

Teacher Training Reform in French-speaking Belgium: A Controversial Translation Process

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Data analysis: Timeline of the reform policy genesis depicting events, working groups and devices

Map 2: Key “events” (T1-T10), **working groups**¹ (WG1-WG 12) and **devices** (D1-16):

<p>T1: Since 2010 Informal working groups work on identifying themes for teacher training reform (Higher Education Colleges and Universities)</p> <p>A loose set of actors, involving HE Colleges (HEC) in FWB on the one hand and Universities in FWB on the other hand work separately in <i>informal working groups</i> towards identifying themes and problems of teacher education. <i>HE College working groups in each of the various HEC (WG1)</i> unite mainly pedagogical directorate and associated working staff, teaching staff as well as pedagogical advisors with in mind mainly the goal of assembling themes that they deem necessary for a teacher training reform. In HEC E (see grid), two workshop days are organized involving all teaching staff at the College, in order to brainstorm and <i>assemble themes and noteworthy topics (creating a first set of tables and grids) (D1)</i> for reforming teacher training. The subject of teacher training reform seems according to HEC interviewees to have been a preoccupation for the last three decades for teacher training actors. Meanwhile, the <i>six universities unite loosely some academics working on higher education and teacher education, pedagogy and didactics from each university (WG2)</i>. The aim of this loose working group, according to university actor interviewees (see grid, Int1, Int2, Int3, Int4, Int12), is to decide together that it is time for universities to be involved in initial teacher training, which is so far solely organized by HE Colleges.</p> <p>WG1: potentially twelve HEC internal working groups, however for the study, only four were effectually identified. D1: First set of HEC grids pertaining to themes for teacher training to be changed, and program grids WG2: Inter-university loose working group involving at least six universities</p>
<p>T2: Creation of the Four Operators Working Group (GT40, Groupe de Travail 4 Organismes): Higher Education Colleges, Social Promotion Colleges, Art Colleges, Universities</p> <p>The loose informal working group of university actors sends out a <i>proposal (D2)</i> to HE Colleges, Art Colleges and Social Promotion Colleges for a joint collaborative working group; proposing at the same time to be involved jointly in a newly defined teacher training. In 2013 the loose set of actors from the various institutions reform a new working group, naming themselves the <i>4 operators working group (GT40) (WG3)</i>. They begin assembling their various ideas to envisage a teacher training reform to be submitted as a <i>proposal to the Higher Education Ministry of the Federation Wallonia-Brussels Government (D3) (FBW Higher Ed. Ministry: WG4)</i>. On the agenda of GT40 formulated as a <i>note (D4)</i> are the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unity of the profession: a common training basis for all teaching professions (primary, pre-school, secondary) • « Tiling » of the initial teacher training program (Cross-level teaching cycles): allowing preschool teachers to teach up to 2nd primary standard, from 3rd primary to 2nd secondary, 3rd secondary to 6th secondary. • 5 years of initial teacher training leading to a Master’s Degree (Level 7) • Co-Graduation (HE and University joint degree) • Reinforcement of research-based and reflexive professional development • Collaboration between Universities and Higher Education Colleges, especially linking educational/social sciences theory with professional practice <p>WG3: GT40 working group, meeting regularly between 2013 and 2017 at least twice annually. WG4: Higher Education Ministry Officials assembled in Ministry working group D2: Proposal from Universities to HEC, Art and Social Promotion Colleges D3: Proposal to FWB Higher Ed. Ministry</p>
<p>T3: Landscape decree by Minister Marcourt</p>

¹ By **working group**, we understand groups of various actors striving to problematize, build, organize and coordinate the reform, or assemble various interest groups

