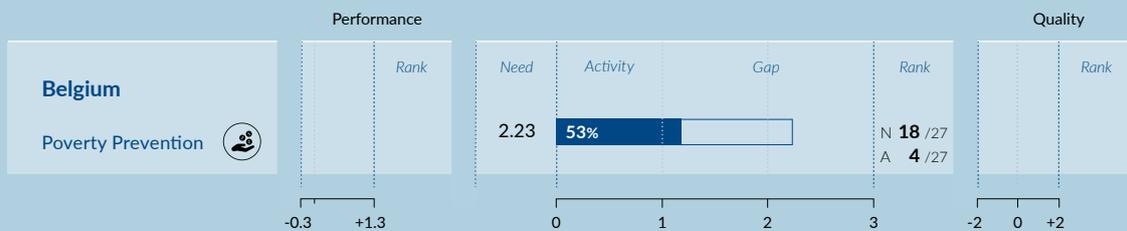


Findings by Country



Belgium

Overview of Reform Barometer Scores



Dimension Findings



Poverty Prevention

Need The experts see an urgent need to reduce poverty among single parents (2.57), refugees (2.54) and the foreign-born population in general (2.64). The need to combat poverty among the total population (1.93) and senior citizens (1.54) is assessed as being significantly lower.

Activity The experts saw the highest reform activity directed towards reducing poverty among seniors (83%), even though this is a non-urgent need. Two-thirds of the reform need to improve the situation for single parents has been addressed by relevant government action, whereas only one-third of the need for policy reforms regarding refugees and the foreign-born population has been tackled.

Quality The experts expect the reforms concerning poverty among senior citizens to have slightly positive effects (0.66). One expert explains: “Owing to the welfare adjustments of the pensions and of the social assistance allowance for the elderly, their real disposable income has increased.”

Looking at government strategy, one expert states that it “can be generally described as a conservative-liberal agenda: cut taxes and cut government expenses (including social expenditure) in order to create jobs in the private sector. This should lead to less unemployment and poverty as ‘derived’ effects. Rather than strengthening social protection, access to benefits has been restricted (mainly in unemployment insurance). Modest increases in benefits have been offset by price increases.”

 Labour Market Access

Need The experts see an urgent need to improve Labour Market Access in Belgium (2.69). As in most other EU countries, this need to improve access for the total population (2.25) is assessed as being significantly lower than it is for the specific subgroups of the labour market, such as senior citizens and young people (3.0 each), the long-term unemployed (2.75), the low-skilled (2.75), refugees (2.75) and the foreign-born population in general (3.0).

Activity According to the experts, the activity undertaken with regard to specific subgroups of the labour market differs strongly. While 100 percent see relevant reform activities to improve labour market chances for the elderly and young people, no expert reported initiatives to improve the situation for refugees or the foreign-born population in general. Two out of three experts reported activities to reduce long-term unemployment.