

Strategic priorities, Funding pathetic



Everyone knows that sports and video are AFP management's priorities for development in the hope they will bring in added revenue for the agency. Everyone also knows that AFPTV has been built upon insecurity: short-term and local contracts, long hours and stress. Our coverage of major sporting events has also long organised in complete disregard of labor laws, putting the health of employees at risk.

Tour de France: suspect scheduling

AFP management presented the company's Works Committee on June 24 the work schedule for photographers covering the Tour de France. The schedule is not that different from those of previous years, but it does not respect French labor law on working hours. It takes as granted a watering down of protections for workers under consideration by lawmakers and which AFP management is trying to fix in the new workplace agreement meant to replace the 117 wage and benefit accords it renounced last year.

The work schedule that covers July 1-24, or 24 working days, provides just 3 days off during that period plus a "day without shift" which is difficult to qualify as a day off as it is a day to travel between sites.

The work schedule foresees 12-hour work days (9am-21pm), specifying it contains one hour of break time and an average of two hours of travel time, thus arriving at "an effective working time of 9 hours on average".

We asked management what compensation in time or money employees would receive for these working under these conditions, but we received no response.

We requested management provide us with the schedules for other employees who could be mobilized for the Tour de France (text journalists, video, infographers, technicians, etc.), as well as the schedules for the Olympic Games.

Contacted by another employee before us, the labor inspector met with the head of the photo service and the Human Resources director. SUD also intervened at the Health and Safety Committee meeting on June 28. But it appears that AFP's management wants to hide behind its tradition of a cavalier attitude towards legal obligations and the importance of sporting events for the agency.

An irresponsible management

The CEO Emmanuel Hoog recently appealed to the sense of responsibility of employees, calling on them to not support a strike that risked disrupting coverage of the Euro football championship.

After having renounced all wage and benefit agreements and in view of his plans for employees to work more for less pay, the CEO might have at least taken the precaution of organizing sports coverage this year in respect of labor law.

Like all employers, AFP is required under the labor code to "protect the safety as well as the physical and mental health of employees". The work schedule of photographers covering the Tour de France does not meet that obligation, particularly concerning the number of working hours and rest days. Whether AFP's management likes it or not, an exception to the labor code's requirements may be granted upon a request made to the labor inspector or under the provisions of a sector-wide agreement (which doesn't exist).

SUD hereby publicly asks AFP's management: have you requested an exception from the labor code for coverage of sporting events in 2016? Or do you think that AFP is above the law?

Paris, 29 June 2016

SUD-AFP (Solidarity-Unity-Democracy)

