

# Wage hike for all HQ-status staff



Ordered by the Paris Appeals Court to raise wages by approximately 1.4%, AFP's management announced at the end of September that it would "assess all possibilities for appeal" against the ruling "which doesn't concern all employees at the Head Office".<sup>1</sup>

Following difficult negotiations carried out under the threat management would wage a long legal battle to prevent execution of the ruling, the three trade unions which launched the lawsuit — the CGT, SUD and FO — have arrived at an agreement in principle with management for a general wage of 1.4% for all HQ-status staff.

## First wage hike in seven years

Concretely, the agreement in principle calls for the 1.4% wage hike to be carried out in two steps:

- A first hike of **+0.7%** on January 1, 2020*
- A second hike of **+0.7%** on January 1, 2021*

At the beginning of 2020, HQ-status staff present between December 31, 2016 and the entry into effect of the pay scales of the "Grand Accord" of March 2017 will be offered a settlement agreement for wages due. This lump-sum settlement will correspond to half a month's salary, which is the equivalent of the amount the 1.4% wage hike generates over 36 months. Beyond three years, management believes the limitation period applies, and thus it does not owe staff any more.

*Employees will have to make a choice:*

- accept the settlement offer of a half-month salary and renounce any later legal action;
- refuse the settlement offer and try to obtain more from the labor court. Note that for most employees this would not guarantee a better result. And, according to our lawyer, the process can be expected to take around four years (1.5 years labor court + 2.5 years appeal).

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<sup>1</sup>

Management statement of 23/09/2019 :

<http://aurore.afp.com/news/general-management/two-court-appeal-judgements-which-undermine-afp>

## A trade union success

After losing at the appeals court, management used all of its legal and PR resources to refuse to apply the ruling immediately and completely, saying that “*implementing this decision will have a major impact on the company’s budgetary balance*”.

SUD studied all of the options available to force AFP to apply the ruling

In the given context, the agreement in principle can be considered a success:

- It allows all HQ-status staff to benefit from the wage increase, and for those present before the “Grand Accord” a lump-sum settlement of a half-month salary, without being forced to individually go to the labor court.
- Employees who consider this deal to be unsatisfactory can go to the labor court to seek more. SUD will offer legal assistance to those that need it.

## New hires benefit

Among the positive points of the agreement in principle is that it allows correcting the following inequalities:

Employees hired after the new pay scales of the “Grand Accord” went into effect would have been excluded from the 1.4% wage increase. Journalists, administrative and technical staff who received or would have received any promotion in the future would have moved into pay scales that would have not included the 1.4% wage hike.

If you ever want evidence that the “Grand Accord”, which SUD refused to sign, was a setback for staff, you need look no further. Management used it here as a justification to exclude new, younger staff. The negotiations, in which we played an active part, helped overcome that inequality.

## We won’t give up!

The agreement in principle shows that *social advances are possible* despite the difficult context. The social climate is in the process of changing in this country. The arrogance of those in power, austerity policies and the destruction of the social safety net... have been challenged by the current strikes.

AFP’s financial problems, the constant pressure on wages, job cuts, long working hours, are the result of the same nefarious political choices where are now being challenged.

**Resistance pays !**

**Paris, December 20, 2019**

**SUD-AFP (Solidarity-Unity-Democracy)**

