



Belgium names pension minister - 26 March 2008 15:20

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BELGIUM – Marie Arena of the Francophone Parti Socialiste has joined the federal government as the new minister of social integration and pensions.

Arena, who until earlier this month was the minister-president of the French Community of Belgium, was appointed after Yves Leterme was sworn in as the country's new prime minister on March 20.



Leterme's five-party coalition government won a confidence vote in parliament last weekend which cleared the way for his term of office to start after a nine-month political crisis in Belgium.

Pensions experts believe Arena is unlikely to make any drastic changes to the Belgian pension landscape.

Karel Stroobants, an independent pension expert, told IPE: "The only question that remains is whether so-called 'soft' benefits will be introduced to add to the second pillar, either via an 'intersectorial' agreement, or the creation of a default system where everyone who does not have access to the second pillar via an employer could join the system."

He added however: "I have not picked up on anything which suggest we will move towards that direction."

Philip Neyt, chairman of the Belgian Association of Pension Funds (BVPI), said in an interview with IPE Magazine earlier this month following the creation of the OFP pension vehicle, the new government "will be very consistent since the law was unanimously approved by parliament and all political parties support the move towards pan-European pension funds".

If you have any comments you would like to add to this or any other story, contact Carolyn Bandel on +44 (0)20 7261 4622 or email carolyn.bandel@ipe.com

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