

FORWARD-LOOKING STUDIES ON EMPLOYMENT, OCCUPATIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS IN FRANCE : TOOLS, USERS, NETWORK AND TRANSFERS INTO PRACTICE

Summary of the presentation at Agora Conference (16 and 17 March 2009), by Marc-Antoine Estrade, Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training

Forward looking studies on employment, occupations and skills, combining quantitative forecasts and qualitative skills assessments, are a common concern, with the aim of producing some guidelines for labour market actors, for employment policy as well as for education and training policies. But these studies are useless if players cannot accept the results and transfer them into practice. It is then necessary to involve stakeholders at every stage of these studies in order to set up shared diagnosis.

In France, one of the main challenges relates to the coordination between national, regional and sectoral actors. This issue is common to many aspects of the French employment and training policies. At each level, experts are producing some forward looking studies :

- At national level, the Centre d'Analyse Stratégique, under the responsibility of the Prime Minister, coordinates the forecasting work of the various ministries. The results and methodologies are discussed in a high-level committee by major administrations, social partners and regional councils.
- At regional level, employment and training regional observatories are co-financed by the State and the Regional council. They gather various players at regional level: local authorities, regional services of the Ministries, public employment services, social partners, etc.
- At sector level, all sectors are required to establish observatories for occupations and qualifications. These observatories are jointly managed by employees' and employers' trade unions. The State and the social partners can also agree to carry out joint forecasting activities for certain sectors. Within the last national collective agreement on vocational training (January 2009), social partners have decided to better coordinate these sectoral observatories.

The State plays an important role to facilitate forward looking activities, produce statistics and provide methodological support at national, regional and sectoral level. Networking of experts is seen as a leverage to promote coordination between national, regional and sectoral actors.