



Long-term sickness – Back-to-work measures

In order to reduce the number of long-term sick persons, two forms of reintegration pathways were introduced at the end of 2016 respectively for people with or without an employment contract (the one form being organised by the Belgian Federal Employment Department and the other by the Belgian National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance – Inami/RIZIV). The Belgian Court of Audit notes that, at the current rate, reintegration pathways are unlikely to contribute substantially to limiting employment disability and encouraging people to get back to work. Although the number of reintegration pathways is increasing, their impact remains negligible in that merely 2% of the intended target group is effectively reached each year. Moreover, reintegration pathways cannot always be started swiftly enough due to a lack of medical advisors and occupational health physicians, and the government does not have the most basic information available on the reintegration pathways to evaluate the policy. The Court recommends keeping on investing in the reintegration pathways organised by the Inami/RIZIV and evaluating the regulatory framework applying to both medical advisors and occupational health physicians. The Court also advocates taking initiatives to ensure that basic information on the different process stages is kept so that evaluation and adjustment can be performed.