

Labor & Employment Law Glossary

Glossaire de droit social et droit du travail

French-English Labor & Employment Law Glossary

250 essential terms — French to English

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Ce glossaire recense 250 termes clés du droit social et du droit du travail français, à l'usage des avocats et juristes francophones travaillant en anglais. La terminologie des autres domaines est couverte dans les glossaires distincts de Madison Legal English Coaching. L'anglais américain est donné en priorité ; les termes britanniques sont indiqués le cas échéant. Les termes sont organisés en dix sections thématiques, tirées du Code du travail, de la pratique conventionnelle, du droit de la sécurité sociale et du contentieux devant le conseil de prud'hommes.

1. Le contrat de travail — The Employment Contract

Terms relating to the formation, types, and content of employment contracts.

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
contrat de travail	employment contract	The fundamental agreement establishing an employment relationship under French law.
contrat à durée indéterminée (CDI)	open-ended employment contract	The standard indefinite-term contract; the default form under the Labor Code. Note: unlike US at-will employment, a CDI cannot be terminated without cause.
contrat à durée déterminée (CDD)	fixed-term contract	A contract for a specific, limited duration; strictly regulated and may only be used in defined circumstances.
contrat de travail temporaire	temporary employment contract	A contract with a temporary staffing agency for work at a client company (utilisateur).
contrat d'apprentissage	apprenticeship contract	A work-study contract combining on-the-job training with classroom instruction.
contrat de professionnalisation	vocational training contract	A contract combining employment with job training leading to a professional qualification; open to all ages.
contrat de chantier	project-based contract	A fixed-term contract tied to the completion of a specific construction or project.
période d'essai	probationary period	An initial trial period during which either party may terminate with shorter notice.

renouvellement de la période d'essai	extension of the probationary period	A one-time extension permitted only if provided for by a collective agreement.
clause de non-concurrence	non-compete clause	A post-contractual restriction on professional activities; requires financial compensation to be enforceable.
clause de mobilité	mobility clause	A clause allowing the employer to change the employee's contractual place of work.
clause d'exclusivité	exclusivity clause	A clause prohibiting the employee from working for another employer during the contract.
clause de confidentialité	confidentiality clause	A clause requiring the employee to keep business information secret during and after employment.
clause de dédit-formation	training repayment clause / clawback clause	A clause requiring the employee to reimburse training costs if they leave within a specified period. Note: US equivalent terms include 'clawback clause' and 'training repayment agreement (TRA).'
avenant au contrat de travail	amendment to the employment contract	A written addendum modifying one or more terms of the original contract; requires mutual agreement.
modification du contrat de travail	amendment of essential terms	A change to an essential element requiring the employee's written consent; refusal may lead to termination.
modification des conditions de travail	change in working conditions	A change to a non-essential element, which the employer may impose unilaterally.
éléments essentiels du contrat	essential terms of the contract	Core elements (compensation, job title, place of work, hours) that cannot be changed without the employee's consent.
qualification professionnelle	professional classification	The grade or category assigned to an employee under the applicable collective bargaining agreement.
fiche de poste	job description	A document setting out the duties, responsibilities, and requirements of a position.
convention de stage	internship agreement	A tripartite agreement between an educational institution, a company, and a student governing a curricular internship.
gratification de stage	internship stipend	The mandatory monthly payment to interns whose internship exceeds two months.

travail à temps partagé	shared-time employment	An arrangement under which an employee divides their working time between two or more employers.
groupement d'employeurs	employer grouping	An association allowing member companies to share employees on a part-time basis.
prêt de main-d'oeuvre	temporary assignment / intercompany transfer	A temporary arrangement making an employee available to another company; strictly regulated and must be non-profit. Note: US terms are 'temporary assignment' or 'intercompany transfer'; 'secondment' is UK usage.
sous-traitance	subcontracting	The use of an external company to perform work; carries co-responsibility for labor law compliance toward that company's employees.
travail à domicile	home-based work / work from home	Work performed by the employee at their own residence, under specific rules distinct from remote work. Note: US terms are 'home-based work' or 'work from home'; 'homeworking' is UK usage.
contrat de travail à temps partiel modulé	variable part-time contract	A part-time contract with variable hours over the year; subject to collective agreement and specific rules.

