

# France

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## National context

### Population, economic and social characteristics

Total surface area: 670,922 Km<sup>2</sup> (Metropolitan France: 547,030 Km<sup>2</sup>; overseas departments 123,892 Km<sup>2</sup>). Total population: estimated at 65.350 million in 2012 (Metropolitan France: 63.46 million; overseas departments: 1.89 million). These figures take into account the definitive results of the census fixing the legal population on 1st January 2006. The population increase is caused more by excess births over deaths than the migratory balance. The total fertility rate is the highest in Europe: 2.01 children per woman in 2011. The average age at labour is up and reached 30 in 2011. The unemployment rate (by the definition of the BIT) in the third quarter of 2012 in Metropolitan France was 9.9% (it was 9.1% in 2009), with 2.8 million of unemployed people.

For the back-to-school period 2011, the school and higher education population (Metropolitan France and Overseas Departments, public + private) amounted to 15 150.6 millions pupils, students and apprentices broken down as follows (in thousands):

School and higher education population (in thousands)

Pre-primary education	2 561.8
Primary education	4 148.9
Lower Secondary education	3 185.2
Upper secondary education	2 384.1
Apprentices	433.1
Higher education	2 347.8

The French economy is mainly a service economy: the service sector occupies around 77% of the active population, the secondary sector (mainly industry), 21% and the primary sector (agriculture, fishing, etc.) 2%. It is an increasingly open economy, highly ranked in international trade (5th importer and 5th exporter in the world). According to the “Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques” (INSEE), in the fourth quarter 2012, GDP in volume rose at the rate of +0.2%

## Description of the types of education and training (formal and informal) that occur in a country

At central level, the French education system is regulated by two departments: the Department for National Education – which oversees the school system – and the Department for Higher Education and Research – which is responsible for higher education and research. They govern within the framework defined by the Parliament, which states the fundamental principles of education (law no. 89-486 of 10 July 1989, the law no. 2005-380 of 23 April 2005 and the law no 2013-595 of 8 July 2013). The State plays a major role in governance, as, by long tradition, the French education system is centralised. Nevertheless, at local level, and since the start of a process of decentralisation of competences in the administration of the educational system in the 1980s, local authorities have been playing an increasingly significant part in governance, ensuring the material operation of the system (construction and maintenance of school buildings, school transport, supply of educational materials, etc.).

Education is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16 years. However, France has a long tradition of pre-primary education: for the past twenty years, almost all children attend nursery school from the age of three, even though it is optional; it is therefore an integral part of the French education system and falls under the responsibility of the Department for National Education which sets the curricula.

Higher education is characterised by the coexistence of two systems: universities, – public institutions that have an open admissions policy, except for *instituts universitaires de technologie* (IUT - technological university institutes) or classes *préparatoires intégrées* (integrated preparatory classes) – and a non-university sector, including, in particular, *Grandes Ecoles* (Elite Schools), with a highly selective admissions policy open to *baccalaureate* holders having attended two years of classes *préparatoires*, themselves highly selective on entry and during the course.

The French education system is organised into several levels of education:

- Pre-primary education (ISCED 0)\*, which is dispensed at “nursery schools” and take children from 2/3 up to 6 years of age. Almost all children attend nursery school from the age of three, even though it is optional. Such schools therefore form – together with the elementary level - an integral part of the French “primary level of education”, which is under the aegis of the Department for National Education.
- Primary education (ISCED 1), which is provided in “elementary schools” and admits children between the ages of 6 and 11. It marks the start of compulsory schooling, and is secular and free of charge when dispensed in State schools. At the end of this 5-year-course, pupils automatically access to the secondary level of education (there is neither standardised tests nor guidance procedures).
- Lower secondary education (ISCED 2), which is provided in colleges for 4 school years (pupils between the ages of 11 and 15 years). Education in colleges is compulsory and common to all pupils. A national diploma (the *brevet*) is awarded at the end of college schooling. Admission to upper secondary level is not conditional upon success in the *brevet*. At the end of college schooling (15 year-old pupils), the school recommends the appropriate scholastic path to families, basing its recommendation on the pupil’s school reports and particular interests. Children will continue their schooling either in general, technological or professional education, provided at upper secondary level.

