be replaced by another teacher without grouping classes together.

7. The minimum estimate of "deficits" considers that the teacher presence rate noted in 2013-2014 is applicable in 2019-2020 and also makes it possible to ensure teachers for the classes. This forecast consists in calculating the difference in supply between 2019-2020 and 2013-2014 and then comparing it to the difference in needs between these same years. This approach yields an estimated additional 436 FTE, 281 in the French Community and 144 in the Flemish Community. This minimum estimate nonetheless cannot be an ideal for it is tantamount to considering that the 2013-2014 presence rate was sufficient to ensure optimum teaching coverage even though we know that some classrooms were permanently without teachers.

8. The number of additional FTE needed by 2019-2020 should thus be somewhere between the maximum estimate (2 164 additional FTE) which tends to over-evaluate needs and a minimum estimate (436 additional FTE) which tends to consider that the present situation must be accepted, with its (too) many teacherless classes. If the gap between these two estimates is quite large, we should note that even the lower deficit level is not negligible. In the French Community the challenges are primarily in secondary education with relatively few in preschool. In the Flemish Community, the expected deficits in primary school are almost as high as in secondary school.

		Estimated needs in FTE in 2019	Maximum estimate of differences		Minimum estimate of differences			
			FTE Supply – FTE need	Need coverage rate (%)	Additional FTE needs from 2013-2014 to 2019-2020	Additional FTE Supply from 2013-2014 to 2019-2020	Additional FTE Supply - Additional FTE Needs	Needs coverage rates (%)
French-speaking system (ordinary and specialised)	Preschool	2,921	31	101.1	154	499	349	324
	Primary	6,114	-413	93.2	713	710	-3	99.6
	Secondary	9,151	-1,064	88.4	750	590	-160	78.7
	Philosophy Courses Prim+Second	1,081	-252	76.7	104	23	-81	22.1
	All levels combined	19,267	-1,699	91.2	1,721	1,822	101	105.9
	All the deficit functions			-1,822			-281	
Flemish system (ordinary)	Preschool	974	-21	97.8	68	99	31	145.6
	Primary	1,351	-140	89.6	152	80	-72	52.6
	Secondary	1,776	-134	92.5	121	102	-19	84.3
	Philosophy Courses Prim+Second	179	-1	99.4	37	8	-29	21.6
	All levels combined	4,280	-296	93.1	378	289	-89	76.9
	All the deficit functions			-342			-155	

Table 1. Maximum and minimum estimate of the gap between the supply and demand of FTE teachers in 2019-2020. The totals differ slightly after rounding off. Source: authors' calculations, based on data provided by ETNIC, 2015 (pay files) and AgODi, 2015 (pay files).

4. Possibilities for intervention

9. Even if the estimates entail a degree of imprecision, it is clear that tensions between supply and demand will persist and even grow more acute in the years to come. The public authorities, whether Community or Regional, will thus have to take a certain number of measures.

10. A first possible level of intervention would be to reduce the needs, in other words to act on various parameters that have an impact on the number of jobs to foresee. This is primarily a question of working to

limit the number of school grade repetitions, but also the number of students steered towards technical, vocational and even specialised studies, forms of education where the teacher coverage rates are much higher than those observed in ordinary general education.

11. A second intervention level consists in reducing the ratio between the number of teachers receiving a salary and the number of teaching posts, yet without increasing the number of teacherless school days. One suggestion would be to improve working conditions to reduce both the number of school days without a teacher and the number of

teachers paid without being on the job. Another suggestion would be improving the efficiency of the system to substitute absent teachers by setting up temporary teacher measures that are common to several organising authorities.

12. A third level of action is to keep more teachers on the job. At the start of the teaching career, three main factors seem to determine whether a teacher will leave the profession. These are all paths for possible improvements: hiring conditions (part-time work and instability), lack of a teaching certificate and actual working conditions. In practical terms, this means encouraging and facilitating the movement of new teachers among the various organising authorities, developing cells specifically aimed at consolidating the part-time or temporary positions of young teachers and developing schemes for mentoring or specific continuing education. It is a question of breaking the linear logic of (ending) careers to maintain motivation through practical measures such as diversifying the work or part time work (including a logic of joint class assignment with a new teacher).

13. The fourth level of intervention consists in making the Brussels market for teachers more attractive. Increasing this relative attraction would make it possible to recruit teachers living outside the Brussels Region or workers from sectors outside education. It would be a question of taking into account the work conditions specific to Brussels and improving them. Mobility (and parking) likely will be an increasingly important factor in this plan. The Brussels Capital Region has levers to act on some of these parameters (mobility, housing costs, etc.) while others are the remit of the Communities. Remobilising those who hold teacher certificates but who have not put them to use in education, and also those holding disciplinary qualifications requires solutions to several questions such as teacher training (or its complement), which must be compatible for people already working or else the valorisation (including salary) of experience acquired outside the education system, two questions that require expenditure and are the responsibility of the Communities.

14. Lastly, there is still time to act further up the line by increasing the number of students graduating with teaching degrees. This means making the teaching profession more attractive, for this profession suf-

fers from a lack of symbolic and financial recognition of a job well done. In view of the high ratio of women in the profession and the possible margin of progression, it would clearly be beneficial to attract more men to the profession. A training offer involving professional reorientation could focus on people who do not have teacher certification as well as on other professionals who already hold such a certification and would like to change posts. Lastly, in view of the high failure rates in the course of studies, setting up measures to help students pass without compromising the required levels of quality would promote a higher rate of graduates. Another need is to anticipate the effect that prolonging teacher training would have on teaching jobs in Brussels.

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