2. La rupture du contrat de travail — Termination of Employment

Terms relating to the ending of the employment relationship by termination, resignation, or mutual agreement.

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
rupture du contrat de travail	termination of the employment contract	The ending of the employment relationship by any means.
licenciement	termination / discharge	The employer-initiated ending of an employment contract. Note: US employment law uses 'termination' or 'discharge'; 'dismissal' is UK/common law usage.
licenciement pour motif personnel	termination for personal reasons	Termination based on conduct or performance attributable to the employee.
licenciement pour faute	termination for cause	Termination based on employee misconduct; the standard US term is 'termination for cause.'
faute simple	ordinary misconduct	Misconduct justifying termination but not forfeiting the notice period or severance pay.
faute grave	serious misconduct	Misconduct making it impossible to maintain the employment relationship; forfeits notice pay and severance.

faute lourde	gross misconduct	The most serious misconduct, implying intent to harm; forfeits all termination benefits.
licenciement pour motif économique	termination for economic reasons	Termination based on economic grounds: financial difficulties, restructuring, or technological change.
licenciement nul	void termination	A termination that is null and void (e.g., discriminatory or violating protected status).
licenciement sans cause réelle et sérieuse	wrongful termination	Termination lacking a valid justification, entitling the employee to damages. Note: 'wrongful termination' is the US term; 'wrongful dismissal' is UK/Canadian.
cause réelle et sérieuse	genuine and serious cause	The legal standard required to justify a termination under French law.
lettre de licenciement	termination letter	Written notification of termination, which must state the specific reasons. Note: US term is 'termination letter'; 'dismissal letter' is UK usage.
entretien préalable au licenciement	pre-termination meeting	A mandatory meeting before any termination, at which the employee may be assisted by a representative. Note: US term is 'pre-termination meeting'; 'pre-dismissal interview' is UK usage.
préavis	notice period	The period between notification of termination and the effective end of the contract.
indemnité de licenciement	severance pay	Statutory or contractual compensation paid upon termination, calculated on length of service.
indemnité compensatrice de préavis	pay in lieu of notice	Compensation paid when the employee is released from working the notice period.
indemnité compensatrice de congés payés	accrued vacation pay	Compensation for unused vacation days upon termination.
démission	resignation	The employee-initiated ending of an indefinite-term contract.
prise d'acte de rupture	constructive discharge claim	A unilateral termination by the employee citing the employer's serious breach of contractual obligations. Note: US term is 'constructive discharge'; 'constructive dismissal' is UK usage.
résiliation judiciaire	judicial termination	Court-ordered termination of the employment contract at the employee's request.

rupture conventionnelle	mutually agreed termination	A negotiated, formally approved separation unique to French law; requires DREETS administrative approval.
rupture conventionnelle collective	collective mutually agreed termination	A collective version of the rupture conventionnelle involving multiple employees.
transaction	settlement agreement	A binding agreement settling a dispute arising from termination; must be signed after termination is effective.
reçu pour solde de tout compte	final paycheck acknowledgment	A document acknowledging receipt of all amounts owed upon termination; contestable within six months. Note: US equivalent is 'final paycheck acknowledgment' or 'wage release.'
portabilité des droits	portability of rights	The continuation of certain benefits (supplemental health insurance, training rights) after termination. Note: this is a French law concept; the US does not have a direct equivalent.
mise à la retraite	compulsory retirement	The employer-initiated retirement of an employee aged 70 or over.
départ à la retraite	voluntary retirement	The employee-initiated transition to retirement.
indemnité de départ à la retraite	retirement departure allowance	A statutory or contractual payment made upon the employee's voluntary retirement.
abandon de poste	job abandonment	An unjustified absence from work without notice; may lead to termination after a formal notice to return.
mise en demeure de reprendre le travail	formal notice to return to work	A formal request from the employer to a job-abandoning employee to justify their absence or return to work.
indemnité spéciale de licenciement	enhanced severance pay	The doubled severance pay applicable when work-related inability to perform leads to termination.

3. Le licenciement économique — Economic Termination and Restructuring

Terms specific to collective reductions in force, restructuring procedures, and workforce reduction plans.

