

The spirit of the reforms developed in France (see below) is the root of the Lisbon strategy.

At this European level, the reflexion clearly misses a more social point of view, trade unions are not sufficiently present. So the first goal should be to find solutions in order to increase the voice of progressive people at this level, and preferentially already at the stage of the definition of the policies. The building of the pan-European new space should not be restricted to a free and all-powerful market. Nevertheless a big market without rules is easy to build, whereas the social progress, which includes public institutions, has been built along history with forms that can be quite different from one country to the other. So in the process of the increases of exchanges and collaborations inside Europe, by various mobilities of people, ideas or things, some modifications are probably necessary. The danger, visible in the logic of the European treatise, is that this process should be used mostly in the interest of the market and the logic of the AGCS, transferring most of the social, public and political spaces to the market, for instance by imposing everywhere (progressively) the most liberal of the solutions existing in the different countries. So one important point is to define a strategy so that the diversity between countries should not be usable for decreasing the social progress existing, but that the building of Europe corresponds to a progress everywhere. The usual way of writing compromise texts by aggregating goals without caring on their compatibility or without adding limits to avoid misuses, can turn out to be counterproductive and should be addressed.

Some directions in order to progress

- 1) Look for a permanent organization (including trade unions, using existing structures) in order to intervene at European level, at all stages (in particular preliminary) of definition and application of policies
- 2) Look for an organization in order to examine the details of the demands made by the trade unions in the different countries, and the ones made in the UNESCO, European Commission, etc.... The goal being to find ways to avoid leaving space where liberal policies can penetrate, inside progressive demands made by social organizations (like mobility, quality, minimal salary: it should be précised that it is mobility rights for the worker, that generally speaking European recommendations should not be used to degrade the existing working conditions)

Concerning the research and high education, some practical directions

- 1) Reaffirm the public service as a goal and reference, and specify that it should be at least defended where it exists. Together with the civil servant status, it is the best way to guarantee the independence of the research and researchers, its public relevance (progress of knowledge, independent expertise, intellectual diversity and freedom)
- 2) Mobility: it has to be a right for the persons, not an additional pressure on the worker. For research, one has to defend the creation of public servant permanent position (or its functional equivalent) everywhere, and also for young researchers.
- 3) The European recommendations should not be used to degrade the existing situation, for instance for working conditions, in particular statuses, or public service of research and high education
- 4) Assessment of scientific policies, careers and activities: must be done by elected peers. Metric assessment should be avoided (the demand for quality needs to be précised on that respect).

- 5) Funding agencies: should finance directly research institutions that have the role of organizing research, and not finance teams or labs.
- 6) European research area: should maximize subsidiarity principle, coordinate at European level only what really needs to be done at this level.

=====

In France an important public service -20000 full time researchers - dedicated to basic research, independently of economical interests, and with an important internal democracy, is existing (CNRS, INSERM, INRIA...). In the last 10 years, this system has been repetitively attacked on several ways: structures (development of parallel structures on the private model, of new external bodies or agencies taking charge of scientific policies or assessment) , fundings (development of agencies at the national, regional and also european level), statuses of people (limited duration employment contracts).

Concerning the structures: these institutions have an important autonomy in their operation, both at the institutional and individual level. This is needed firstly for ensuring the intellectual freedom and the creativity which are important when dealing for progress of knowledge at its borders, but it is also important for the global intellectual freedom of the society to have access to experts that are not depending of economical or political interest, and indeed researchers from cnrs are often asked for opinion by the medias.

This internal independency is supported by the public funding of these institutions, and by an internal democracy which goes beyond the peer assessment: the assessment of activities, laboratories, policies, and recruitment and promotion of researchers is made by elected (at 66%) peers, and this ensure a high level of representativity and independency toward administrative hierarchy. As a public service it has a very different logic than army or strongly hierarchical institutions, and this is very important for ensuring intellectual diversity inside the expertise.

In the last 10 years this mode of operation has been attacked by

Removing the assessment of laboratories, to the benefit of a new created agency, the AERES, where people are not elected but designated by the president of the AERES, himself being designated by the government.

There are increasing pressures to go to a metric evaluation (all the national budget is associated to such logic (LOLF)) performed by administrative bodies, mainly based on the quantity of publications.

Attempts to break the CNRS (which is containing quite all types of fundamental research, from philosophy to mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics) in various pieces. This has been partly done last year through the creation of internal institutes (for physic, mathematic, etc), and progressively external new bodies are created (alliances), in charge of managing field of research at national level. Of course these bodies do not contain any trace of internal democracy and are not linked to the existing elected bodies.

The same process is also at work at regional level. Through the creation of RTRA, associated to private like foundations, in charge of a part of certain fields of research at local level, also in

conjunction with industrial poles, and which operate only between representative of governance of involved institutions. In these new structures and even everywhere, the secret of discussions is becoming progressively mandatory, and it start to become usual that one learn in newspapers that “the whole community wants” things that only very few people were aware of.

Concerning the fundings, there have been continuous problems of cuts in budgets, leading to the 2004 big reactions with demonstration of 10000 researchers which led to important effects in medias and even at elective level, in such a way that the government gave back the 400 civil servant researchers recruitment he had replaced by temporary contracts. But more and more agencies for funding research are built: ANR at national level, foundations associated to RTRA at local level, ERC at European level, and the flux of public money in research institution is changing from internal to external (and the total is not increasing).

One major concept of the reforms is the “culture of project”. Pushed to its absurdity limit, it implies that since the projects are changing, the people should have only temporary contracts. This is a consequence of the development of the funding agencies, who operate blindly the selection of the supported activities, without having the responsibility of the operation of research institutions. The decrease, up to a complete disappearance of recruitment possibilities for young researchers in some areas of research, was the starting point of the strong reaction of public research community in 2004, that finally succeeded to get back the 400 jobs that had been transformed in temporary contracts.

The “LRU” reforms of the universities, going toward their “autonomy” (which could of course mean progressive privatization), could also aggravate the trends of the reforms for the research. Laboratories are supposed to be technically managed by the universities, in which a “more professional and modern” governance is supposed to be developed, which could mean a local management of employments, and eventually increased arbitrariness in the employment statuses (we are attached to nationally defined statuses), and increase of the limited duration contracts.

=====