

## **Job cuts, reorganizations, computers: Social dialog broken at AFP**

**It is becoming hard to ignore the rotted state of social dialog at AFP. Just as management was trying to push through its retirement incentive plan, its lack of transparency and broken promises were on full display at its monthly meeting with trade unions (CSE) on September 26.**

This distressing observation emerged unexpectedly during a preliminary discussion launched by staff representatives after an employee had her desktop computer removed without warning or her consent.

The agency's IT director had, however, during the April CSE meeting said that as part of the transfer to Windows 11 not all obsolete desktops would be switched to docking stations for laptops, even if management strongly desired this as a cost-saving measure.

After trade unions raised health and safety as well as performance concerns, the IT director promised that the switch to a docking station would be entirely voluntary. That promise didn't last five months, as the employee in question discovered when she no longer had a desktop computer when she arrived at the office one morning.

And this case is not unique: SUD has since learned that docking stations have been imposed in several places within the newsroom, including the new MENA desk in Paris.

### **"Voluntary" becomes "Voluntarist"**

Caught red-handed on Friday, management finally admitted the facts, but made no apologies. Instead, it explained that one of the agency's directors had demonstrated "voluntarism" and said that given the agency's financial situation, that it was within its rights to impose laptop docking stations without consulting staff representatives. Coercion instead of consultation has become its modus operandi!

"France can participate in the collective effort" to cut costs, management said, recalling that laptop docking stations had already been adopted (imposed) elsewhere in the world. Always ready to pit employees against one another when it suits them, management sang its old refrain about France always lagging behind and HQ-status employees being resistant to change...

However, there's no question of management questioning itself: it pretended not to understand demands by staff representatives for transparency and better communication. There has been no recent communication on the subject on Inside or an

awareness campaign. There has been no debate in the Health Committee about preventing potential health consequences, nor any discussion on workstation ergonomics...

This fait accompli policy only strengthened the resolve of staff representatives to refuse to vote on the proposed retirement incentive plan, which was the main item on the meeting's agenda. As SUD has already written, we can't render an informed opinion on a retirement incentive package that targets 70 departures without knowing the consequences of their "non-replacement". Management has put nothing on the table to show 70 job cuts, including in the newsroom, won't harm the smooth running of the company and the pursuit of our public interest mission (MIG).

Although it claimed to have "worked all summer," management was able to neither to provide a single document to assess workload shifts following the job cuts, nor to present measures to protect the health of the employees who will remain. We received no information on the future for those on short-term contracts and work-study contracts.

### **CSE suspended until October 7**

"It's too complicated, we don't know yet who's going to leave, we don't have time to look at each department," said management in a tone that was both a plea for trusting in them to manage the job cuts, and a threat that any delay would add to the heavy losses expected in 2026.

Faced with a refusal by staff representatives to vote on its proposal for the plan it hoped to launch October 1, management was forced to agree to suspend the CSE until October 7. This delay gives management time to provide guarantees demanded by staff representatives that it will carry out serious evaluations of workloads in order to avoid burnouts among remaining staff once job cuts are identified.

This delay wasn't the fault of trade unions as such a proposal was made at an earlier meeting on September 19. On the advice of its lawyers, SUD was prepared to request the CSE vote to launch a "major project assessment" that would mandate an outside firm to objectively assess the impact of the job cuts on working conditions. We put on hold this option which would have delayed the retirement incentive plan as the trade unions were united on insisting management promise to conduct these later.

**For SUD, speed should not be confused with haste. We need to protect the health of employees and the ability to carry out our MIG. Even if management is heaping pressure on us to get retirees out the door as quickly as possible, we will not accept a half-baked project.**

Paris, October 1, 2025

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

