



## Belgium Government Demonstrates Disability Management Leadership on Several Fronts



**cdmp**<sup>™</sup> certified disability  
management  
professional



**crtwc**<sup>™</sup> certified  
return to work  
coordinator

Under the leadership of Mr. Francois Perl, Director General for Belgium's Social Security Organization, INAMI/RIZIV, Belgium is significantly advancing strategies, programs and practices designed to maintain successful and productive employment for individuals acquiring a mental or physical health impairment, who are at risk of losing their jobs, and then enter the INAMI/RIZIV supplemental security income benefits system, with often only marginal success in entering the labour market again.

In order to shift towards a pro-active job retention strategy versus a reactive vocational rehabilitation intervention, in 2014 INAMI/RIZIV signed a 5-year license agreement which provided access to the entire NIDMAR continuing education framework as well as the ability to offer the Certified Disability Management Professional (CDMP) and Certified Return to Work Coordinator (CRTWC) examinations across Belgium.

After tremendous work involving translation and some adaptation, principally to address Belgium's unique legal and social security framework, and facilitation provided through INAMI/RIZIV's project director Dr. Saskia Decuman, and involving a number of dedicated individuals, universities, research institutes, and occupational health services, 42 individuals wrote either the CDMP or CRTWC examination in 2017.

Fast forward to 2019 when Mr. Francois Perl explained, "We decided to commission a formal review of the RTW/Disability Management intervention improvements that individuals trained through the education program and subsequent professional certification were able to achieve. The improvements identified were consistent with outcomes achieved in other jurisdictions, and were such that we extended our education and professional certification license agreements to 2025, and we will continue to support 90 individuals annually going through the entire process."

Another key plank in Belgium's strategy to achieve much improved socio-economic outcomes for individuals who acquire a mental or physical health impairment while employed is represented through the hosting of the 2020 International Forum on Disability Management (IFDM 2020) scheduled to take place December 2–4, 2020 in Brussels.



At a time when an increasing number of complex health challenges, especially rapidly rising mental health impairments, are creating ever more significant job retention issues for both the workplace stakeholders and relevant social security organizations, the IFDM world forums have offered global leadership, cutting edge solutions and evidence-based research findings for key government, business and labour leaders, as well as representatives from all relevant stakeholder communities since 2002.

During his comments inviting the national and international participants to IFDM 2020, Mr. Perl commented, "Maintaining a continued successful employment relationship for individuals who acquire a disabling impairment is absolutely the best outcome for the individual, from every perspective."

He went on to say, "From both research and practical experience within our system and similar schemes around the world, indications are that very few individuals who have lost their employment due to a disabling impairment ever return to gainful work."

**Further information on IFDM 2020 can be found at:**  
<https://www.ifdm2020.org/>

**Deadline for submission of abstracts is March 31, 2020 – please visit the website at:**  
<https://www.ifdm2020.org/call-for-abstracts>

**For further information regarding the education and professional certifications, please contact us at:**  
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