

## FORUM 2

### Supporting and redeploying employees affected by the crisis

#### The issues

One response to rapidly rising unemployment lies in the ability of public authorities have to facilitate transitions and to secure wage earners' professional paths. Immediate support to active people who have just lost their job helps them return to work more quickly. Measures jointly financed by the European Social Fund during the 2007-2013 period foreshadow flexicurity, following the example of such measures developed in other Member States (for example, in Denmark), but adapted to the French economic and social model.

The crisis, however, accelerated changes in certain territories and greatly impacted some firms. It brought to light the complex challenges of redeployment: the need for intermediaries between stakeholders in employment, organising professional mobility towards more promising occupations, defining new training specifications, and analysing occupations to accompany these changes.

During times of crisis, large-scale redundancy plans override individualised coverage of impacted employees, which is why one of the immediate responses of the French recovery plan has been to broaden the use of state-aided professional transition contracts (known as CTP) in order to promote support adapted to territories, occupations and individual employees in redeployment. The CTP measure had been tested since 2006 and was extended to 25 vulnerable employment basins particularly impacted by job loss, and the European Social Fund committed €20 million over two years to support career transitions.

What assessment can be made of this support? What were the results for the employee beneficiaries and what place could the CTP have in the renewed landscape of redeployment measures? Beyond the CTP, what challenges does training face as a tool for creating job security?

In addition, €80 million were specifically tagged to support the cross-sector Fonds unique de prérequalification (FUP) (equalising training fund for crisis victims), which should make it possible to jointly finance operations that the training fund managing organisations are unable to finance alone.

The crisis brought to light the need to develop skills and competences. Professional mobility is one of the best answers for employment. Now, how is it possible to combine employability and security? What priority is granted to employees in small and medium firms? What added value could the European Social Fund contribute to promoting redeployment of employees towards occupations of the future? ■■■

# ESF: A Partner to Tackle the Crisis

## European Conference

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Forum 2 Presentation



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### Projects

#### **RESIST The Crisis (Burgundy OPCALIA)**

The State and the Fonds unique de prérequalification (FUP) (equalising training fund for crisis victims) signed an agreement on 21st April to set up an "Emergency Training Fund" to tackle the crisis. As part of the approach, the Burgundy Opcalia and the Rhône-Alpes Opcalia used ESF support to develop an inter-regional project called RESIST. This project aims to promote maintaining and return to employment via skills development. It was implemented with the help of local firms, and more specifically SMEs located in areas exposed to the crisis and firms particularly impacted by fewer orders, loss of customers, and relocations. RESIST has several phases:

- pinpointing the firms facing crises
- pinpointing priority target groups within these firms;
- identifying the needs of these groups;
- building training paths based on local opportunities;
- funding the training;
- assessing the impact of the project

Opcalia was also involved to support job seekers via state-aided professional transition contracts (CTP) and a personalised redeployment agreement (CRP).

#### **Training to soften the blow and prepare for the future (Agefos PME)**

Agefos PME set up a territory-based "anti-crisis" plan as part of an overall European Social Fund subsidy. The current context of a weakened economy and increasing uncertainty for SMEs and VSEs has already interrupted the trajectories of a number of employees and led to unemployment. Furthermore, even when the situation is normal, SMEs and VSEs do not necessarily have the time or means to set up the training plans that would be necessary to develop their business or to maintain jobs. The Rhône-Alpes Agefos PME used this initiative to offer concrete support to member firms, especially to get them to commit to training and developing the skills of their employees, with the goal of preparing for the future.

The firms are encouraged to take advantage of slow periods to develop employee skills rather than to use partial unemployment. This is a win-win approach, as the firm prepares for the



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future and the employees develop their employability. These initiatives mainly concern employees with lower levels of qualification. This project led to specific territory-based and sector-based applications in connection with initiatives supported by the Rhône-Alpes Regional Council (for toppers in Vallée de l'Arve, industrial body repairmen in Bresse-Dombes-Val de Saône, in plastics in Oyonnax, etc.). This project had a budget of € 6.8 million, of which nearly €3 million came from the ESF.

