

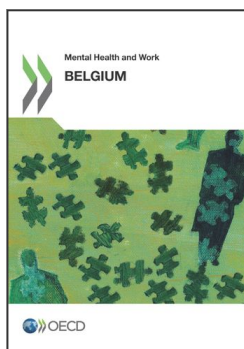
Foreword

Tackling mental ill-health of the working-age population is becoming a key issue for labour market and social policies in many OECD countries. It is an issue that has been neglected for too long despite creating very high and increasing costs to people and society at large. OECD governments increasingly recognise that policy has a major role to play in improving the employment opportunities for people with mental ill-health, including very young people; helping those employed but struggling in their jobs; and avoiding long-term sickness and disability caused by a mental disorder.

A first OECD report on this subject, *Sick on the Job? Myths and Realities about Mental Health and Work*, published in January 2012, identified the main underlying policy challenges facing OECD countries by broadening the evidence base and questioning some myths around the links between mental ill-health and work. This report on Belgium is the first in a series of reports looking at how these policy challenges are being tackled in selected OECD countries, covering issues such as the transition from education to employment, the workplace, the institutions providing employment services for job seekers, the transition into permanent disability and the capacity of the health system. The other reports look at the situation in Australia, Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Together, these nine reports aim to deepen the evidence on good mental-health-and-work policy. Each report also contains a series of detailed country-specific policy recommendations. As there has not been a previous report on sickness, disability and work in Belgium (in contrast to most other countries participating in the project), some of the discussion in this report will address the sickness and disability system in general rather than focussing solely on mental-health issues.

Work on this review was a collaborative effort carried out jointly by the Employment Analysis and Policy Division and the Social Policy Division of the OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs. The report was prepared by Veerle Miranda under the supervision of Christopher Prinz. Statistical work was provided by Dana Blumin and Maxime Ladaïque. Valuable comments were provided by John Martin, Stefano Scarpetta, Mark Keese and Monika Queisser. The report also includes

comments received from experts and various Belgian ministries and authorities, including Freddy Falez of Université Libre de Bruxelles, the National Institute for Sickness and Invalidity Insurance, the Independent Mutualities MLOZ, the Federal Public Service for Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, the Federal Public Service for Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue, Forem and the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training.



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