

Wages at AFP:

# Thaw in 2019 or stuck in an ice age?



While the Yellow Vest protests have sparked a national debate on purchasing power and the fairness of public finances, AFP's management is readying to open talks with unions about wages. After six years of a wage freeze will there finally be a thaw? Will our salaries finally tick higher, even by a little bit? Nothing is less certain...

On December 5, management organized the first meeting of the NAO, the mandatory annual negotiations on wages, working hours, and issues such as pay gender gaps. **SUD** refused to give into the fatalism or alarmism over AFP's situation and **called for a general wage increase to compensate for inflation in 2018.**

The wage freeze, imposed unilaterally in 2012 by former CEO Emmanuel Hoog by his refusal to apply increases agreed in the SPQN association of the French national press, was unjust. To obtain these raises due for 2013 and 2014 (worth several hundreds of euros), the CGT, FO and *SUD* have filed a lawsuit that we won (on most points). An appeal filed by management won't finish before 2019, or even 2020.

**We can't wait for 2020!** Even more so as the SPQN lawsuit doesn't cover periods since the new collective bargaining agreement entered into force in March 2017. We're not slated to get anything for 2018 when inflation could hit 1.8%. That is why *SUD* called for a general wage hike. Stringers should also benefit as they are crucial for the proper operation of the Agency.

***SUD* has also called for improvements to the career plans, the only effective means to reduce gender wage gaps.** If the journalist career plan was spared under the March 2017 collective bargaining agreement, the same can't be said for cadres who lost the few automatic increases they had under PPC mechanism. A similar situation for employees and workers, who are guaranteed their career plans for five years before being dropped into a new "low cost" career plan.

**Management meanwhile sapped hope for a positive outcome from the negotiations:** *"There isn't much margin for maneuver,"* said deputy CEO Dalila Zein at the end of the meeting. Worse, if AFP loses its appeal in the SPQN case, *"there will be a problem with the wage bill and we'll need to revisit our plan"* (the Fries Plan), said the head of human resources, Philippe Le Blon.

AFP staff should refuse to walk this Way of the Cross that management is planning for us: a wage freeze that shows no sign of ending, threatening job cuts if they lose the SPQN case and additional work for the same pay for those who remain after 125 jobs are cut.

Events show that mobilization by citizens can achieve results. What those in power judged financially impossible yesterday becomes acceptable today. And it's not over!

**A vast social movement is underway in France that seeks a radical change in economic, fiscal and social policy.  
Such changes are also necessary at AFP.**

**The state should also finance investments at the Agency and fully compensate its public interest mission,  
allowing for preserving jobs and the purchasing power of staff.**