



Belgium agrees to labor market reforms to boost jobs, flexibility

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Belgium's federal inner cabinet agreed on a labor deal that aims to boost the employment rate by 2030 to 80% — up from 71% — and provide more flexibility. It includes reforms — such as training rights, improved severance arrangements, a right to disconnect from the workplace, protections for platform workers, variable work patterns, and diversity reporting. The agreement will be incorporated into law in the coming months.

Highlights

- **Training days and plans.** Companies with 20 or more employees will have to prepare, at least once a year, a training plan that includes measures to improve workforce skills. Individual employees will be entitled to three paid training days in 2022, increasing to four in 2023, and five in 2024.
- **Skill shortages report.** Sectoral-level social partners must prepare — every two years — a report on skills shortages that includes recommendations.
- **Improved severance measures.** Employees dismissed on no-fault grounds with a notice period of 30 weeks or more could use the final third of their notice period to improve their employability (including training and outplacement), paid for by the employer's social security contributions. Employees could ask their employer to allow them to start work for a new employer during their notice period; the new employer could compensate the employee, and must hire the employee on an indefinite contract at the end of the notice period.
- **Right to disconnect.** Companies with 20 or more employees must allow their employees to disconnect from their workplace at the end of the working day. Companies' disconnection policies will be subject to consultation with trade unions and must be incorporated into collective bargaining agreements.
- **Rights of platform workers.** Platform workers will be classified as employees unless the employer can show they are not, based on certain criteria.

- **Part-time workers' schedules.** Part-time workers who work variable hours must be notified of their upcoming work schedule at least seven days in advance — currently they are given five days' notice.
- **Evening work.** The rules on introducing evening work between 8 pm to midnight have eased. In addition, an 18-month pilot project will allow employees to volunteer for evening work without the employer having to secure prior trade union approval.
- **Variable work patterns to improve work-life balance.** Full-time employees can condense their working hours over four days, instead of five, and vary their schedule by working more hours in one week, and fewer in another week. Arrangements will be valid for six months, and employers will have to justify any refusal to allow variable work patterns.
- **Diversity data.** The Employment Ministry will provide sectoral diversity data every two years to sectoral social partners. Companies must prepare a diversity report comparing their diversity performance against the sector and, if necessary, publish a remediation plan.

Related resource

- [Ministerial announcement](#) (French) (Government, 15 Feb 2022)

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