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
plan de sauvegarde de l'emploi (PSE)	workforce reduction plan / job retention plan	Mandatory for large-scale economic terminations in companies with 50+ employees; must include measures to avoid, limit, and compensate job losses. US equivalent: RIF (Reduction in Force) plan.

plan social	workforce reduction plan	The colloquial term for the PSE; older usage still current in practice.
suppression de poste	elimination of a position	The removal of a job position as part of an economic restructuring.
transformation de l'emploi	transformation of the job	A significant change in the nature of a position that may constitute economic grounds for termination.
ordre des licenciements	order of terminations	The legally required criteria for determining which employees are terminated in a collective reduction in force.
critères de l'ordre des licenciements	reduction in force selection criteria	Factors (family responsibilities, seniority, employability, disability) used to rank employees for potential termination.
priorité de réembauche	re-employment priority	An employee's right to be considered first for re-hiring within one year of economic termination.
congé de reclassement	paid outplacement period	Paid period during which the employer provides outplacement and retraining assistance; for companies with 1,000+ employees. Note: 'outplacement' is the standard US term for employer-sponsored job search assistance.
congé de mobilité	mobility leave	A voluntary leave scheme facilitating employees' transition to other employment.
contrat de sécurisation professionnelle (CSP)	professional reintegration contract	Enhanced support for employees terminated for economic reasons in companies with fewer than 1,000 employees.
accord de performance collective	collective performance agreement	A company-level agreement modifying working time or compensation to preserve jobs.
accord de méthode	procedural agreement	A collective agreement organizing the information and consultation process for a restructuring.
reclassement interne	internal redeployment	The obligation to offer employees alternative positions within the company or group before termination.
cellule de reclassement	outplacement unit	An internal or external unit providing job search assistance to employees terminated in a reduction in force.
bilan de compétences	skills assessment	A formal assessment of professional skills and career prospects, often offered during restructuring.

licenciement économique individuel	individual economic termination	An economic termination affecting a single employee; follows a simplified procedure.
grand licenciement collectif	large-scale collective reduction in force	A collective termination affecting 10+ employees over 30 days in a company with 50+ employees.
homologation du PSE	administrative approval of the workforce reduction plan	The mandatory DREETS approval of a unilaterally drawn-up PSE.
redressement judiciaire	judicial reorganization	A court-supervised reorganization of an insolvent company; may include workforce reductions. US equivalent: Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization.
liquidation judiciaire	liquidation	A court-ordered winding up of a company; leads to termination of all employment contracts. US equivalent: Chapter 7 bankruptcy liquidation. Note: 'compulsory liquidation' is UK usage.
accord de rupture collective	collective departure agreement	The agreement formalizing the terms of a rupture conventionnelle collective, including the number of departures and departure indemnities.

4. La rémunération — Compensation and Pay

Terms relating to compensation, wages, bonuses, and statutory pay obligations.

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
salaire brut	gross pay / gross wages	Total compensation before deduction of employee social security contributions. Note: US uses 'gross pay' or 'gross wages' more commonly than 'gross salary.'
salaire net	net pay / take-home pay	Compensation after deduction of all employee social contributions.
salaire de base	base pay / base salary	The fixed component of compensation, excluding bonuses and allowances.
SMIC	national minimum wage	Salaire minimum interprofessionnel de croissance — the statutory minimum hourly wage, indexed annually. US equivalent: federal minimum wage.
prime	bonus / allowance	An additional payment above base pay; may be contractual, collectively agreed, or discretionary.