Simultaneously to T2, in 2013, the then appointed socialist Minister for Higher Education emits a decree, called the **landscape decree (D4)**, proposing a re-landscaping of Higher Education in FWB, following the lines of the Bologna Agreement. Its main features are a harmonizing of the higher education institutions and degrees of Bachelors and Masters, to allow the mobility of students from one type of institution to another according to individual study pathways and requirements. The administration of Higher Education Colleges and Art and Social Promotion Colleges and their degrees offered are to be aligned to the European Higher Education Landscape. Moreover, the decree abolished the previous three large academies (around 3 Universities) in favor of **one Academy of Research and Higher Education (ARES) uniting all Higher Education Institutions (WG5)** and introducing **five Higher Education Poles (WG6)** according to regions and regrouping around five university units in FWB the various HEC and Art and Social Promotion Colleges. This decree is insofar directly linked to teacher training reform, as Higher Education Colleges, Art Colleges and Social Promotion Colleges were required to **transform degrees into European degrees (Bachelor and Masters) (D5)**, thus paving the way for transition of students and their mobility toward university-based training. Moreover, Universities were offering **Masters programs in didactic specialization and aggregation (D6)**, allowing discipline-based students to acquire teaching skills, to be able to teach in higher secondary school.

D4: Landscape decree

D5: HEC Degrees progressively transformed into Bachelors and Masters

D6: University based specialized Masters' program in didactics/pedagogy for trainee teachers or established teachers

WG5: ARES

WG6: 5 Higher Education Poles grouped around 9 universities (Bruxelles (2), Hainaut (3), Liège-Luxembourg, Namur (2), Louvain)

T4: Selection of some points from the GT4O note by Ministry and tender appointed to St. Louis university for study on status quo of teacher training in Wallonia-Brussels Federation.

Between 2013 and 2015 a **note is elaborated and forwarded by the GT4O toward the FWB Higher Education Ministry (D7)** with the points recommending teacher training reform. The Ministry seizes the note, and tenders a **large-scale study (D8)** to a **research team in St. Louis University in Brussels (WG7)**. The study aims at identifying the lacks and gaps of teacher training in FWB Higher Education institutions. Nothing less than a **thousand actors from the field of teacher training (WG8)**, according to the study, are mobilized to participate in the two-year study (Dufrasne, 2013). The main results discuss the lack of quality of teacher training programs throughout FWB and the requirement of teacher training to be reformed, improving quality. A **series of recommendations (D9)**, reuniting previous recommendations issued by various groups of actors and education-based associations and syndicates are forwarded by the research team. A **follow up committee to the reform (WG9)** is created at the Academy of Research and Higher Education (ARES) uniting the different stakeholder representatives of the reform, such as university rectors, HEC directors and Higher Education Ministry Officials.

D7: Note from GT4O toward FWB Higher Ed. Ministry

D8: St. Louis study

D9: Recommendations from St. Louis study

WG7: Research team of St. Louis university in Bruxelles

WG8: Participants/Practitioner in study of St. Louis University

WG9: Follow-up committee of the reform at ARES

T5: 1st version of decree² on reforming teacher training: reform proposal and budget allocation for appointing pedagogical advisors for the reform in each of the four types of organizations.

In 2019, based on a selection of recommendations from the St. Louis study, as well as some points forwarded by the GT4O, the Higher Education Ministry issues a **first decree (D10)** on reforming teacher education. This first version of the decree gathers the following broad proposals:

- Prolonging/upgrading the initial teacher training from 3 years to 5 years (240 Credits), 180 credits for a Bachelor and 60 credits for a Master's degree for pre-school, primary and lower secondary school teachers. A Master's degree with specialization for higher secondary school teachers.
- Cross-level teaching cycles: 1 to 3rd Preschool teachers can teach up to 1st and 2nd primary school (S1), 3rd pre-school up to 6th Primary school (S2), 5th and 6th Primary school up to 1st, 2nd and 3rd secondary school (S3), 3rd – 6th Secondary school (S4).
- A diagnostic test for the mastery of the French language is to be obtained by all trainee teachers. An upgrading of the quality of French teaching for all trainee teachers is proposed.
- A joint degree (Co-graduation) obtained by all trainee teachers through HEC and Universities, as well as Art Colleges and Social Promotion Colleges and Universities.

² https://www.galilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/46261_000.pdf

Moreover, a ***follow-up committee (COCOFIE³) (WG10)*** is allocated through the Ministry uniting all concerned stakeholders in order to process the reform. A ***budget is allocated (D11)*** to each stakeholder institution for employing a full-time pedagogical advisor to the reform.