- Upper secondary education (ISCED 3), which is dispensed in “general and technological high schools” or in “professional high schools”, which extends over 3 years (pupils between the ages of 15 and 18 years). Upper secondary education provides three educational paths: general path (which prepares pupils for long-term higher studies), technological path (which mainly prepares pupils for higher technological studies) and professional path (which leads mainly to active working life, but also enables students to continue their studies in higher education). A national diploma is awarded at the end of secondary schooling: the baccalaureate. It which is both a sign of successful completion of secondary studies and the first step in university education, access to higher studies being conditional upon its obtaining. Pupils at professional high schools can prepare the CAP (*Certificat d’aptitude professionnelle*), a course of study extending over 2 years, after what they can either integrate active working life or prepare the professional baccalaureate after 2 additional years of studies.
- Higher education (ISCED 5 and ISCED 6), which is dispensed in higher educational institutions. These institutions have a wide variety of legal statuses that are listed in the French Code of Education (book VII). Courses dispensed at these institutions have different aims and conditions for admission, but most of them are structured into three study cycles (Bachelor’s degree, Master’s degree and Doctorate) and in ECTS credits, in compliance with the principles of the Bologna Process.

In 2013, the French education system provided schooling for around 12 million pupils, students and apprentices (representing about 20% of the national population); the total budget was of 45.5 billion euros, in 2012 (the equivalent of 6% of the Gross Domestic Product).(MEN-DEPP)

## **Practices and organisations**

### First Cycle Programmes

First, bachelor programmes are presented through the main branches of study, their normal structure and length and the various stages or levels into which programmes may be divided with reference to National Qualifications Frameworks. Are also detailed admission requirements (general and alternative routes), curriculum, teaching methods, and progression of students, graduate employability, student assessment and certification. Second, short-cycle higher education is described when applicable along the same lines: branches of study, admission requirements (general and alternative routes), curriculum, teaching methods, and progression of students, graduate employability, student assessment and certification. Third, any organisational variation such as for example, distance learning, open universities, etc. are explained through their general objectives, their admissions criteria, programme of activities and methodological emphasis. All information on recognition and validation of foreign degrees or other qualifications are described in the chapter on the Mobility and International Dimension in Education.

### Second Cycle Programmes (Master Programmes)

Those programmes are presented through the main branches of study, their normal structure and length. Are also detailed admission requirements (general and alternative routes), curriculum, teaching methods, and progression of students, graduate employability, student assessment and certification.

## Programmes outside the Bachelor and Master Structure

This section describes variations in degree programmes (for example, degree programmes where the length is unusually long, and/or programmes that begin with a first cycle entry but end in a second cycle degree etc.). As for the other programmes, the general objectives of these alternative structures are explained as well as the branches of study where they are to be found, their admissions criteria and any other differences that exist in comparison to the typical bachelor and master programmes.

### Third Cycle (PhD) Programmes

The organisation of doctoral studies is presented through the main branches of study at this level of education by grouping them into categories, such as humanities and arts, science, mathematics and computing, health and welfare, social sciences, business and law, etc. as well as the normal length of each branch in years and the various stages into which it may be divided. This extends to a description of the organisation of structured doctoral studies in doctoral schools or graduate schools and any specific distinction in the structure of doctoral education (for example, "professional doctorates").

Are also detailed admission requirements (general and alternative routes), status of doctoral students/candidates, supervision arrangements, graduate employability, assessment, certification and any organisational variation.

## **Policy environment**

Main features of the local, regional and national policy documents and strategies concerning education policies on key competencies in LLL, on ICT in the learning process, on creativity and innovation, on intercultural learning skills.

The French education system is characterised by strong State presence in the organisation and funding of Education. The State defines the details of curricula at all education levels; it organises the teachers' admissions procedure, defines content, recruits teachers who become civil servants, provides them with in-service training; it recruits and trains inspectors, responsible for controlling the quality of the education system; it is the main funding body of the public education system and subsidises "private schools under contract" which receive approximately 20% of school pupils.

Still at local level, and since the start of a process of decentralisation of competences in the administration of the educational system in the 1980s, local authorities have been playing an increasingly significant part in governance, ensuring the material operation of the system (construction and maintenance of school buildings, school transport, supply of educational materials, etc.). With regard to schools, colleges and high schools (CITE 2 and CITE 3) have room for manoeuvre in how they manage budgets granted by the State, as well as in the definition of what educational strategies to adopt in order to achieve national objectives. At higher education level, governance of the system is ensured by a contractual policy set up by the State with universities, which are autonomous bodies financially and administratively speaking.