prime d'ancienneté	seniority bonus	An additional payment based on length of service, typically provided by collective agreement.
treizième mois	thirteenth month pay	An additional month's pay, typically paid at year-end; may be contractual or customary.
participation	statutory profit-sharing	A mandatory profit-sharing scheme in companies with 50+ employees; amounts are blocked for three years.
intéressement	performance-based profit sharing	A voluntary profit-sharing scheme based on performance targets set by collective agreement. Note: US equivalent is 'performance-based profit sharing' or 'incentive compensation.'
plan d'épargne entreprise (PEE)	company savings plan	A tax-advantaged scheme allowing employees to invest profit-sharing sums.
plan d'épargne retraite collectif (PERCOL)	collective retirement savings plan	A long-term savings plan for retirement, funded by profit-sharing or voluntary contributions.
bulletin de paie	pay stub	The mandatory written document detailing compensation and deductions for each pay period. Note: US term is 'pay stub'; 'pay slip' is UK usage.
maintien de salaire	salary continuation	The employer's obligation to continue paying salary during sickness or other authorized absence.
heures supplémentaires	overtime	Working hours in excess of the legal 35-hour threshold; subject to pay supplements or compensatory time off.
majoration pour heures supplémentaires	overtime premium	The additional pay rate for overtime hours (25% for the first 8 hours, 50% thereafter).
remboursement de frais professionnels	reimbursement of business expenses	Payments covering expenses incurred in performing duties; exempt from social contributions within set limits.
avantage en nature	fringe benefit / non-cash compensation	Non-monetary compensation (company car, housing, meals) subject to social contributions on an assessed value. Note: US term is 'fringe benefit'; 'benefit in kind' is UK/tax usage.
titres-restaurant	meal vouchers	Employer-subsidized vouchers for purchasing meals; exempt from contributions within a set ceiling.
prime de partage de la valeur (PPV)	value-sharing bonus	A statutory bonus allowing employers to pay an exceptional tax-exempt bonus to employees.

salaire minimum conventionnel	minimum wage under collective agreement	The minimum pay level set by the applicable collective bargaining agreement, which may exceed the SMIC.
avance sur salaire	salary advance	A payment of future wages made before the normal payday.
charges sociales	payroll taxes / social contributions	Social security contributions (both employer and employee portions). Note: US equivalent is 'payroll taxes.'
net imposable	taxable net income	The net pay figure subject to income tax, after certain deductions and additions.
prélèvement à la source	income tax withholding	The system under which income tax is deducted directly from pay by the employer since 2019.
rémunération variable	variable compensation	A component of pay that fluctuates based on individual or collective performance.
épargne salariale	employee savings plans	A collective term for profit-sharing and savings plan arrangements (participation, intéressement, PEE, PERCOL). Note: US uses 'plans'; 'schemes' is UK usage.

5. Le temps de travail – Working Time

Terms relating to working hours, rest periods, leave, and flexible work arrangements.

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
durée légale du travail	statutory working hours	The legal standard of 35 hours per week in France; overtime rules apply above this threshold.
temps de travail effectif	actual working time	Time during which the employee is at the employer's disposal and carrying out their duties.
forfait jours	annual fixed-day arrangement	An arrangement measuring working time in days per year; applicable to managerial and autonomous staff.
forfait heures	fixed-hours arrangement	An arrangement specifying a fixed number of working hours per week or month above the statutory threshold.
convention de forfait	fixed-term or fixed-day agreement	The individual agreement formalizing a forfait arrangement; must be based on a collective agreement.
durée maximale de travail	maximum working time	The statutory limits: 10 hours per day, 48 hours per week (44 hours averaged over 12 weeks).

repos quotidien	daily rest period	The minimum 11-hour rest period between two working days.
repos hebdomadaire	weekly rest period	The minimum 35-hour (24+11) weekly rest period, normally on Sunday.
congés payés	paid vacation	The statutory entitlement of 2.5 working days of paid vacation per month worked (30 days per year). Note: US uses 'paid vacation'; 'paid annual leave' is UK usage.
congé de maternité	maternity leave	Statutory leave for expectant and new mothers; duration varies with the number of children.
congé de paternité et d'accueil de l'enfant	paternity leave	Statutory leave for the second parent following the birth of a child; currently 25 days.
congé parental d'éducation	parental leave	Unpaid leave to care for a young child; the employment contract is suspended but not terminated.
congé pour événements familiaux	family event leave	Statutory paid leave for specific personal events (marriage, bereavement, birth of a child, etc.).
congé de proche aidant	caregiver leave	Leave to care for a dependent family member with a disability or serious illness.
arrêt maladie	sick leave	An absence from work due to illness, certified by a physician; subject to a waiting period (carence).
indemnités journalières	short-term disability benefits	Payments by the social security system during sick leave. Note: US equivalent is 'short-term disability benefits'; 'daily sickness benefits' is European/UK terminology.
télétravail	remote work / telework	Work performed outside the employer's premises using information technology.
accord de télétravail	remote work agreement	A collective or individual agreement formalizing remote work arrangements.
compte épargne-temps (CET)	time savings account	A mechanism allowing employees to accumulate leave entitlements or overtime hours for later use.
travail de nuit	night work	Work performed between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m.; subject to specific compensation and health monitoring rules.
récupération	compensatory time off / comp time	Rest time granted to compensate for overtime or exceptional working hours. Note: US terms are 'compensatory time off' or 'comp time'; 'compensatory rest' is UK/European usage.

