

**- Theoretical and practical problems in the building of long time series  
(Johara Khelif, Insee)**

French national accounts already have sixty years of existence. Since their first implementation, they have experienced nine base changes. In other words, accounts have adapted to their environment very regularly since 1952. Bases from 1952 to 1962 were used to put the French national accounts into place and consolidate them while the 1971 to 2005 bases reflect a progressive evolution towards harmonized European accounts. But whatever the base year, each new national account basis integrates changes of three sorts : concepts are redefined (field of production, break down of the economy into sectors, valuation ...) as well as classifications of activity and products and statistical sources.

The 2005 base is no exception to the rule, its implementation in 2011 leans firstly on a change in classification (from Nace rev.1 to Nace rev.2 which are European classifications), secondly on a change in business statistics and lastly on an improvement of the general quality of the accounts due to the updating of several sources (Bank of France, customs,...).

The publication in may 2011 of base year 2005 French national accounts would have been of little interest for economists if the new definitions only applied to years 2006 to 2010 whereas "old" accounts (going from 1949 to 2005) remained as they were published in base year 2000. For example, how could the year 2009 economical crisis be apprehended if there is no historical data to compare it to ?

This is why new long-term French national accounts in the year 2005 basis have been implemented leading to the publication of yearly and quarterly accounts going from 1949 to 2005. This backcasting operation ("rétropolation") consists in computing more or less detailed accounts that are coherent and detailed enough to be benchmarked when implementing quarterly accounts. This presentation will describe how base year 2005 French national accounts were implemented.