On the local level, local authorities (regions, departments and municipalities) have competence in the administration and material operation of the school system: pursuant to the law of 13 August 2004 relating to local freedoms and responsibilities, local authorities take charge of building, rebuilding, extending, conducting major repairs and equipping institutions under their responsibility: primary schools for municipalities, colleges for departments and high schools for regions.

Secondary schools (colleges and high schools) have some room for manoeuvre in the elaboration of strategies to achieve national educational policy objectives, expressed in the school project.

In higher education, universities have administrative, financial, educational and scientific autonomy. They have the power to determine their by-laws and structures. There are several consultation bodies on the regional, academic and departmental level which contribute to local governance of the education system. The Region is responsible for:

- the building of and work on upper secondary schools: general, technological and professional high schools;
- subsidies for their equipment and operating expenditure;
- recruitment and management of technical, operative and service personnel (TOS) in high schools;
- organisation of educational, sporting and cultural activities in school premises;
- the region's apprenticeship and vocational training policy for young people and adult job-seekers or adults seeking redeployment.

The Department is responsible for:

- building of and work on colleges (lower secondary schools), subsidies for equipment and operation of colleges;
- recruitment and management of technical, operative and service personnel (TOS) in colleges;
- organisation of educational, sporting and cultural activities in school premises;
- organisation and operation of school transport.

The municipality is responsible for:

- the location, building, equipment, operation and maintenance of nursery and elementary schools (primary education);
- the management of equipment and operation credits for schools;
- organisation of educational, sporting and cultural activities in school premises;
- it can change pupils' start and finish times as well as school rhythms and establish, for example, a four-day week;
- it manages non-teaching staff.

**What level and kind of investment is currently being deployed into key competencies in LLL, ICT in the learning process, creativity and innovation, intercultural learning skills?**

Over the past few years, France's education system has undergone a number of major reforms:

- a curricular reform : in application of the Guidance and Planning Law for the Future of Schools of 23 April 2005, the decree no. 2006-830 of 11 July 2006 defined a Common Base of Knowledge and Skills that all pupils must progressively acquire throughout their compulsory schooling (from 6 to 16 years of age). The reform led to changes with regard to educational objectives, programme content – from ISCED 0 up to ISCED 3 – and assessment of learning.
- a reform of upper secondary education (reform of professional lycées – Official Bulletin special edition no.2 of 19 February 2009 and Official Bulletin special edition no.9 of 15 October 2009 – and reform of general and technological lycées – Official Journal of 28 January 2010 and Official Bulletin special edition no.1 of 4 January 2010). Beyond the changes specific to each scholastic path, the two reforms seek to raise levels of qualification among young people, their integration into professional life, and their pursuit of higher educational studies, and to reduce numbers of unqualified school-leavers.
- a reform of teacher recruitment and training (Official Bulletin no.29 of 22 July 2010), with a Master's degree (five years of higher education) now being required for recruitment into and exercise of the profession.
- a reform of universities (Law no.2007-1199 bearing on the liberties and responsibilities of universities, of 10 August 2007), which seeks to increase the drawing power and competitiveness of French universities by according them greater autonomy in budget management and recruitment policies.

**What strategic objectives are attributed to key competencies in LLL, ICT in the learning process, creativity and innovation, intercultural learning skills? How is key competencies in LLL, ICT in the learning process, creativity and innovation, intercultural learning skills linked to other policy agendas?**

The present government places high priority on education and employment. Begun in July, 2012, a large-scale consultation involving many different players on initial and further vocational training links education to employment. A bill on apprenticeship development and vocational training should be ready for presentation to the Council of Ministers by June, 2013. The specific recommendation for France for the European Semester 2012 are:

- Take actions to increase adult participation in lifelong learning;
- Improve youth employability especially for those most at risk of unemployment, by providing for example more and better apprenticeship schemes which effectively address their needs.

In 2009, the Council of the European Union adopted Conclusions setting up a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training, ET2020. Four long term strategic objectives for EU education and training policies were adopted for 2020:

- Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality;
- Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training;

- Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship;
- Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

Europe 2020 is a 10-year strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The strategy identifies a number of key areas which concern the field of education and training: a common headline target with twin targets on early school leaving and higher education participation; country specific recommendations; the Annual Growth Survey under the European semester of economic governance; the question of investment in education; and the agenda for New skills and jobs.