modulation du temps de travail	variable working time arrangement	An annualized arrangement varying weekly hours around the 35-hour average.
astreinte	on-call duty	A period during which the employee must remain available to intervene if required; not counted as working time unless intervention occurs.
temps partiel	part-time work	Employment for hours below the statutory 35-hour threshold; subject to specific protective rules.
avenant de complément d'heures	additional hours amendment	A temporary amendment to a part-time contract increasing hours for a defined period.
journée de solidarité	solidarity day	A working day (typically Whit Monday) whose proceeds fund care for elderly and disabled persons; generates one additional day of work.

6. Les relations collectives — Collective Labor Relations

Terms relating to employee representation, labor unions, collective bargaining, and industrial action.

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
syndicat	labor union / union	An organization representing employees' collective interests in negotiations with employers. Note: US term is 'labor union' or 'union'; 'trade union' is UK usage.
syndicat représentatif	representative labor union	A union meeting statutory criteria (audience, independence, transparency) entitling it to negotiate binding collective agreements.
délégué syndical	union representative / union steward	A union representative appointed within a company to negotiate collective agreements with management. Note: US terms are 'union representative' or 'union steward'; 'trade union delegate' is UK usage.
section syndicale	union local / union chapter	The organizational unit of a union within a company. Note: US terms are 'union local' or 'local chapter'; 'union branch' is UK usage.
comité social et économique (CSE)	social and economic committee	The unified employee representative body established in 2017, replacing the former CE, DP, and CHSCT.
élections professionnelles	workplace elections	Elections held every four years to appoint CSE members and measure union representativeness.

représentant du personnel	employee representative	A generic term for any elected or appointed employee representative.
heures de délégation	union release time / union leave time	Paid hours allocated to employee representatives to perform their representational duties. Note: US terms are 'union release time' or 'union leave time.'
accord collectif	collective agreement	An agreement negotiated between an employer and representative labor unions.
convention collective de branche	sector-level collective bargaining agreement	A comprehensive collective agreement covering an entire industry; sets minimum standards binding on all sector employers.
accord d'entreprise	company-level agreement	A collective agreement at the level of a single company; may derogate from sector agreements in certain areas.
négociation annuelle obligatoire (NAO)	mandatory annual bargaining	The legal obligation to negotiate annually on pay, working time, and professional equality.
droit d'alerte économique	economic alert right	The CSE's right to alert management when it identifies serious economic concerns.
droit de grève	right to strike	The constitutionally protected right of employees to engage in collective work stoppages.
grève	strike	A collective, concerted work stoppage by employees to press professional demands.
préavis de grève	strike notice	Advance notice of an impending strike, mandatory in public services and certain regulated sectors.
service minimum	minimum service	The obligation to maintain a basic level of service during a strike in certain public-sector activities.
accord majoritaire	majority agreement	A collective agreement signed by unions representing 50%+ of employees; required since 2017.
référéndum d'entreprise	company referendum	A vote of all employees validating an agreement signed only by minority unions (between 30% and 50%).
protocole préélectoral	pre-election agreement	An agreement between management and unions organizing employee representative elections.
consultation du CSE	consultation of the CSE	The mandatory process by which the CSE is formally informed and gives its opinion on employer decisions.

avis du CSE	opinion of the CSE	The formal opinion issued by the CSE following consultation; does not bind the employer.
expert du CSE	CSE-appointed expert	An external specialist appointed by the CSE to assist in analyzing complex matters.
base de données économiques, sociales et environnementales (BDESE)	economic, social and environmental database	A mandatory database providing the CSE with economic, social, and environmental information about the company.
représentant syndical au CSE	union representative on the CSE	A non-voting union representative appointed to the CSE by each representative union.
procès-verbal de carence	record of failed elections	A document certifying that no candidate stood or was elected in a workplace election; has legal consequences for collective bargaining.

7. La santé et la sécurité au travail — Occupational Safety and Health

Terms relating to occupational health, workplace safety, and work-related injury.

