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Industrial Sector Workforce Tensions and Skills and Related Training Schemes

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REPORT

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR WORKFORCE TENSIONS AND SKILLS AND RELATED TRAINING SCHEMES

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SUMMARY

While the industry has created more than 100,000 jobs since 2017, the priority of a job-skills policy for this sector remains the resolution of recruitment tensions. New industrial projects linked to environmental, energy and digital transitions are reshaping the territories and accompanying a reindustrialisation policy led by France 2030 in various strategic sectors for the country. This is a challenge for the development of industrial skills, given that industrial employment has been declining steadily in France since 1974 and that it is partly a question of developing new sectors. As the diagnosis stands, the extent of job creation in the coming years remains difficult to quantify but should be less than the replacements of end-of-career departures already estimated at 966,000 by 2030. The tense situation in industrial recruitment remains the most difficult problem to resolve, against a backdrop of increased competition on the labour market and falling unemployment rates, even though industrial companies are already making more use of temporary employment and the public employment service than other sectors.

Together with companies, public authorities are now investing heavily in the development of industrial skills. The latter benefited from at least €2.7 billion in 2021. In addition, the call for expressions of interest "Skills and Future Professions" has a budget of €2.5 billion for the adaptation of training by 2030, with €101 million already paid out to the selected projects. Almost 265,500 pupils and students were enrolled in 2020 in the last year of training related to industrial professions. At the start of 2021, 1.3 million pupils and students were enrolled in initial training linked to industrial professions (production or scientific specialisation) at all levels. While demand for employment is falling, the public employment service is mobilising its efforts and entry into industrial training for jobseekers has doubled since 2015. Finally, more than 271,000 people have completed industry-related training with their personal training account (PTA) since 2021. **The situation is paradoxical: in the short and medium term, the volume of people trained to take up a profession in industry is higher than the recruitment needs, but recruitment tensions are increasing.**

Recruitment tensions thus remain at a high level and can be explained primarily by the difficulties of integration and the final orientation of the trained persons. Employment integration rates for students from the certificate of professional competence (CAP) to the advanced vocational training certificate (BTS) remain low overall, although they are better in industry, and some young people trained for industry choose to work in other sectors. Thus, in 2021, out of 170,100 vocational apprentices and students from CAP to BTS level in employment one year after leaving secondary education, 35% completed industrial training, but only 16% pursued an industrial profession. For jobseekers with industrial training, competition in the construction sector is strong.

Tensions also stem from an inadequacy between training and the qualification needs of companies. Although an increase of 10% in 10 years in the number of students trained by the initial training system has been observed, it is concentrated in higher education, mainly at the engineering level, while the number of students following industrial production courses in secondary education has continued to decline over the past two decades, falling a further 5% in 10 years. The development of

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apprenticeships has not helped to stem the decline in the workforce at these levels, while current and future recruitment tensions are focused on the jobs of technicians and skilled workers. **Thus, in order to limit drop-out rates at the end of training benefiting industry and reduce recruitment tensions, the mission recommends an increase in training efforts by giving priority to schemes that engage businesses (apprenticeships and traineeships prior to recruitment) and by targeting Bachelor's degree and BTS levels (proposals No. 3, 4 and 5).**

These actions must go hand in hand with strong communication to promote the image of industry, which is currently still seen in a negative light by the general public. Harsh working conditions, pollution and redundancies are the words that continue to emerge from opinion surveys. Improving this image and the attractiveness of professions and training courses is a major challenge that is addressed by several means. **Global communication must be favoured**, bringing together all industrial players. This is the case of the initiative that has just been launched by the inter-industrial skills operator (Opco 2i), but which nevertheless remains insufficient and the mission recommends targeting trades and territories in line with the France 2030 priorities (proposal No.12).

The goal of better information and orientation from secondary school onwards is supported by the trades discovery programme from the 2023 academic year onwards and by the ONISEP's Future programme(s): it must be accompanied by personalised meetings and discussions between students and professionals (proposals No.10 and 11). Multidisciplinary teaching in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STIM), which is very common abroad and innovative in the approach to technology, must be introduced from primary school to high school level (proposal No.15) in order to disseminate a culture of industrial issues across an entire age group. Special actions aimed at female audiences must be monitored over time (proposals No.16 and 17).

At the same time, the vocational lycée (secondary school) requires a complete image overhaul: by equipping it with sufficient technical resources, as was undertaken with the reform of the vocational lycée and, above all, **by attracting more people to the teaching profession through an initiative on the conditions of assignment, continuous training and remuneration, but also by partly sourcing trainers from industrial companies (proposals No.13 and 14).**

When it comes to developing skills and supporting the retraining of their employees, small and medium-sized industrial enterprises (SMEs) need stronger support, as the size of the company remains a major determinant of access to vocational training. The resources committed by Opco 2i for skills development plans for companies with fewer than 50 employees seem to be insufficient and the amount of NEF-Training available for inter-industry, a very significant supplement that now aims to adapt skills to transitions, decreased during 2022.

In this context, the mission calls for stabilisation of the resources available for HR support to SMEs and for the development of their employees' skills by guiding them towards France 2030 priorities (proposal No. 6). The PTA can also be mobilised as a tool serving employees in industry by developing both the training offer and the contributions of branches and companies (proposal No. 8). The priority given to training in SMEs must be accompanied by the development of collective bargaining on working conditions, the management of jobs and career paths, the dissemination of good practices in this area (proposal No. 7) and the simplification of public schemes to support restructuring, first of all Transco (proposal No. 9).

The overlapping of current governance bodies does not allow industrial redevelopment goals to be achieved. The numerous tools for diagnosing job and skills needs must be improved, by making their financing by the State conditional on

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methodological prerequisites (proposal No. 1), by updating the Outlook for Professions and Qualifications exercise (PMQ) carried out by France Stratégie and DARES (proposal No. 2) and by experimenting with new tools for sharing prospective job needs within France Travail (proposal No. 18). The development of the vocational training programme must be managed with regard to industrial needs (proposals No. 20 and 21) and the monitoring and evaluation of projects carried out under the improved AMI CMA (proposal No. 22). Finally, the mission recommends, at regional level, mobilising the prefects to propose, together with the regional councils, governance enabling the integrated management, with industrialists, of skills needs and solutions for France 2030 industrial sectors within the territories (proposal No. 19). **At national level, a limited-term mandate should be given to a qualified person responsible for ensuring that industrial, national and regional issues are consistently taken into account in employment and training schemes and their development** (Proposal No. 23).