In January, 2013 the French government published its *projet de loi d'orientation et de programmation pour la refondation de l'Ecole* (Guidance and Programming Bill for Re-organising School). It will be submitted to Parliament for debate and a vote from mid-March, 2013. The main fields covered are the following:

- initial education and further teacher training;
- learning cycles and teaching content;
- communication and information technologies;
- the guidance and professional-integration systems;
- dialogue with education partners and evaluation bodies.

Restructuring initial and further education in the teaching profession and education  
 After reforming the masters pathway (B.O. no. 29 of 22 July, 2010), which raised the academic level of all primary and secondary school teachers, 2012 saw the government decide to implement the new initial education and further training of teachers, a major leverage in improving the educational system. To this end "*écoles supérieures du professorat et de l'éducation*" (i.e. teacher-training colleges - ESPE) will be opened in universities at the start of the 2013 academic year. Initial education and further training given in these colleges will include information technologies as a training, teaching and research tool. To diversify the social backgrounds of future teachers 6,000 "teaching jobs with a future" will be created at the start of the 2013 school year. This provision will give more scholarship students the opportunity to choose teaching as a profession by offering them both a career path and financial support. The national educational system will recruit 18,000 future teachers by 2015. Starting in their second "licence" year, then for the next three years, selected scholarship students will enjoy financial aid and do paid work in schools. They will commit to sitting a competitive teacher-recruitment exam after three years.

Reducing the number of students in difficulty at all levels and building successful careers for all

The government has committed itself to restarting enrolment for children under three. While in 2000 35.4% of 2-year-olds were enrolled in nursery school, by 2011 the percentage had fallen to 11.6% (RERS, 2012). The government's objective is to increase that percentage to above 30% within three years by prioritising the enrolment of children from disadvantaged backgrounds so as to facilitate their chances of success at school from an early age. The "More Teachers than Classes" provision in elementary schools will be put in place at the start of the 2013 school year in order to enhance teaching practices and to provide in-class help for acquiring basic skills.

Reforming school hours—with the return to nine half-days per week to alleviate daily class time—will be progressively implemented from the 2013 return to school. It will include personalised tutoring for all during class time. And the relationship between teaching time and extra-curricular time will be reconsidered. Municipalities will be able to draw from a fund for developing extra-curricular activities.

Rethinking priority education and enhancing policies for academic attainment  
*The comité interministériel pour la modernisation de l'Etat* (the interdepartmental committee for modernising the State, CIMAP) has scheduled an overall evaluation of the priority education policy. This evaluation will feed the brainstorming that will contribute to generally rethinking academic attainment in connection to a town's policies. To this end a working group led by the executive management of education has been instituted. Reduce early school-leaving and facilitate the transition from school to work by developing quality traineeships, apprenticeships and dual learning models - classroom-based education combined with hands-on experience in the work place. Efforts to develop entrepreneurial skills are needed to support new business creation and improve employability levels of the young.

Reducing academic failure is a government priority. In 2012 the French President vowed to reduce by half the number of early school leavers by 2017 and offer every school leaver from 16 to 18 a training solution.

The actions taken by the government intend on the one hand to prevent early leaving by reducing academic failure (early detection and help for students in difficulty; improving guidance) and, on the other, to provide young people with a real chance to re-engage in education. Beginning in December, 2012, the Department for Education called for the implementation of new networks to mobilise all players working with early school-leavers (the "Work-Study Objective" networks).

Education through apprenticeship and work-study schemes has, moreover, been much developed over the past ten years in the form of two kinds of contracts, i.e. the apprenticeship contract (initial education) and the vocational career contract (further training). A bill for developing apprenticeship and career training is to be presented to the Council of Ministers in June, 2013.