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
santé et sécurité au travail	occupational safety and health	The body of rules and practices aimed at protecting employees from work-related risks. Note: US standard terminology follows OSHA: 'occupational safety and health.'
obligation de sécurité	safety obligation	The employer's general duty to protect the physical and mental health of employees.
évaluation des risques professionnels	occupational risk assessment	The mandatory identification and assessment of workplace hazards.
document unique d'évaluation des risques (DUER)	single occupational risk assessment document	The written document recording the results of the occupational risk assessment; mandatory for all employers.
accident du travail	workplace accident	An accident occurring as a result of or in connection with work; triggers enhanced compensation rights.
maladie professionnelle	occupational disease	A disease caused by occupational exposure; subject to a system of recognized conditions and enhanced compensation.

faute inexcusable de l'employeur	inexcusable fault of the employer	A particularly serious breach of the safety obligation under French law, entitling the employee to enhanced compensation. Note: this is a French law concept with no direct US equivalent.
inaptitude	inability to perform job duties	A finding by the occupational physician that an employee cannot perform their current job. Note: US equivalent is 'inability to perform job duties' or 'medical disqualification'; 'unfitness' is UK/European usage.
inaptitude d'origine professionnelle	work-related inability to perform	Inability to perform resulting from a workplace accident or occupational disease; triggers enhanced protection and severance. Note: 'work-related unfitness' is UK/European usage.
inaptitude d'origine non professionnelle	non-work-related inability to perform	Inability to perform arising from a cause unrelated to work.
médecin du travail	occupational medicine physician	A physician monitoring employee health and advising the employer on workplace health matters. Note: US equivalent is 'occupational medicine physician'; 'occupational physician' is also used.
visite médicale de reprise	fitness-for-duty examination	A mandatory examination following a prolonged absence, determining fitness to resume work. Note: standard US term is 'fitness-for-duty examination' or 'return-to-work exam.'
aménagement de poste	workplace accommodation	A modification to the workstation or duties to accommodate a health condition or disability. Note: US term is 'reasonable accommodation' under the ADA.
reclassement pour inaptitude	redeployment following inability to perform	The employer's obligation to offer an alternative position following a finding of inability to perform the current job.
harcèlement moral	workplace bullying / hostile work environment	Repeated conduct degrading the employee's working conditions, dignity, or health. Note: US equivalent is 'hostile work environment'; 'moral harassment' is a direct translation of the French concept.
harcèlement sexuel	sexual harassment	Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature; includes both repeated conduct and any serious single act involving pressure.
violences au travail	workplace violence	Physical or psychological violence at work, whether from colleagues, management, or third parties.
burn-out	job burnout / occupational burnout	A state of physical and mental exhaustion resulting from chronic workplace stress.

risques psychosociaux (RPS)	psychosocial risks	Work-related risks affecting mental health: stress, harassment, burnout, and difficult working conditions.
plan de prévention	prevention plan	A mandatory document drawn up when outside workers carry out work on the employer's premises.
commission santé, sécurité et conditions de travail (CSSCT)	health, safety and working conditions commission	A specialized CSE sub-committee, mandatory in companies with 300+ employees.
fiche d'aptitude	fitness-for-duty certificate / medical clearance	A document issued by the occupational physician recording the result of a medical examination. Note: US terms are 'fitness-for-duty certificate' or 'medical clearance'; 'fitness certificate' is UK/European usage.
substance dangereuse	hazardous substance	Any chemical, biological, or physical agent capable of causing harm to the employee's health.
signalement de danger grave et imminent	report of serious and imminent danger	A formal alert by an employee or representative of a risk of serious and immediate harm requiring urgent action.
visite médicale périodique	periodic medical examination	A regular health check-up conducted by the occupational physician at intervals determined by the employee's risk category.

8. Le contentieux prud'homal – Employment Litigation

Terms relating to employment disputes and proceedings before the labor tribunal.

