

UNEMPLOYMENT : THE MEASURE UNDER DEBATE

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In January 2007, the French institute of statistics decided to report the use of the labour force survey of 2006 for computing the French unemployment rate and to publish instead an unemployment rate based on administrative statistics, although, according to the ILO principles, the unemployment measure should not depend on administrative statistics. Thus, this choice has raised a suspicion on any measure of the unemployment rate. The answer rate of the survey has known an evolution, which could only have a marginal impact on the unemployment rate estimate. The employment and the labour force estimated by the survey seem respectively consistent with other sources and with recent demography dynamics. Because of changes in the management of job seekers rolls by the French employment agency, an error should mainly affect the temporary estimates and, by taking into account the survey of 2006, the unemployment rate in April 2007 should be revised in September from 8.2% to around 8.9%. The decrease of the unemployment rate since June 2005 (-1.1 point) would not have been as sharp as indicated by temporary statistics (-1.8 point).