Develop and implement "youth guarantee" schemes whereby every young person under the age of 25 receives an offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. Such schemes can be co-financed by the European Social Fund

Law no. 2012-1189 of 26 October, 2012 established *emplois d'avenir* ("jobs with a future"). The purpose of "jobs with a future" is to facilitate the vocational integration of jobless young people from 16 to 25 with few or no qualifications and who find it hard to gain access to employment. This will be done by recruiting them in activities of a socially useful nature or with a high potential for creating jobs. The sectors involved are essentially the non-market developmental sectors or those with high social usefulness, i.e. the green or digital streams, social and medical-social sectors, activities, tourism and personal care-giving. Accessing the market sector will be done with certain conditions. The State will cover 75% of the gross minimum-wage salary for a maximum period of three years. Aid in the market sector will see 35% go to employers who will be selected according to their plans for intern supervision and the training activities they propose.

The government's goal is to integrate 100,000 young people into the jobs market in 2013, then 50,000 more from 2014. The "jobs with a future" contract adds to the following already-existing provisions for integration and job security:

- the job-security contract (law no. 2011-893 of 28 July, 2011), addressed employees whose economic redundancy is planned in a company not subject to the obligation to offer paid leave for redeployment. The purpose of this contract, that lasts a maximum of 12 months, is to organise and develop the process of returning to work, if need be, through retraining or the a company creation or buyout
- the single reintegration contract (law no. 2008-1249 of 1 December, 2008) combines training and financial aid to facilitate the hiring of people whose job applications are habitually rejected
- the vocational training contract (law no. 2004-391 of 4 May, 2004) offered by a company is intended for young people from 16 to 25 inclusive, job seekers 26 and over and those receiving certain benefits. It gives access to work-study training ("training centre-company") culminating in a recognised vocational certificate or degree. It is funded by the company, which the State dispenses from paying social security contributions.

Improve access to lifelong-learning systems throughout working life, including for older workers, by strengthening partnerships of public and private institutions involved in the provision, application and updating of specific skills.

Lifelong learning is a core value in the present government's policy for employment and education. There are plans for presenting the Council of Ministers in June, 2013 with a bill for developing apprenticeship and initial and further vocational training. Improve the connection between education and lifelong-learning systems and labour market needs. Short-cycle tertiary qualifications of two years, focused on areas where a skills shortage has been identified, as well as targeted mobility schemes, can provide particularly effective in current circumstances.

One of the priority objectives of schools and higher learning is to provide an understanding of business and vocational integration. In this regard the Department for Education plans to set up an Education-Economics Board in 2013 that will bring businessmen and women together. Along the same lines, the Minister intends to create real information and guidance pathways to teach young people from lower secondary school (ISCED level 2) to university about businesses and their professions, urge companies to explain their professions in classrooms in order for young people to be better informed of job possibilities and ensure that teachers have contacts with the business world during their training. Three training frameworks focusing on business knowledge, entrepreneurship and competitive intelligence are becoming common in all higher education schools. Moreover student awareness of entrepreneurship is becoming widespread in large part due to the "entrepreneurship framework" in all schools and some twenty "student entrepreneurship centres".

Designing a Portal "Mon Stage en ligne" ("My On-line Internship")

The French portal for business internships, called *Mon Stage en Ligne*, has been designed by the *Office national d'information sur l'emploi et les professions* (National Bureau of Information about Employment and the Professions, ONISEP), upon a request by the Departments for Education and Higher Education and Research, to ensure greater educational

mentoring and better management of the offer for and demand of training courses and on-the-job periods spent in professional environments. It is aimed at both companies and student interns. The portal is organised into two sections: one for high school students (ISCED level 3) and the other for university students.

#### Giving priority to the first university cycle

In the latter half of 2012 the Department for Higher Education and Research organised wide-ranging talks, called the Conference on Higher Education and Research, with all players and partners concerned. In the coming months a guidance and programming bill will be discussed. Steps will be taken to reduce academic failure in the first university cycle. The future guidance bill will undertake to simplify and clarify the training on offer by reducing the number of degrees by at least ten-fold whilst increasing the number of graduates. More broadly, students throughout the first university cycle will be able to finalise their personal and professional projects with diversified pathways, progressive specialisation and bridges for redirecting their studies to different fields.

#### New skills and Jobs

Efforts are made in secondary and higher education both to encourage pupils and students to get transversal competences throughout their schooling and to increase clarity between training and the employment market.

According to the guidance and planning law for the future of schools of 23 April 2005, the notion of “competence” has been introduced in the school syllabus (ISCED 1 and 2). A “common base of knowledge and skills” that each pupil should master at the end of compulsory education has been defined. Each major skill is designed as a combination of fundamental knowledge, capacities to be implemented in various situations and attitudes needed throughout life. These skills are assessed and legible throughout all the pupil’s schooling, in a personal competences record book.