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
conseil de prud'hommes	labor tribunal	The specialized French court dealing with individual employment disputes.
conseillers prud'homaux	lay judges	Elected lay judges from employer and employee colleges who hear cases before the labor tribunal.
bureau de conciliation et d'orientation (BCO)	conciliation and referral panel	The initial panel that attempts to conciliate the parties; if unsuccessful, refers the case for adjudication.
bureau de jugement	adjudicating panel	The panel that hears and decides employment disputes not settled at conciliation.
formation de référé	interim relief panel	The panel dealing with urgent applications for interim measures.

référé prud'homal	labor tribunal interim proceedings	Urgent proceedings for immediate interim relief, e.g., to order payment of an undisputed debt.
départage	tie-breaking referral	A referral to a professional judge when lay judges are equally divided.
prescription biennale	two-year statute of limitations	The standard limitation period for claims relating to the performance of the employment contract.
conciliation	conciliation	An attempt to resolve a dispute amicably before the BCO prior to adjudication.
constat de non-conciliation	record of failed conciliation	A document recording the failure of conciliation and referring the matter to the adjudicating panel.
barème Macron	Macron scale	The statutory scale (from the 2017 Ordonnances) capping damages for wrongful termination based on length of service.
indemnité pour licenciement sans cause réelle et sérieuse	damages for wrongful termination	Compensation awarded when termination lacks genuine and serious cause; subject to the Macron scale.
réintégration	reinstatement	Restoration to the former position, ordered by the court in cases of void termination.
provision	interim payment order	An order for the employer to make an advance payment pending the final judgment.
astreinte judiciaire	daily fine for non-compliance	A financial penalty imposed for non-compliance with a judgment, payable per day of delay.
appel	appeal	A review of the labor tribunal's decision by the court of appeals.
cassation	appeal on points of law	A review by the Cour de cassation on points of law only, not on the facts. US equivalent: appeal on questions of law / certiorari.
dommages-intérêts	damages	A monetary award compensating the employee for loss caused by the employer's wrongdoing.
nullité du licenciement	void termination	A legal finding that a termination is null and void, typically due to discrimination or protected status violation.
exécution provisoire	enforcement pending appeal	The enforcement of a judgment pending appeal; available as of right for certain employment claims since 2020.

délai de prescription
en matière de
discrimination

statute of
limitations for
discrimination
claims

Three years from the last discriminatory act; longer than the standard two-year period.

9. Les cotisations et organismes sociaux — Social Contributions and Institutions

Terms relating to the French social security system, contributions, and administrative bodies.

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
cotisations sociales	social security contributions	Mandatory contributions paid by employers and employees to finance the French social protection system.
cotisations patronales	employer contributions	The employer's share of social security contributions, paid on top of the gross pay.
cotisations salariales	employee contributions	The employee's share, deducted from gross pay before payment.
URSSAF	URSSAF	The agency collecting social security contributions (Unions de Recouvrement des cotisations de Sécurité Sociale et d'Allocations Familiales).
CPAM	primary health insurance fund	Caisse Primaire d'Assurance Maladie — the local body administering health insurance benefits.
CARSAT	regional retirement and occupational health fund	Caisse d'Assurance Retraite et de la Santé Au Travail — manages retirement pensions and occupational risk.
France Travail (ex-Pôle emploi)	public employment service	The national body registering unemployed persons and paying unemployment insurance benefits; renamed France Travail in 2024.
allocation chômage (ARE)	unemployment insurance benefits / unemployment compensation	Aide au Retour à l'Emploi — the unemployment benefit paid by France Travail to eligible job-seekers. Note: US terms are 'unemployment insurance benefits' or 'unemployment compensation'; 'unemployment benefit' is UK usage.
retraite complémentaire (Agirc-Arrco)	supplemental pension (Agirc-Arrco)	A mandatory supplemental pension for private-sector employees, administered by Agirc-Arrco. Note: US uses 'supplemental'; 'supplementary' is UK usage.

