

Purchasing power:

AFP's new Plan Image: Cut photo and video bonuses!



The joke that isn't a joke at all... With inflation soaring and the current wage negotiations struggling to find a way to provide some relief to employees, AFP management has just tabled a brilliant idea: **reduce bonuses for video and photo journalists in order to increase those for managers.** In other words, robbing Peter to pay Paul!

It's hard to believe, but it's true... Management dropped this bombshell on June 30 during a meeting devoted to "Journalists' Remuneration", part of a series of discussions aimed above all at "bringing coherence" (as management put it) to the maze of bonuses at AFP.

Indemnités de fonction, d'alignement and sujétion for chiefs, astreintes, prime photo, prime video, indemnité "bicompetence" for text journalists who shoot videos, etc. All of these variable pay elements for journalists are on the table. (Not to be confused with the annual "primes et promotions" campaign¹)

Finding money to motivate

On the one hand, Paris unions including *SUD* have been demanding the opening of these "discussions" for years because some bonuses are too low, have never been increased or because the methods of attribution are sometimes opaque or unfair.

For example, *SUD* has demanded in vain that video reporters and editors continue to receive video bonuses even if they transfer to a text journalist position, similar to managers keeping a portion of their bonus after three or five years in the position.

On the other hand, management is interested in reviewing the bonus system, especially those for managers that were reduced in the **2017 workplace agreement**² because it now judges them to be too low to attract candidates... Because 100 euros per month to be the slot editor, 150 euros for deputy desk chief or even 250 euros to be assistant video editor in chief isn't a lot of money for the added responsibility. (Note: all the figures in the tract are gross)

Video and photo journalists: victims of "coherence"

There was every possibility for beginning a constructive dialog at Thursday's meeting... But then, management explained to us that we should not expect an increase in the bonus budget, because of a lack of money, and that if some bonuses were to increase, then others would have to decrease! And it openly named the victims: photographers, video journalists and editors... Because their bonuses are apparently the source of deep jealousy: 467 euros for the prime photo and 322 euros for the prime video (161 euros for editing and/or 161 euros for filming).

¹ Not to be confused with the annual promotion and bonus campaign, which is meant to reward "deserving" staff members in the eyes of management. Some 182 people got them for 2021, out of more than 1,200 HQ status staff). You might or might not ever get one in your career.

² See our communiqué *The "Grand Accord" turns five - Anyone celebrating?* - <http://u.afp.com/wzWa>

The differences with text journalists are “enormous”, stated management, as if it has just discovered the situation. It said a debate needed to be opened over whether these bonuses are “coherent” with those for text journalists, and whether or not they still serve a purpose and should be continued. But management said don't worry: these aren't yet proposals, just ideas for reflection and no financial simulations have yet been run...

Management also wants to reassure current photo and video journalists: you'll get to keep your bonuses... and only new hires will be affected by the reduction.

Shaft the newbies?

In short, they'll create a “closed group” as they did in the 2017 workplace agreement for certain workers. This was the tool management used to scuttle hard-earned gains: get unions to go along as the cuts won't hit current staff but only future employees.

It's a proposal that – even at the stage of an idea or a vague concept – is scandalous and unacceptable.

Photo and video journalists should not have to pay the piper for a flawed and poorly negotiated bonus system set in the 2017 workplace agreement that the signatories have been desperately trying to “fix” for the past five years.

Even if their bonuses seem high, they are not “incoherent” with the skills, workload, and hardships of their professions: driving hundreds of kilometers per week, spending hours waiting outside in the rain or the sun on stakeouts, carrying heavy loads (tripod, camera, transmission equipment or photo bag with several lenses) not to mention the risks during violent demonstrations...

These bonuses were not created in 2017 just to please them. They are the result of much older negotiations to compensate for the differences in wages with the wider audiovisual industry and they are non-negotiable gains. And if the chiefs are not paid well enough for their work, then let management improve their bonuses, but without touching those of others!

For *SUD*, this *trial balloon* of management must be shot down immediately and buried deep underground. There is no question of pitting one category against another (once again), on the pretext that the agency does not have sufficient means.

AFP's CEO made the *Plan Image* his main strategic development axis. So, you would think he'd treat well those who carry out this project every day, and who have already made AFP a world-class photo and video agency.

Paris, June 30, 2022

SUD-AFP (Solidarity-Unity-Democracy)

The logo for SUD AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, featuring the word "Sud" in a stylized red font with a white outline, and "AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE" in a smaller, plain red font below it.