



**UC** Leuven  
Limburg

**MOVING MINDS**

# EQF Level 5 in Flanders

dr. ir. Toon Martens

University College Leuven-Limburg



# Level 5 in Flanders

- 2009: Decree on Flemish qualification structure
- 2010: Motion in Flemish parliament on restructuring higher education
- 2013: Decree on reinforcement of higher professional education.
- 2016: Decree on integration of L5 in higher education?
- 2019: Integration in higher education?



# Motion of Flemish parliament

- The ultimate responsibility for level 5 should be located in the university colleges with a clear division of labour between university colleges and centers for adult education.
- Level 5 is part of the integrated higher education area, which is a continuum from practice oriented and research based programmes.



# Decree on reinforcement of higher professional education (2013)

1. Cooperation between university colleges and centres for adult education (and with secondary education for nursing)
2. A more flexible regulation for merging and transfer of programmes in adult education
3. Quality assurance ( no inspection for 10 years)
4. Conversion of existing programmes to level 5 programmes (deadline 2017 but can be extended to 2019)



# 14 partnerships in Flanders

	#programs
Karel de Grote-Hogeschool KH Antwerpen	1
Thomas More Kempen	18
Thomas More Mechelen-Antwerpen	17
Erasmushogeschool Brussel	13
UC Leuven	17
Hogeschool Gent	18
UC Limburg	8
Hogeschool West-Vlaanderen	4
Katholieke Hogeschool Vives Zuid	12
Odisee	12
Arteveldehogeschool	10
PXL	17
AP Hogeschool Antwerpen	30
Katholieke Hogeschool Vives Noord	6
number of programmes	183

14 partnerships cooperate in HBO5 platform



# Cooperation between UCs and centres for adult education

1. joint organization of higher vocational education level 5
2. joint educational and examination regulations
3. the development of a common internal quality system for the training of higher vocational education
4. Joint requests for accreditation of higher vocational education programmes
5. the transformation of existing programmes
6. applying for the recognition of a new programmes
7. the curriculum development including the development of routes to professional Bachelor's programmes
8. Division of the training programmes in modules and capturing the number of teaching periods and credit points per module
9. the optimization of the student services
10. Development of programmes to widen participation in higher education



# Cooperation between UCs and centres for adult education

11. the optimization of employability and professionalization of the staff
12. buildings and technical infrastructure
13. the development of student guidance
14. availability of the social services for the students
15. developing and evaluating recognition of prior learning
16. the elaboration of the communication strategy about the offer of level 5
17. the organisation of the admission test



# Waiting for a new decree...

- HBO5 platform works on:
  - professional and learning qualifications L5
  - qualifications framework: differentiation levels 4, 5 and 6
  - conversion of existing programmes
  - macro-efficiency
  - bridging programmes to L6
  - 1 new L5 programme: shop management
  - quality control
  - dual learning
  - ....





# Number of students in programmes to be converted to L5

<b>Area of study</b>		
Biotechnics	263	1%
Health Care	86	0,48%
Business studies	9941	55%
Industrial sciences and technology	1746	10%
Social Care	5953	33%
<b>Total within institutions of adult education</b>	<b>17989</b>	
Nursing on level 5	7383	
<b>Total on level 5</b>	<b>25372</b>	



# HBO5 in a wider context of Life Long Learning

	#students	
Institutions for adult education (CVO)	332 317	
secondary level	224 442	68%
Dutch as a foreign language	80461	24%
<b>Level 5</b>	<b>17989</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Specific teacher training</b>	<b>9425</b>	<b>3%</b>
Syntra	49191	
VDAB	92159	
Basic education	33004	
Basic education Dutch as a foreign language	14857	