prévoyance	supplemental employee benefits / disability and death coverage	Collective insurance covering death, disability, and long-term sickness beyond state coverage.
mutuelle	supplemental health insurance	A complementary health insurance scheme covering costs not reimbursed by basic health insurance; mandatory for employers.
déclaration préalable à l'embauche (DPAE)	pre-employment declaration	A mandatory declaration made to URSSAF before hiring a new employee.
DSN (déclaration sociale nominative)	monthly payroll declaration	A monthly electronic declaration replacing most social filings, transmitted directly from payroll software.
portage salarial	employer of record arrangement	An arrangement under which an independent worker carries out client assignments while employed by an umbrella company.
travail dissimulé	unreported employment / off-the-books employment	Employment not declared to the relevant authorities; subject to criminal and civil penalties.
exonération de cotisations	payroll tax exemption	A statutory reduction or elimination of employer social contributions, e.g., on low wages or in certain geographic zones.
taux d'accident du travail	workplace accident contribution rate	The employer-specific contribution rate applied to fund workplace accident and occupational disease insurance.
cotisation AT/MP	workplace accident and occupational disease contribution	The employer-only contribution covering workplace accidents and occupational diseases.
plafond annuel de la sécurité sociale (PASS)	social security contribution ceiling	The annual reference figure used to calculate ceilings for various social contributions and benefits.
cotisation chômage	unemployment insurance contribution	The contribution paid by employers and employees to fund the unemployment insurance scheme managed by France Travail.

10. Divers — Miscellaneous Employment Law Terms

Additional terms covering discrimination, whistleblowing, training rights, and other key concepts.

Terme français	English equivalent	Note
discrimination	discrimination	Any differential treatment based on a protected characteristic (sex, age, origin, disability, etc.).
égalité professionnelle hommes-femmes	gender equality in the workplace	The principle of equal treatment and equal opportunity between men and women in employment.
index de l'égalité professionnelle	gender pay gap index	A mandatory annual score (out of 100) measuring gender equality; required for companies with 50+ employees.
lanceur d'alerte	whistleblower	An employee disclosing illegal activity or serious misconduct; protected from retaliation under the Sapin II and Wasserman laws.
protection contre les représailles	protection from retaliation	Statutory protection for employees who report misconduct, exercise a right, or assist in an investigation.
droit à la déconnexion	right to disconnect	The employee's right not to be contactable outside working hours; employers must address this in a charter or agreement.
formation professionnelle	professional training / vocational training	Training to develop or update professional skills.
compte personnel de formation (CPF)	personal training account	A portable training rights account crediting each working person with funds per year to cover approved training costs.
plan de développement des compétences	skills development plan	The employer's plan organizing company-funded training; replaced the former plan de formation in 2019.
entretien professionnel	professional development interview	A mandatory biennial meeting to discuss career development, distinct from the performance review.
validation des acquis de l'expérience (VAE)	recognition of prior learning	A procedure allowing professional experience to be formally recognized as equivalent to a qualification. Note: US terms are 'recognition of prior learning' or 'credit for prior learning'; 'validation' is UK/European usage.
travailleur handicapé	employee with a disability	An employee with recognized disability status entitling them to specific protections and workplace accommodations.

obligation d'emploi des travailleurs handicapés (OETH)	disability employment obligation	The legal requirement for companies with 20+ employees to employ at least 6% workers with disabilities.
RQTH	disability recognition status	Reconnaissance de la Qualité de Travailleur Handicapé — official recognition granted by the MDPH.
égalité de traitement	equal treatment	The principle that employees in comparable situations must be treated equally unless objective justification exists.
médiation	mediation	A voluntary alternative dispute resolution process in which a neutral mediator assists the parties.
inspection du travail	labor inspectorate	The administrative body responsible for enforcing labor law in the workplace.
inspecteur du travail	labor inspector	An official of the labor inspectorate authorized to inspect workplaces and enforce the Labor Code.
DREETS	regional labor authority	Direction Régionale de l'Économie, de l'Emploi, du Travail et des Solidarités — the regional authority supervising employment law compliance and approving PSEs.
Code du travail	Labor Code	The codification of French employment law; comprises both legislative (L.) and regulatory (R./D.) provisions.
ordre public social	social public policy	The body of mandatory labor law rules from which parties cannot derogate to the employee's detriment.
harcèlement discriminatoire	discriminatory harassment	Harassment based on a protected characteristic; constitutes both harassment and discrimination.
alerte professionnelle	internal reporting procedure / whistleblowing procedure	An internal reporting mechanism allowing employees to report serious breaches confidentially.
plan de vigilance	duty of vigilance plan	A mandatory plan for large companies identifying and preventing human rights and environmental risks in their operations and supply chains.
procédure disciplinaire	disciplinary process	The formal process the employer must follow before imposing a sanction; includes notification, meeting, and written decision.
rapport de situation comparée (RSC)	comparative situation report	An annual report analyzing the professional situation of men and women within the company; now integrated into the BDESE.

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