

Expatriation, Grand Accord:

What they give with one hand They'll take back with the other



AFP's management has abandoned its proposal to introduce **two levels of expatriation** for journalists with a French labor contract: those with conditions unchanged from current practice and a second "low cost" group. In the face of opposition from all trade unions – in particular from the three currently attending the negotiations on the Grand Accord (CFDT, SNJ, *SUD*) – **management rescinded its proposal** during the meeting on 24 November.

Negotiation on expatriation benefits

What was management's project?

Concerning the some 170 expatriate posts currently occupied by "statut siege" journalists, management wanted to make a distinction based on two criteria: the level of responsibility and difficult living conditions.

The "**low cost**" expatriation was to have applied to **46 non-management posts** in nine countries: Austria, Belgium, Britain, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. For these posts, the benefits would have been reduced by having AFP pay only two-thirds of housing costs, including in very expensive cities such as London.

Management's argument: the third at the charge of the expatriate journalist would still be less than their full rent in Paris...

After an hour of at times heated argument, AFP's Director General called a break in the talks. 25 minutes later, management returned to announce it had rescinded its proposal.

Why did management give in?

As we've repeatedly pointed out, management wants to wrap up the negotiations in February 2017 with the signature of the Grand Accord so it can begin to **make substantial savings** via its plans for us to **work more**. To preserve the chances for the adoption of the Grand Accord, management had no choice but to beat a tactical retreat.

SUD welcomes management's U-turn and reaffirms that **expatriation is one of AFP's best assets** and is also one of the reasons that justifies our being subsidized by the French state, even if within the absurd free competition criteria set by the European Union.

However this success should be tempered and put in context:

- "**Low cost**" expatriation has existed for many years already. During negotiations in 2011 on job security, *SUD* opposed management offering local status posts abroad to CDDs and stringers. However, this practice has become more and more prevalent, in particular for AFPTV, a strategic priority for the Agency that has been built on insecurity. And don't forget about the local and regional staff who make a decisive contribution to AFP's international coverage without getting the same benefits.
- **Management said the savings** to have been generated from cutting benefits on **46 posts** would have totalled some **€400,000** per year. It left no doubt that the savings it had intended to make via the two-speed expatriation will be made up elsewhere.

Management will seek to divide us. Don't respond: "Okay to make savings, just on others..."



Say NO to working more! NO to Grand Accord cuts!