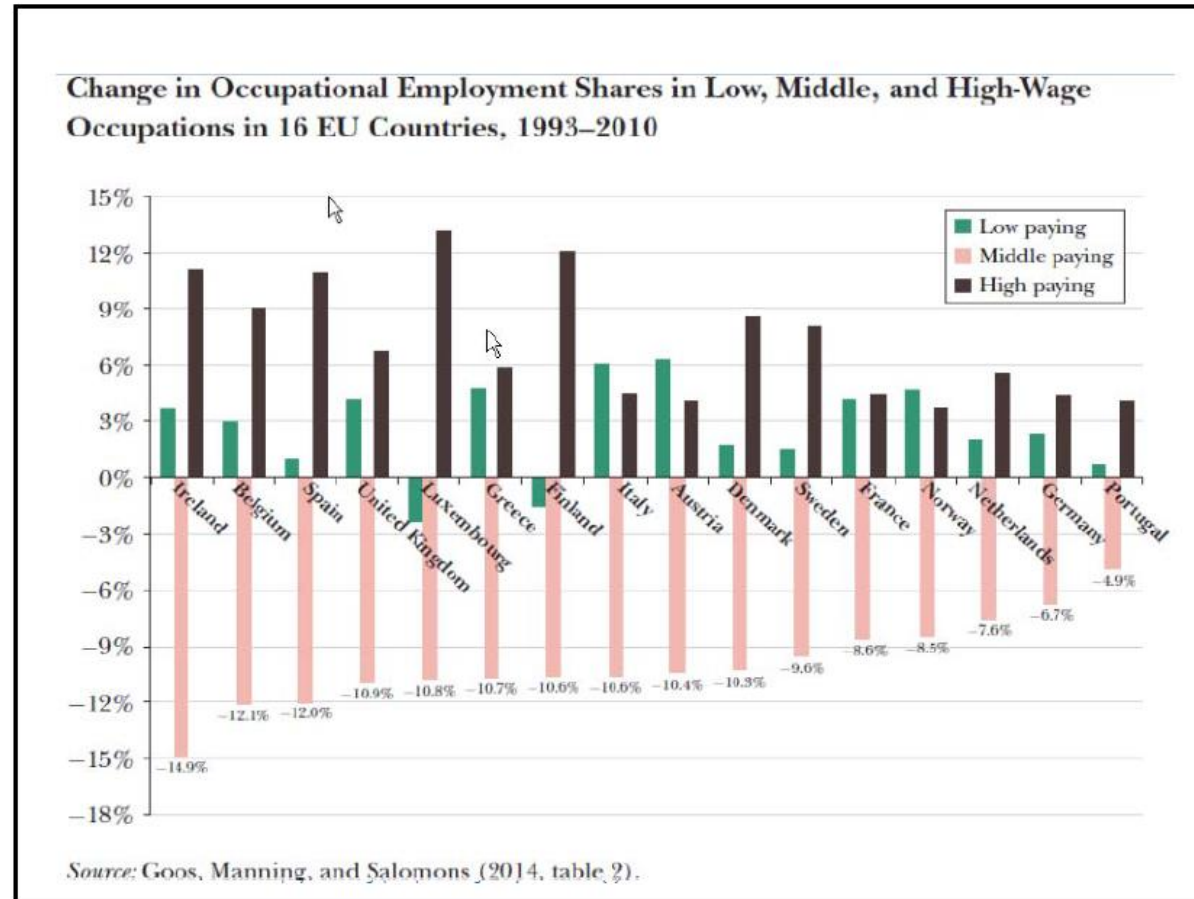


# Why programmes on level 5?

- 3 challenges:
  - labour market
  - youth unemployment
  - Flanders 2020

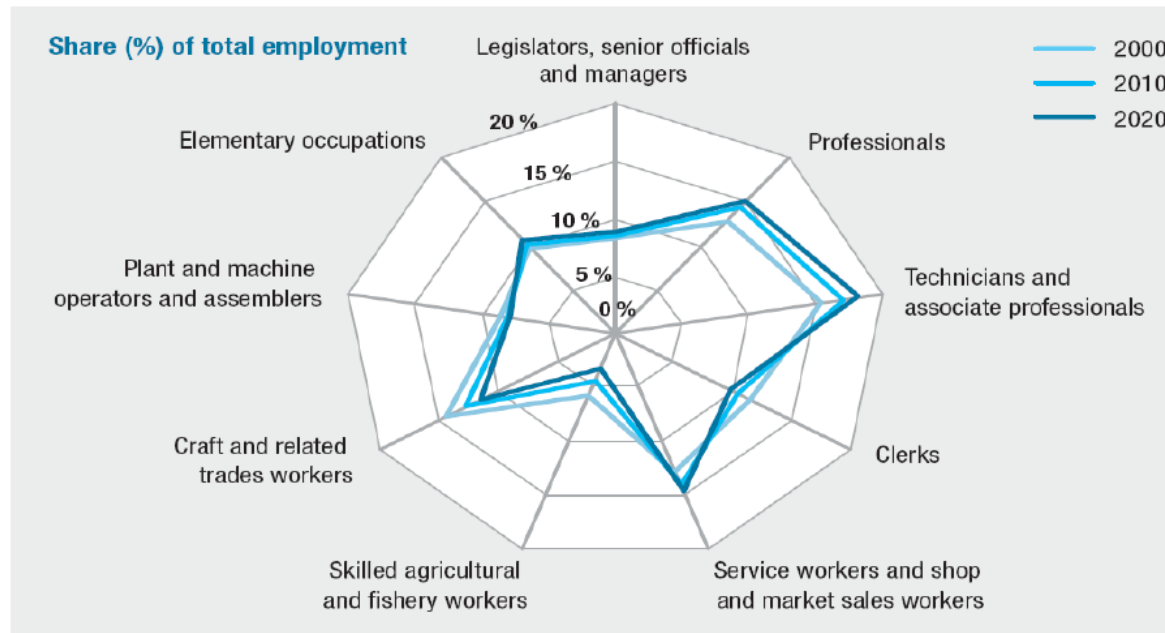


