

Checks for some, More work for others



The talks ended on a bitter note. After the mandatory minimum of two months of discussions, management asked staff representatives on May 27 to render their opinion on its voluntary departure plan (PDV). Despite the unanimous negative vote, management can and will go forward with its plans to carry out a net 95 job cuts, plus the localization of 13 expat posts, the first part of our CEO's transformation plan.

Advances, but no breakthrough

Certainly, management decided after all not to make job cuts in the chef de quart, which would have resulted in the outsourcing of directing responses to technical problems, or cut two reporter posts (Infos générales and Service économique).

Certainly, there were improvements made to the departure conditions, and for the first time AFP will pay for journalists to take jobs at other media or receive training for other professions. Three out of 28 departures planned for journalists are now quasi-reserved for "professional projects"...

But the difficult truth is that without a mobilization by staff, the staff representatives couldn't defeat management's plan. Management did retreat – for fear of a mobilization by staff – when it sensed lots of resistance, such as when three production services launched public letters.

Temporary victories

Management did make tactical retreats, which is easy because it had a pure accounting mentality where staff are viewed as a cost variable.

When management agreed not to cut certain posts, it stated clearly that it would cut others later. Thus, only a temporary respite was gained, and we regret that the trade unions were not united to effectively resist management's plans.

Risk of overload

More disconcerting: in the special meetings of the CSE (Social and Economic Committee) management did not demonstrate that the reduction in posts won't result in increasing the workloads for those of us who remain.

We have to take their word for it that the staff reductions will be compensated for by "*pooling of resources*", "*synergies*", and "*new software tools*". These are clearly false arguments – one only needs to look at the efficiency gains of our latest tools such as Iris and Chronos.

On the editorial side, the reduction of workloads still remains to be identified in the services impacted. "*Do less, but better*" is the mantra of management, but they never like to say exactly what we will no longer cover.

Worse, it will be up to the heads of services to make those choices. When asked about the burden falling onto them, our CEO was brusque: "*This is really the work of service chiefs, if not then I don't know what their job is.*"

Stay defiant!

Today, only the certification of the PDV by the regional authority, the Direccte, is needed before management can unilaterally put it into practice.

After the first departures take place in October 2019 is when any organizational problems increasing workloads become apparent. And unfortunately, the sacrifices that staff will be asked to make likely won't stop there...

Only a mobilization of staff can ensure decent working conditions and protect AFP's public interest mission.

Together, let's fight the Fries Plan!

Paris, June 3, 2019

SUD-AFP (Solidarity-Unity-Democracy)

