

National Report: Belgium

1. In the field of the legislation and the regulations concerning insurance business and pension funds, the following must be mentioned:
 - 1.1. The long-anticipated regulation concerning pension funds, which must come within the framework of the legislation on the general control on insurance, has not been issued yet. Neither is it expected in the near future, because there is an immense opposition of interests, on the one hand from the life insurance companies that regard the regulated pension funds as competitors for their group insurances. On the other hand it is opposed by some very important pension funds that have substantial pension claims which are completely unfunded, and for which it would mean total bankruptcy to constitute the required representative assets, if the decree would be promulgated as it was drafted.
 - 1.2. The regulation of the life insurance companies, which is expected in the framework of the EEC directories, has also been delayed. A first draft for these directories met with a lot of resistance from the insurance companies because of the opposition between the point of view of the Control authority and that of the Professional Association of the Insurance Companies concerning the tariff structure and the calculation basis of the mathematical reserves. The Committees are meeting but a terminal regulation cannot be expected before the beginning of 1984.
 - 1.3. A bill that was passed into law on November 11, 1979, is that on the financial reporting and disclosure by the insurance companies. It has been in force since 1980 and it imposes a uniform scheme for the balance account, the revenue account and for the results. It is also highly beneficial to the disclosure and the comparison of the activities of the insurance companies in Belgium.
 - 1.4. In addition, it must be said that, since January 1, 1977, there has been a legislation on the financial reporting by the industrial and commercial companies, which pays some attention to the social liabilities of those companies and to the assets that are provided for these.
2. As far as social security is concerned, some striking events have occurred:
 - 2.1. A Royal Decree of February 26, 1982 has suspended, at least till the end of 1982, the automatic linking of salaries, wages and welfare benefits to the cost of living index. At present, this index-linking is restricted to the lowest level of remuneration and the index adjustment represents an equal nominal amount for everyone. Considering the fact that this automatic linking was the sacrosanct attainment of the labour unions, the extent of the concession this decree represents can be understood and makes it possible to rate at its true value the extent to which the Belgian population has been prepared to co-operate in the economical revival out of the crisis.
 - 2.2. Belgium does not make an exception to the general trend in unemployment that can be noticed in Europe and in all the industrialized countries all over the world. This problem gives rise to enormous budgetary problems. Man is looking for new financial systems in social security. New in this field is the influence of social scientists and moral philosophers. It is to be expected that social security will soon be remodelled from a system of social insurance into a system of social solidarity.
3. I would like to conclude with a word about the development of the actuarial profession in Belgium. On June 30, 1981 the Royal Association of Belgian Actuaries (KVBA, ARAB) was acknowledged as a professional association. This is an important step in the further development of the profession of the consulting actuary in our country. The legal acknowledgement does not only give us a voice in the national matters, but it also gives us a claim to the official appointment as experts and lays the foundation of the further development of our profession.