Abstract

In France, since 2008, Insee has decided to take into account profiling for all groups of any size. This is a dramatic change. Until now, business statistics still fully rely on legal units. This is the case for dissemination, data collection, data editing, and the processing of businesses accounts as an input for National Accounts. In the near future, all these operations are intended to rest on the “enterprise”, the economic unit newly defined through profiling.

In a first part, we sum up the reasons for this change. The shift from legal unit to an economic unit (group or enterprise) provides a far better view of the concentration of the productive fabric. Beside, from a few examples, we show that this shift was necessary to ensure that the statistics are not disturbed by legal group restructurations. Some group restructurations, which are purely legal and without economic significance at all, have a large impact on the data collected in legal units. These purely legal restructurations could bring strong breaks in statistical series and in National Accounts, while the productive fabric remains unchanged from the economic point of view.

In a second part, we explain the French strategy for profiling, which is settled on the differential treatment of 3 targets of groups. (i) 42 of the largest groups operating in France are already profiled by face to face profiling, with a yearly meeting between representatives of the group and profilers. (ii) In contrast, about 40 200 small or median sized groups will be automatically profiled by an algorithm, assuming that each of these groups corresponds to a single enterprise. (iii) Between these two targets, around 3750 large or intermediate sized groups will be profiled automatically by the algorithm, but with more elaborate hypotheses, which could be even checked or ratified through surveys.

First results are available on each of the three targets. For larger groups, the way we identify their enterprises is largely consistent with the method that was defined by the EU ESSnet working group on Profiling. We then explain the principles of the two methods we use to build accounts of the profiled enterprises of the larger groups (on the scope of the national territory), using both administrative data and data collected from face to face profiling. For smaller groups, we sum up the principles of the algorithm we use to profile them automatically and to build the accounts of their enterprises. In the end, we present the main results regarding the representation of the French productive fabric, namely the sectoral distribution according to the three levels of units, legal unit, group and enterprise.