



**PRESS RELEASE**

## **Employment of the disabled: the French Ministry for the Economy, Industry and Employment approves the collective agreement signed by the Caisses d'Épargne**

**(Paris, February 10, 2009) --- On January 27 earlier this year, Christine Lagarde, the Minister for the Economy, Industry and Employment in the French Government, signed the ministerial order giving official approval to the national collective agreement adopted by the French savings banks to promote the employment of people with disabilities (as published in the *Journal Officiel* dated February 5, 2009). Signed on October 10 last year by a majority of management and employee representatives within the savings bank segment\*, this agreement reasserts their commitment to a determined and sustainable policy to promote the employment of people with disabilities.**

This second agreement, lasting five years, is designed to ensure the continued growth in the proportion of people with disabilities employed by companies within the savings bank segment. The aim is to double this percentage by the year 2013.

The agreement is designed to improve conditions that make it possible:

- to keep disabled people already working in the segment, or individuals who may become disabled during their career, in active employment;
- to take on new disabled recruits;
- to actively contribute to the organization of sandwich courses for disabled employees;
- to develop the use of organizations providing work specifically for the mentally and physically handicapped (*secteur "protégé"* [sheltered workshops] and *secteur "adapté"* [adapted enterprises]).

Within the framework of an initial agreement covering the period running from 2006 to 2008, the Caisse d'Épargne recruited more than 200 disabled people, thereby exceeding its initial target of 170 new recruits.

During the same period, 213 savings bank employees obtained official recognition as disabled workers. This enabled them to benefit from the adaptation of their working environments and to receive individual assistance.

The Handicap & Diversity Department of Groupe Caisse d'Épargne and the handicap referral agents working in the regional Caisses d'Épargne have organized almost 2,000 actions to promote the employment of individuals with disabilities and the training of young disabled people.

Actively involved in the struggle against all forms of exclusion, the Caisse d'Épargne, through this agreement, demonstrates once again its long-standing commitment to society as a whole.

\* The savings bank segment includes 41,000 employees working in the individual Caisses d'Épargne, the IT communities and shared structures.

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