In addition, a career and training discovery programme is proposed to pupils throughout their schooling, at secondary level. This guidance system is aimed at acquiring knowledge, skills and aptitude which are useful all throughout life, like "social and civic" skills as well as those pertaining to "autonomy and initiative".

At higher education level, at the start of academic year 2010, a reflection process was initiated on the definition of a training repository for the first university cycle. These repositories should define the volume of training proposed per diploma, expected skills and knowledge and assessment methods, in order to increase clarity between training and the employment market.

Besides, the validation of acquired experience (VAE - *validation des acquis de l'expérience*) created by social modernisation law no. 2002-73 of 17 January 2002 is a measure that allows anyone, regardless of their age, level of qualification or status, to validate acquired experience to obtain a professional certificate. The law no.2009-1437 of 24 November 2009 related to lifelong guidance and vocational training aims to ensure that everyone, independent of their status, acquires and updates knowledge and skills favouring their professional development: with this in mind, it establishes the "right to professional information, guidance

and qualification" and a whole series of concrete measures to apply, define and implement by the State, regions and social partners a "coordinated national strategy".

The Mission for European and International Relations within the Assessment, Prospects and Performance Directorate (DEPP) is taking an active part in two European projects: the ESCO project (European skills, competencies and occupations) and the project link to the "Network of Observatories on Skills Needs and Mismatches".

## **Past and current initiatives and projects in Schools**

The strategy identifies a Europe 2020 headline target with two underlying targets for education and training to be reached by the EU by 2020:

- to reduce the share of early school leavers to less than 10%;
- to increase the share of the population aged 30–34 having completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 40%.

French government has translated these two EU wide-targets into specific national initiatives and project in schools:

### **1) To reduce the share of early school leavers to 10%**

French authorities have set the goal of reducing the percentage of early school leavers to 9.5%, i.e. the proportion of youths from 18 to 24 who leave the educational system with at best a secondary school degree (ISCED level 3C, short cycle) and who do not enter a training programme. The percentage in 2011 was 12% and 12.6% in 2010 (Eurostat). This percentage has remained fairly stable since 2003. In 2012 France's President vowed to halve the number of early school leavers by 2017. There are two parts to the government's actions, on the one hand to prevent early school leaving and on the other, to offer young people a real chance of meaningful training.

### **2) Preventive actions**

Early school-leaving is part of the broader issue of academic failure. So measures shall be adopted as early as primary school to prevent academic failure.

Strengthening student supervision in primary schools and personalised study-support in school hours are examples of measures with an eye to seamlessly detecting early learning difficulties while not stigmatising the student and avoiding excessive recourse to repeating a year. Secondary schools' plans of action (*projet d'établissement*) must include specific objectives mobilising the entire educational staff for reducing absenteeism. A reference person on the staff shall be appointed in schools that are particularly affected by academic failure. It will be this person's job to detect students at risk of failure and mentor young people who return to education/training after having dropped out. Improved guidance provisions are also planned.

### **3) Actions fostering a return to education/training**

From late 2011, a detection system (SIEI, an interdepartmental system of information exchange) makes it possible to draw up lists of young school leavers. The list is then sent to the 360 "school-leaver support and follow-up platforms" that exist in France. Also instituted in 2011, they are a way to co-ordinate local players who are active in training, guiding and integrating young-people.

A new system was initiated in December, 2012 by the French Department for Education called ROFE, *Réseau Objectif Formation-Emploi* (the Work-Study Objective Network). By interacting with the platforms it should enable young school leavers to be offered a personalised return path to education and training that will result in employment. The ROFEs should mobilise all players who work with young school leavers, e.g. head teachers, anyone working for youth integration, guidance counsellors and psychologists, tutors, etc. The goal is to offer every young school leaver a way back to education and training as part of a "Work-Study Objective" contract signed either by the young person or their families if they are minors. The following are the phases of this path back to education and training:

- a young person is contacted by a support and follow-up platform;
- the "Work-Study Objective" network invites the young person to a face-to-face interview to discuss their needs and desires and an evaluation is made of their academic level;
- should the young person wish, an induction period is arranged as part of the more general integration project to help build a successful, personalised project
- a return to education is offered either as an initial educational course in a "traditional" school, or in a specific class devoted to young school leavers, or in apprenticeship or as further training. Other solutions outside of the national educational scheme may also be offered (civic service, for example) in connection with the platform's interdepartmental players;
- the young person is mentored by a tutor throughout their new training with stock being taken on a regular basis.