Around during this time, ***several interinstitutional working groups (WG11)*** are created in each Academic Pole, in order to start joint discussions about how to co-organize the reform between HECs and Universities. And simultaneously, ***inner-institutional working groups in Universities and HECs (and probably Art Colleges, although not part of study) (WG12)*** are re- or newly launched to discuss the organization of the reform within the organizations, uniting various representative actors from different departments/faculties.

D10: First decree of 2019

WG10: First COCOFIE

WG11: First interinstitutional working groups

WG12: First inner-institutional working groups

T6: Change of government (political shift: from socialist Ministry of Higher Education to Liberal Ministry); political declaration note of new Ministry includes a postponing of teacher training reform to 2021.

In September 2019, the ***FWB changes its government (WG13)***, which now involves a Higher Education Minister (female) from the liberal party. The new FWB government ministers issue a ***political declaration (D12)***, in which there is a mention of the intended teacher training reform. This mention elaborates that the process of implementing the reform is delayed by one year (2021). Furthermore, the ***Ministry appoints the ARES with the mission (D13)*** to:

- “Examine the operational capacity of higher education institutions to implement the reform;
- If necessary, adapt the reform in terms of its modalities and implementation;
- Evaluate the cost of organizing the reform of initial teacher education and its integration into the budgetary trajectory;
- Clarify the status of the diagnostic test in French at the beginning of studies.

The government will also use this period to evaluate the cost of the reform of initial teacher training, which will be extended to four years. The estimate will cover a period of at least 20 years.” (p.11, Political Declaration 2019-2024⁴)

The important changes to the initial decree are the delay in implementation, but also the declaration of 4 years of initial teacher training to be envisaged instead of 5 years as previously planned.

WG13: New liberal Higher Education Ministry of FWB

D12: Political declaration of new Higher Ed. Ministry and government

D13: Mission from Ministry to ARES

T7: Issue of Pre-project of modifying the 1st version of the decree under discussion⁵.

In 2020, a ***new decree version (pre-project) (D14)*** is proposed by the Higher Education Ministry forwarded towards the concerned stakeholders of the reform. The new modified text now includes the points recommended by GT4O and the St. Louis study, however adds the following requirements to the decree:

- Specify the objectives of the initial training, the generic competences of the teacher and the level to be reached at the end of the training;
- Review the composition and missions of the COCOFIE and strengthen the steering of the reform;
- Review and make more flexible the distribution of credits within the training axes;
- Review the pairings to take into account the implementation of the Pact for Excellence in Teaching and to integrate disciplines related to French as a Foreign Language (FLE), French as a Learning Language (FLA), digital technology and cultural education;
- To introduce clarification of the French language proficiency test;
- To Increase the density of practical activities in the final year;
- Make the distribution of credits between the partners of a co-degree agreement more flexible;
- To abolish the first cycle of the program leading to the academic degree of "Master in Teaching section 4" and modify the cycle leading to the degree of Master in Teaching section 4 in order to ensure that all objectives of initial teacher education are pursued;

³ https://www.galilex.cfwb.be/document/pdf/46261_000.pdf

⁴ [http://www.federation-wallonie-](http://www.federation-wallonie-bruxelles.be/index.php?eID=tx_nawsecured1&u=0&g=0&hash=d46c9f4830a54be6e1cd75d62c91dbd4bfd19b73)

[bruxelles.be/index.php?eID=tx_nawsecured1&u=0&g=0&hash=d46c9f4830a54be6e1cd75d62c91dbd4bfd19b73&file=fileadmin/sites/portail/uploads/Illustrations_documents_images/A._A_propos_de_la_Federation/3._Gouvernement/DPC2019-2024.pdf](http://www.federation-wallonie-bruxelles.be/index.php?eID=tx_nawsecured1&u=0&g=0&hash=d46c9f4830a54be6e1cd75d62c91dbd4bfd19b73&file=fileadmin/sites/portail/uploads/Illustrations_documents_images/A._A_propos_de_la_Federation/3._Gouvernement/DPC2019-2024.pdf)

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- To take into account the specificities of initial teacher education in the arts.
Changes are therefore suggested as to the length of the training to four years instead of five as intended by GT4O. And as to a practical-based fourth year of training. Also, important changes in credit distributions are proposed whereby universities lose some credits in research-based teaching and gain credits in practice-based teaching.