Agefos PME also finances training set up as part of personalised redeployment agreements (CRP) with the help of FUP and the ESF. ■■

### Speakers

#### Moderator

**Isabelle Pavis**, "National Employment Fund" Unit, French general Delegation for Employment and Vocational Training

Isabelle Pavis is Head of Unit at the French General Delegation for Employment and Continuing Training and is responsible for steering and implementing tools to prevent and accompany economic mutations, as part of the sub-department for economic mutations and business development. These tools include partial unemployment, redeployment tools, and territorial revitalisation. ■■

#### Experiences

**Ourida Lebbal**, Burgundy OPCALIA

Ourida Lebbal has been the regional representative of the Burgundy OPCALIA since August 2009 and is responsible for implementing strategic orientations defined by the Council of Administration. Previously, she coordinated studies and projects within the Rhône-Alpes OPCALIA, and is a legal specialist trained in public law. ■■

**Serge Regi**, Rhône-Alpes Agefos PME

Serge Regis is a graduate of the Ecole Supérieure de Commerce. He served as secretary general of the Burgundy CGPME for 15 years, then as the director of the Burgundy AGEFOS PME, and since 1988 at director of the Rhône-Alpes AGEFOS PME. ■■



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### Perspectives

**Frédéric Bruggeman**, Amnyos Group

Frédéric Bruggeman is a specialist in economic mutations and related restructuring. He has worked with stakeholders on an operational level since 1985. He serves as an expert for enterprise committees, analysing firms with a focus on anticipating risks. For seven years, he has managed and led a cross-disciplinary team responsible for capitalising on know-how and formalising methodological tools in the field of economic mutations. From 2004 to 2007, he coordinated the project Monitoring Innovative Restructuring in Europe (ESF article 6), after which he coordinated the book "Restructuring Work and Employment in Europe: Management and Policy Responses" with Bernard Gazier. He has been director of Amnyos Economic Mutations since 2008 and participates at a European, national and local level in work and discussion aimed at foreseeing economic mutations. ■■

**Laurent Lacour**, Limousin Regional Council

Laurent Lacour, Director of Vocational Training and Apprenticeship for the Limousin Regional Council since 2006, after serving from 2004 as technical advisor on these same topics for the offices of the Chairman of the Limousin Region, Jean-Paul, Denanot, who also chaired the continuing training and apprenticeship commission for the Association of French Regions (ARF). ■■

**Nika Juvan**, Head of the ESF Unit, Slovenian Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs

Nika Juvan is graduated from the University of Ljubljana, Faculty for Social Sciences, in the field of international relations. She began working at the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, in the field of European Social Fund with special emphasis on the Community Initiative EQUAL. From 2005 to 2007 she worked as a seconded national expert at the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities - Slovenian desk covering ESF, Lisbon Strategy and Social Inclusion's open method of coordination. In 2007 she moved to the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Slovenia at the EU as an assistant to the presidency team for the Council's Social Questions working party. She then returned to Slovenia to take over the ESF Unit at the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. The Ministry is the Intermediate Body for the ESF in Slovenia, responsible for approximately €400 million of ESF funds in the programming period 2007-2013. As a head of the ESF Unit she is responsible for the coordination of all ESF-related activities in the Ministry and with all other stakeholders. This Unit is responsible as well for the preparation and monitoring of the operations within the priority axis Equal Opportunities on the Labour Market and Social Inclusion. ■■

### Reporter

**Laurent Duclos**, "Policy Assessment & Innovation" Department General Delegation for Employment and Vocational Training ■■

Laurent Duclos is Assistant Head of Department at the French Ministry of Economy, Industry and Employment's General Delegation for Employment and Vocational Training. ■■