ABSTRACT

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Subject:	2022 LFS Pilot Module "Digital Platform Employment" results
Title:	Considering the French results, how could we improve the DPE questionnaire?

Abstract:

The legal provisions governing the EU-LFS from 2021 (Regulation (EU) 2019/1700 of the European Parliament and of the Council) underlined that it is important to have extensive, sound and comparable statistical data about new employment trends, especially in the context of the digital economy. In this context, the 2022 pilot data collection aimed to estimate the number of digital platform workers, to measure the working time of digital platforms workers and to know about the working conditions on these platforms. In France, this pilot was implemented in 2022 and followed as close as possible the European model questionnaire and explanatory notes.

The main conclusion of the French implementation of the 2022 pilot about the digital platform employment (DPE) is a misunderstanding by the interviewees of the concept of DPE. Some of the identified DP workers are in fact underlined clients of platforms (false positive DP workers). Moreover, by crossing the variables of the 2022 DPE pilot with some French core LFS variables about self-employed workers (which identify if 50% or more of the turnover in the last 12 months of independent self-employed person comes from a "numeric platform"), a part of the identified DP workers in the core LFS do not register as such in the DPE pilot (false negative DP workers). By definition, it is hard to estimate the number of these false negative DP workers. Focusing on the doctors, we know that in France a large part of doctors work on the "Doctolib" platform, and should be as a result considered as DP workers. However, almost all of them declared in the questionnaire that they were not DP workers. Considering this example, we therefore believe that the number of false negatives is potentially significant. At last, when analysing the platform's name declared in clear in the questionnaire, some of them are not "platforms", that is to say that they do not correspond to the concept of platform precisely defined during the European task force meetings. These results are key arguments to work on improving the introductory text of the module and the organization of the questionnaire.

The French implementation of the 2022 DPE pilot enables to list the most used platforms in France. Considering only the "real" DP workers (by deleting the clients and/or the DP workers who work less than 1 hour during the month preceding the interview), the five most commons activities on DPE are: selling goods, renting accomodation, medical and health care services, taxi services, delivery of food. The other proposed activities are only marginally mentioned among the respondents.

We estimate that only a few percent (less than 5%) of the 15-64 years old respondents work on a DP during the 12 months preceding the interview. This rate is approximately 1% if we restrain to the DP workers who work at least 1 hour during the month preceding the interview. Due to the absence of the false negative DP workers, it is difficult to know if this estimation can be considered as a good one. In any case, the small number of DP workers who worked at least 1h during the last month makes it difficult to analyse the answers of the questions about the social rights of the DP workers. Moreover, it seems impossible to link the DPE to a job declared in the core of the LFS, which concerned only the reference week.

As a result, if the DPE subject is maintained as the 2026 complementary module, we could modify the questionnaire by removing questions about work organisation on DP and social protection of the DP workers. In contrast, we could add some questions to identify more precisely the DP workers who depend on platforms, which is the key issue in terms of public policy.