D14: Modified decree version (2020)

T8: Non-favorable positioning of ARES (Association of Higher Education Institutions of Wallonia-Brussels) towards points of pre-project text: budget allocation and favorable to postponing to 2022.

In 2020, the representative association body ARES assembles and forwards reactions of the 4 operators (D15) towards this modified decree proposal, identifying three common complaints towards the Higher Education Ministry:

- An imbalance of credit distribution between the stakeholder organizations (mainly Universities) in the new version.
- A lack of information given to stakeholders concerning the budget to be allocated toward the reform.
- A unanimous desire to postpone the implementation of the reform one year, in 2021.

D15: Reactions of stakeholder Organizations compiled in a note by ARES to Higher Ed. Ministry

T9: 2nd pre-project to decree for reforming Teacher Education is approved by the government: discussions with institutions under way.

The pre-project to the decree is now approved by the government (D16), however with the following additions or changes to the decree text of 2019:

9 categories of changes in the 2019 decree:

- 1) Objectives and competences to be achieved by all FIE students specified (addition of Education towards life, affective and sexual relationships, gender and media literacy)
- 2) Revision of composition and role of COCOFIE, steering of the reform
- 3) Abolition of Bachelors section 4
- 4) Balance between partners in co-graduation
- 5) Revision of credits within the training axes
- 6) Revision of the pairings for section 3 in line with the pact of excellence (another ongoing reform concerned with fundamental education)
- 7) Clarification of the French language test: addition of credits in the curriculum
- 8) Distribution of practical activities during the course and supervision: "Professional load" possible after a few validated internship credits, status of the "student teacher" to be defined / professional integration / fight against shortage
- 9) Abolition of several specialization Masters to keep only 2

D16: Decree 2nd version 2021

T10: Interorganizational working groups work on implementing the reform for 2023

The old inter-organizational working groups constituted in 2019 are remobilized and regrouped in January 2022 (WG14) to work on Sections 1, 2 and 3 (pre-school, primary and lower secondary), as well as another working group on Sections 4 and 5 (higher secondary). Moreover, two commissions for the implementation of the reform (WG15) involving representatives of each stakeholder institution are established, one involving more administrative actors and the other the pedagogical councilors of each institution. The members of the working groups are so far including representatives of involved pedagogical HEC as well as the referent University as per academic pole. The idea is to trickle down the distribution of credits as per faculties within universities according to the competences they can contribute toward the teacher training program, as well as the trickle down to organizing the cycles in each of the concerned HECs. Institutional internal working groups (WG16) for thematic courses (pedagogy, didactics, disciplines (sciences, linguistic, historic), social and human sciences, psychology, philosophy and letters, educational sciences) are in the making within the universities, however without yet any distribution of credits and competences for each concerned faculty.

WG14: Interorganizational working groups on S1S2S3 and S4S5: 2 working groups (2 working groups in each Higher Education Pole: 10 interorganizational working groups at least in the whole of FWB)

WG15: Two decision-making commissions with administrative heads and with the Higher Ed. Ministry Officials.

WG16: Institutional inner working groups on S1S2S3 and S4S5 in concerned Universities, and in each of the concerned HEC and Art Colleges (Pole Brussels (12), Namur (7), Louvain (6), Hainaut (9), Liège-Luxembourg (9)): Roughly, at the least 43 internal institutional working groups of concerned stakeholder organizations. Possibly the double number, as inner institutional working groups probably will be split into working on either S1S2S3 or S4S45: so we could also potentially have 86 inner institutional working groups as per organizing. Moreover, in Universities, Masters programs concerning a specialization in "Teacher Trainers" is being launched in Liège. Potentially, this could be the case for all FWB universities (9). So we could be looking at roughly 100 working groups.