# Occupational employment shares





# Challenge: labour market

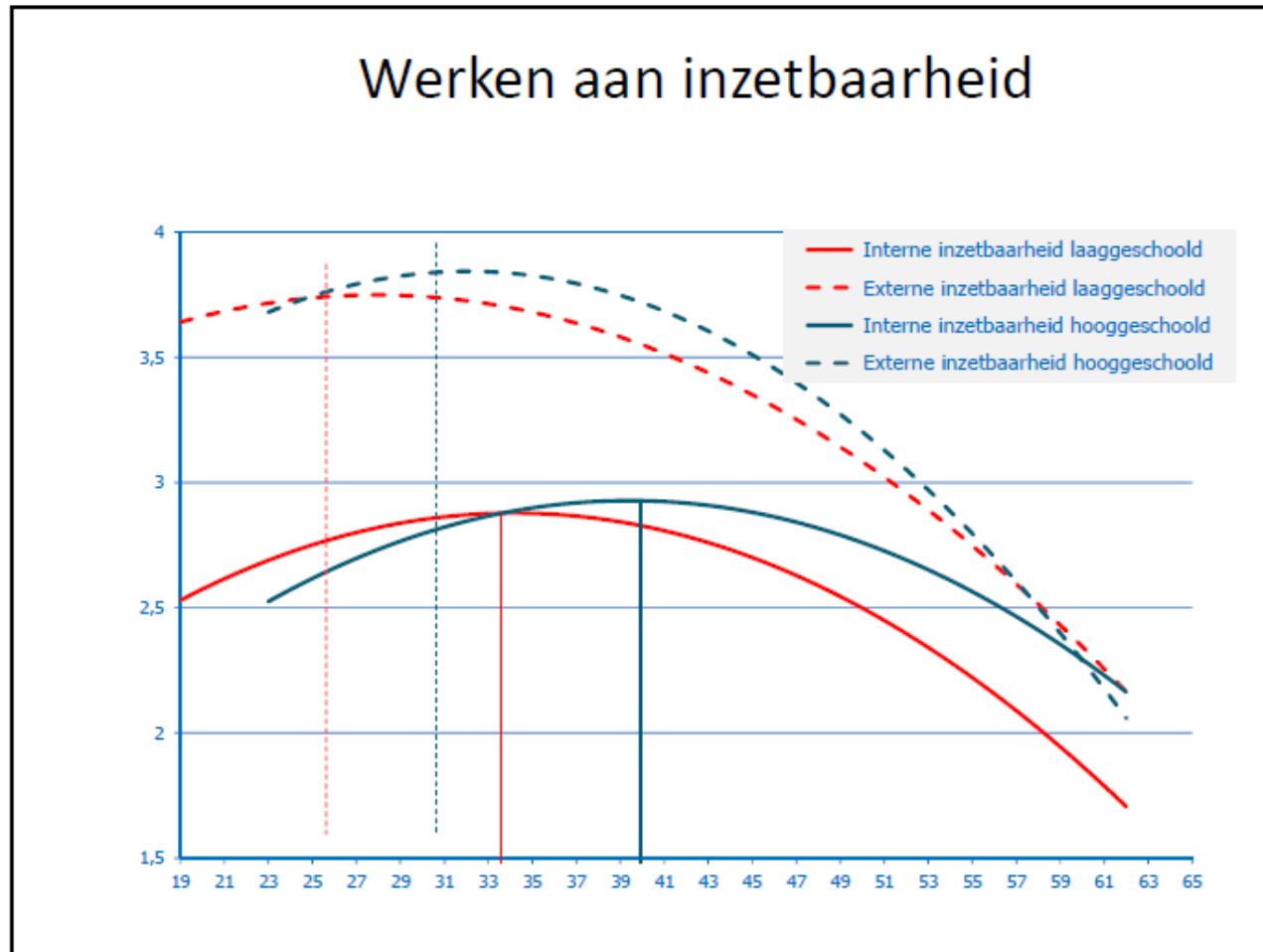


NB: Numbers in employment (NA-based estimates).  
Source: Cedefop (IER estimates based on E3ME and EDMOD).