#### **4) To increase the share of the population aged 30–34 having completed tertiary education or equivalent to at least 40%**

In 2011 the percentage of higher-education graduates in the 30 to 34 year-old age group stood at 43.4% and in 2010 at 43.5%, putting France perceptibly above the European average, which was 34.6% in 2011 (Eurostat). This percentage has risen by over 10 points since 2000. Guidance and planning law no. 2005-380 of 23 of April, 2005 for the future of schools set the objective of leading 50% of an age group to a higher education degree. In 2009 (the latest available statistics) this percentage stood at 46.4% for successful initial-education candidates (*L'état de l'enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche*, 2011 – The State of Higher Education and Research, 2011, DfE/DEPP).

From 2008 to 2012 specific steps were taken to reach this goal, in particular the *Plan pluriannuel pour la réussite en licence* ("The Multi-annual Plan for Attaining a Licence", i.e. bachelor's degree). In this framework universities have implemented concrete measures for helping students, e.g. induction periods, increased educational supervision, support for struggling students, more profession instruction, a quality approach, etc. Attainment for all students is a priority for the present government. A bill for Higher Education and Research shall be submitted to the Council of Ministers by March, 2013. And there are plans for taking

steps to simplify the higher education landscape and making the First Cycle's teaching offer easier to understand.

### **5) A case study: "The school project"**

The school project is the expression of secondary schools' (colleges and high schools) autonomy recognised by the State. It was made compulsory by the guidance law n° 89-486 of 10 July 1989.

In this project, the educational community of each school (i.e. management staff, teachers, guidance personnel, parents, pupils) defines the most appropriate strategy - depending on pupils' needs and local resources - to attain the educational objectives set at the national and academies' level. This implies choices in terms of:

- management of space and premises;
- management of school rhythms (timetable in the school day, in the week);
- availability of educational material;
- definition of specific educational provisions to implement national objectives and curricula.

In its project, the school ensures the consistent application of provisions that contribute to its own educational policy:

- reception and information of parents;
- guidance;
- documentary policy;
- individual monitoring of pupils;
- opening onto the economic, cultural and social environment;
- European and international opening;
- health education;
- civic education;
- environmental education for sustainable development.

### **6) from the "Creativity and Innovation best practices EU 2009"**

"Cre'actor": new networks to help young people create their own future. Young people with a low level of academic attainment may often suffer from low self-esteem.

Cre'actor is a 3-year project aiming to help them gain confidence and play an active role in society by setting up their own businesses. The project's innovative approach has produced some creative outcomes.

The first phase of the project investigated just how realistic it is for low academic achievers, especially those aged under 26, to set up their own business. Specially commissioned research sought the views of key agents – public authorities, financial organisations and trade unions. The conclusions were cautiously optimistic. Key factors for success were identified, but it was agreed that even if projects failed, the young people involved would benefit from the training and support offered to them. The research also identified support systems already in place in the 5 partner countries to help business start-up.

The final preparatory stage was to identify organisations in partner countries which could form a network to advise on training methodology and help develop support structures. In all, 304 organisations joined the network – over 60 for each partner country. On the basis of the research, partners developed a methodology to guide young people during all stages of the start-up process. In consultation with the network organisations, 10 packages were devised, each offering the most appropriate support and guidance for each stage of the process. Packages include workshops, simulation software, documents, questionnaires, useful books and websites – and a network of other ‘cre’actors’ to share experiences. Network organisations also offered mentoring to the trainees. 15 young people were recruited to join the project as ‘cre’actors’ – creative actors in building their own future. They succeeded in launching 10 new enterprises, some working together. Testimonies on the website show their enthusiasm for the project and the concepts behind it.

All involved in Cre’actor – young people, network organisations and partners – gave feedback about the progress of the project and changes were made to address these comments. So the project has created a whole new methodology which has been user-tested and can now be adapted in other countries across Europe. It has also created new networks, demonstrating models for innovative collaboration between organisations.