

# Hoog, Chapter Two: What Has to Change

**Emmanuel Hoog has been granted a second three-year mandate as AFP's Chief Executive Officer. Despite a track record that's nowhere near as brilliant as he likes to make out, and in the absence of any heavyweight rivals for his job, he was backed to stay on by both the government and the French press representatives on the board.**

M. Hoog lobbied hard - and expensively - to ensure his re-election, but in the end it was practically a foregone conclusion. The election process itself, organised within the AFP board, was far from a model of transparency.

For AFP staff worldwide, the maintenance of Emmanuel Hoog at the head of the company is not exactly the stuff of dreams. About the only advantage we can see is that the CEO will no longer be able to complain about the brevity of his mandate, and blame his own failures on the problems left behind by Pierre Louette, his predecessor. Problems which included the time-bomb of miscalculated holiday pay, the continual spread of insecure labour contracts and the absence of meaningful management-union dialogue.

Will M. Hoog seize the opportunity of his re-election to correct the mistakes of his first term, or will he push ahead regardless with a policy of ramming through measures that have no or little support among staff?

Among the many questions he must address urgently are the following:

- Where exactly is AFP headed? There's a burning need for a new consensus on the agency's role in the worldwide media landscape, and for its activities to be refocused on the public interest mission laid down in the Statutes, rather than on irrelevant froth, ethically dubious practices and PR buzz. In a word, AFP needs at long last to be given a strategy;
- Staff also need to know the truth about AFP's financial situation and the French government's plans to redefine the relationship between the agency's main users - both in the state and among the media;
- Management must also turn its back on the "low cost" approach to the running of AFP's services, and do everything to enhance and encourage its most precious asset: its staff. Over-ambitious investments which cannot be fully financed - the Iris editorial system and the renovation of the HQ building in Paris - should be reviewed;
- The CEO should also lay out exactly what his ambitions are for Iris. Glitch-prone and not exactly user-friendly, the system was a direct outcome of Pierre Louette's "multimedia agency" plan, which was dropped in 2010;
- M. Hoog should also change his top management team, most of whom are discredited;
- Instead of only talking about union-management dialogue, M. Hoog should actually practice it, by opening two priority negotiating processes. These are:
  - 1) Talks on understaffing and insecure labour contracts, which concern over 20% of all staff in France and 30% of those in the rest of the world;
  - 2) The drawing-up of democratic and labour rights common to all AFP staff everywhere, whatever their status. Currently, over half of all staff are employed under non-French labour contracts, and do not enjoy the same rights as those with "headquarters status".
- Last but not least, on the occasion of his re-election, we expect M. Hoog to do the right thing by reversing the brutal decisions taken by management with respect to several members of staff, resulting in serious distress and suffering.

**That in sum is what we are expecting from Emmanuel Hoog as he begins his second mandate as CEO. We are under no illusions, but we intend to show the same perseverance in fighting for these aims as we have in the past.**

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**SUD-AFP (SUD Culture & Médias Solidaires)**

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