

# A new accord: a real update

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After months of negotiations, *SUD* has signed the new télétravail (TT) agreement. It is a permanent agreement whose provisions will be integrated into the 2017 workplace agreement, and its entry into force is backdated to July 1.

Overall, this new agreement on working from home extends the provisions from the temporary agreement signed in late 2020. But there are above all some improvements.

Here are the main elements of the new agreement:

- Two days of TT per week for most staff
- 10 floating days of additional TT per year for unforeseen events
- Reimbursement for daily expenses up to 50 days of TT per year, at €2.60 per day (€130 per year max)
- Immediate possibility allowing the obtaining of a maximum of 250€ for equipment

Why did *SUD* sign?

There are advances, such as the 10 floating days per year and compensation. There are very few setbacks.

After the experience of working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic, a temporary agreement on télétravail was concluded at the end of 2020 (but not signed by *SUD* as it did not contain any reimbursement for daily expenses). It granted two days of TT per week for most employees, i.e. one day more than what was then provided for in the 2017 company agreement. This was done to ensure we had struck the right balance between working at home and the office before setting a permanent agreement.

We started the negotiations on a new agreement with two observations: the majority of the employees appreciate working from home and even want more days, but editorial managers were reluctant to accept such an increase. Management immediately rejected an increase of up to three days of working from home per week, but was open to thinking about other improvements.

In the end, the management refused *SUD*'s proposal to allow more TT for journalists on the desks working shifts ending late at night. This is practiced on an ad hoc basis on some desks and we sought its formalization. Management did not want to examine in detail in which services this would be possible, but it also did not question the flexibility that currently prevails.

On the other hand, the management accepted a proposal to create 10 floating days per year to give employees a little more flexibility. The introduction of these days, essentially for unforeseen events, led to an intense debate because the management considered that TT must be planned and carried out with the agreement of one's supervisor. What to do in the event of disruptions to public

transport at the last moment? If the supervisor asks you to come to the office anyway? To reduce the risk of abuse of refusals, a solution was found: a supervisor must copy HR into its refusal.

### **Another advance: reimbursement for TT expenses**

We will receive the maximum daily reimbursement for TT expenses allowed by URSSAF, currently €2.60 per day, for 50 days, for a maximum of €130 per year. For those who work from home two days per week (90 days with the 10 additional floating days), not all days will be compensated, but this is a real step forward in comparison with the Agency's previous refusal to participate in supporting the costs generated by working from home (electricity, heating).

Management also agreed to reset the counter for its participation in the purchase of equipment for working from home. Normally, one has to wait five years to get another bite of this cherry, so those who had bought a screen or chair in 2020 would have had to wait until 2025. But now we'll immediately be able to claim up to €250 for equipment purchases.

Another important advance: a study will be carried out on the implementation of the four-day work week for certain employees who are not eligible for TT or the forfait jours contract. It was impossible to obtain a commitment from management to trial a four-day work week, but we believe that the study will show its feasibility in certain departments and the benefits that both employees and the Agency will derive from it.

The main setback in the new agreement concerns photo reporters. Until now, all journalists were eligible to work from home two days per week. As the end of negotiations neared, management disclosed that photographers would become ineligible for TT. Management's argument: the photographers go into the field every day, so working from home really doesn't apply to them. This is both true and it is false. False because it happens that photographers edit their photos at home. Sure, photographers go into the field, but so do text and video journalists. Here, we saw a big risk: management's ability to unilaterally modify the list of positions eligible for TT. For example, management could decide in six months time that video journalists can no longer work from home. Unfortunately, we will have to live with this risk. And be ready to defend the right of employees to work from home if management changes its mind about the eligibility of certain positions. In the case of photographers, we managed to assure them 20 days of TT per year in the new agreement.

We did not get everything we wanted in the negotiations. But *SUD* signs agreements when there are advances and if there are no provisions contrary to our principles. Here, we have real progress, very few setbacks and nothing against our principles.

Our elected representatives remain at the disposal of employees for any additional information or possible difficulties.

Paris, July 19, 2023

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

The logo for SUD AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE, featuring the word 'Sud' in a stylized red font above the words 'AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE' in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.