

Grand Accord:

Decision time has arrived



The negotiation of the Grand Accord, intended to substitute for 117 wage and benefits agreements that management renounced in 2015, has wrapped up. The period for signature is open until March 10. By that date we'll learn whether our CEO Emmanuel Hoog succeeds in getting the agreement signed by unions that represent more than 50 percent of employees who voted in the last workplace elections in 2014, a minority of 30 to 50 percent, or whether management will have to implement the Grand Accord unilaterally.

Historic loss of benefits

Management recently published on the intranet a document titled **Implementation of the new collective agreement at Agence France-Press**. Here are our initial remarks:

- The document sets out the main changes planned by management under two scenarios: **1) approval of the Grand Accord by a majority of trade unions; 2) unilateral application**. The text provides few comparisons with the current, more generous benefits, that staff will lose under the new workplace agreement.
- If the document is generally factual, its presentation is somewhat misleading when it says it will **maintain current remuneration**. If it notes that the laborers will lose the June bonus, it omits to mention that desk journalists working evenings will lose the night differential if they take the forfait jours. If the career plan for journalists has been improved marginally, the classification of many posts been shifted lower (for example the chef de vacation or slot is reduced to RED4 from RED5). The career plans for cadres, employees and laborers have been degraded considerably.
- In the event the Grand Accord is signed, management is ready to temporarily extend certain current benefits. However this document does state clearly enough that these small concessions concern only staff present at the date of signature. **New employees will have the new conditions applied immediately**.
- **For employees, laborers, apprentices as well as younger staff, there is no way to escape working more**. The Grand Accord proposes to **cadres** and **journalists** the **forfait jours**, which will allow them to partially save their number of days off depending on how many years of service they have. But at what price! Those who opt for the forfait jours will work much more than 35 hours per week, and the safety measures included in the text won't prevent an increase in daily and weekly work hours. This is why deputy CEO Fabrice Lacroix calls the forfait jours the "main edifice" of the Grand Accord.

No general staff meeting, no vote?

The benefits that are being cut under the Grand Accord were the product of a half-century of social progress and struggles, at AFP and in France in general. Many staff are shocked that the negotiations have finished without any staff mobilization, or even without a general staff meeting.

While *SUD* has repeatedly called for a general staff mobilization, other unions have only now called informational meetings by staff category. It is now time for staff to make its voice heard. *SUD* supports the petition signed by more than 160 employees calling for a **consultative vote on the Grand Accord by secret ballot**.

The Grand Accord requires more sacrifices but won't resolve AFP's problems. Say NO to working more to earn less!

Paris, 27 February 2017

SUD-AFP (Solidarity-Unity-Democracy)

