

Call for contributions for the review *Travail et Emploi*

Special issue: “Structural reforms and employment”

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The review *Travail et emploi* is planning a thematic issue dedicated to the analysis of the various reforms implemented over the last ten years in the OECD countries to support employment. Following the global economic crisis that started in 2007-2008 and the euro area recession in 2012-2013, these countries have suffered from high rates of job destruction and rising unemployment. The OECD and the European Commission have widely recommended reforms aimed at labour market flexibilisation and lowering labour costs (decentralisation of collective bargaining on wages and work organisation; lower minimum wages; removal of wage indexing rules, etc.), while at the same time countries were facing strong budget constraints on public expenditure.

These recommendations are not new. However, since international institutions advocated for them in depressed macroeconomic conditions, one can wonder about how they were implemented and the effectiveness of the different strategies countries have chosen, from both comparative and historical perspectives. The dual purpose of the issue is therefore **to describe the implementation** of the advocated strategies, in France and abroad, and **to assess their effectiveness** regarding employment and growth **from a macroeconomic perspective**. It also specifically intends to promote the analysis of public employment management strategies and their general effects on economic activity and employment.

Articles in this thematic issue should be within the framework of one or more of the following themes:

First, the issue will seek to understand the reasons for the contrasting dynamics of labour markets in OCDE countries in times of crisis. Why have some countries experienced a more favourable development than others? What did they do to limit manufacturing job destructions or develop service job creations, and return to unemployment levels prevailing before the crisis? What is the contribution of economic policies to these differences?

From a historical perspective, the extent and length of the crisis also raise the question of the specificity of the current reforms aimed at supporting employment compared to previous crises. Are the implemented reforms, the strategies and methods for implementing the reforms specific to this crisis? Did their implementation have the same effects from one crisis to another?

The diversity of conducted reforms also calls for questioning their effect according to macroeconomic conditions. Are the expected effects of the reforms dependent on the business cycle regime? Methodological difficulties in identifying the effects of the reforms arise due to the multiplicity of shocks that have affected OECD economies since the crisis. One will need to specify and consider them.

The structural reforms recommendations favour the adjustment of wages and labour costs. These recommendations may have exacerbated the downward pressure on labour costs within the euro area, leading to more competition or, on the contrary, to more cooperation between economies through the implementation and the coordination of economic policies. One can therefore question the overall effect of the reforms undertaken at the level of each country, for example. Have they been complementary or, on the contrary, have they tended to neutralize one another or even penalize employment at the European level?

Finally, the special issue will focus on identifying the role of public employment for supporting overall employment and economic activity in general. Governments have been facing a dilemma between supporting economic activity and responding to the growing need for public services on the one hand, and controlling public spending on the other hand. The latter limits the scope for public sector intervention as well as increases in remuneration for civil servants. While the policies intended to support economic activity tend to increase public employment, the budgetary constraints restrain its progression so that the effect of supporting a certain level of public employment on the recovery and activity in general may seem difficult to identify. Not all countries have had the same public employment management strategy over time or following a major crisis. One can therefore examine the different public employment management strategies between states; and propose an assessment of their impacts on total employment and growth by jointly observing and modelling the dynamics of public expenditure, public employment, total employment and growth. The objective is to highlight the existence of complementarities or, on the contrary, of crowding-out effects between public and private employment.

Expected contributions can be original analyses based on time series or panel data, which can represent an exercise to assess reforms carried out in one or more sectors or countries. They can also be descriptive studies of the implementation of economic strategies, as an international comparison or from a historical perspective. Lastly, literature reviews or meta-analyses would present an opportunity to discuss the wide spectrum of policies conducted in different countries and the evaluation methods used.

This call primarily concerns **economists**, and mainly quantitative work in macroeconomics and labour and employment economics. Economic history work also falls within its scope.

Applications and timetable:

The editors initially invite the contributors to propose a plan (either in French or in English, for native speakers of either of these two languages) for an article of approximately 5,000 to 7,000 characters (three to four pages), clearly presenting the research question investigated, the materials used, the analytical tools mobilized, and the expected results.

Such proposals should be sent by email, as an attached file (word or pdf format), to the editors of the review at travail.emploi@travail.gouv.fr, with copies to bruno.ducoudre@ofce.sciences-po.fr, and veronique.simonnet@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr by **October 30th, 2017** at the latest.

The authors whose proposals are selected will then send their full article (in French or English) in Word format (or equivalent) by **9th February 2018**.

For more details on the stylistic norms used, please read the articles "[Recommandations aux auteurs](#)" and "[Normes graphiques](#)" on the website of the review.

Articles will be evaluated by referees in line with the procedures adopted by the editorial board of the journal (see "[Procédure d'évaluation](#)").

Following their review, the articles that have been accepted should be published in the first half of 2019.