60% of Flanders' GNP in trade and services

162 shortage occupation

**88 ask for a degree between the secondary level and the profession oriented bachelor**





# Challenge: unemployment

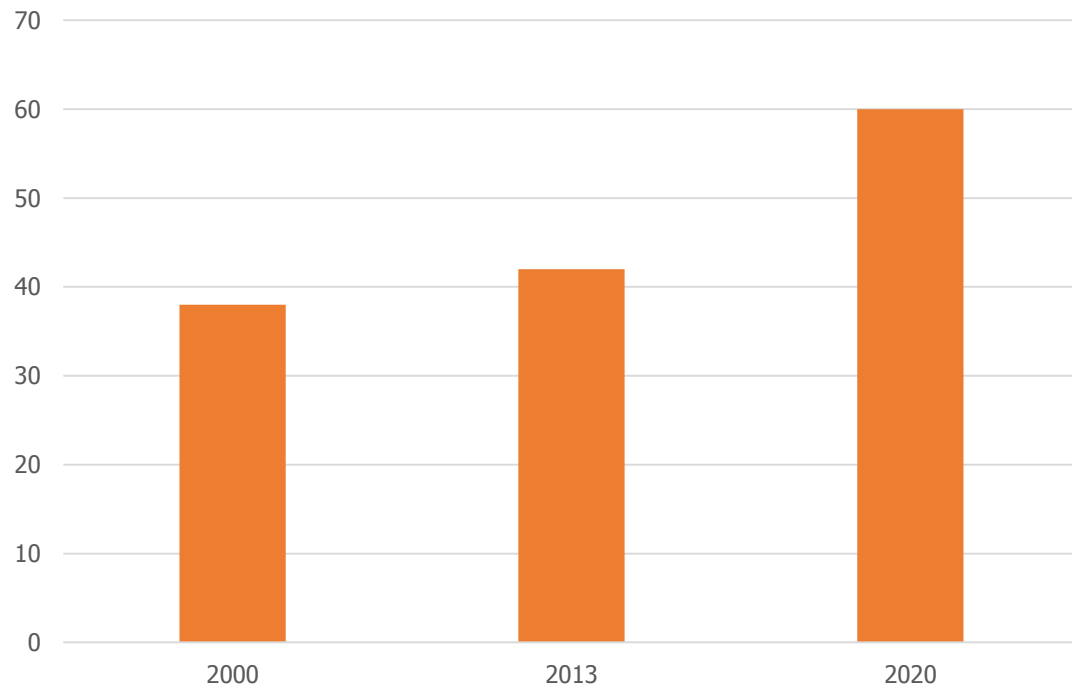
## **Unemployment in Flanders**

- Global: 7,8%
- Age 15-24 years: 16,1%
- Secondary or Lower Education= 82,4% of unemployment
- Migrants : 26,4% unemployed



# Challenge: Flanders 2020

Evolution highly skilled profiles (25-34 years old)



Goal: 60% in 2020





# High dropout education

- 13% of students do not obtain a diploma secondary education
- 80% of drop-outs after 1 year of HE don't obtain a degree in HE
- 40% of starters in university colleges and universities don't obtain a degree in HE



# Specific characteristics of level 5

- Focus on practical skills -> work based learning
- Flexible learning paths, demand driven
- Importance of adult education
- Importance of geographical nearness for adult education
- Importance of possibility for drop out from higher education to stay on campuses of university colleges



# Critical success factors

- Specific approach needed for L5, is not a bachelor light
- Right balance between professional sectors and education in development of jobprofiles and training programmes
- Flexible programming of learning paths
- Enough financial resources, especially for difficult groups
- Better orientation of students and more stimuli for fast orientation towards a successful track
- Better knowledge of possibilities of L5 by politicians, employers, study advisors, ...
- Vision and courage of political decision makers



# Vision of the level 5 Platform

- Level 5 must be part of Higher Education
- Embedded in the university colleges
- Respect for identity of level 5 (content, didactic approach, target groups, ...)
- Level 5 must be recognized by labour market
- Function differentiation within several sectors, also in education
- Need of European benchmarking and coordination of Level 5-profiles



# What we expect from the Flemish government

- Position of level 5 must be clearly defined within Flanders and Europe
- Legislation based on Higher Education for all level 5 programmes included nursing
- Simple procedure for conversion of existing programmes
- Shorter and more simple procedures for new programmes that are not too small
- Financial space for new programmes, investments, internationalisation, social grants, ....
- Transitional measures (f.i. staff regulations)



# What to do ourselves?

- Sharper distinction between level 4, 5 and 6
- Specific learning outcomes
- Name of the programmes (different for each EQF level)
- Transformation of existing programmes to level 5
- Infrastructure, administration system, learning platform,...
- Education and examination regulations
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- ...