

RESPECT for AFP Staff

RESPECT for Staff Rights!



Less than a year away from a French presidential election, our CEO and the ruling party in parliament recently tried to rush through a bill that would gut AFP's 1957 Statutes, boosting the role of the state and further compromising the agency's financial stability. Thanks to a new mobilisation by HQ-status staff in France, a first reading of the bill was shelved until October. We now have to fight for the measure to be scrapped altogether, by strongly reaffirming AFP's status as a company acting in the general interest under the 1957 law.

One way to send a strong signal will be to vote, in these **staff representative elections**, for trade unions which have played an active role in fighting the latest bill. **SUD** has been on the front line in building opposition. But to be even more effective, **SUD needs to get past the barrier of 10% needed to ensure official recognition** under a recently enacted French law on union elections. In the last vote two years ago, we fell just three votes short.

To ensure that **SUD** can take part in union-management talks, sign agreements and above all go on keeping you informed, we need your support: we have to be representative and have elected officials. Leaving **SUD** on the sidelines would weaken the AFP unions overall.

Vote SUD to show solidarity, unity and democracy in trade union action!

Our Priorities

- **If it is to modernise and launch new services, AFP has to create jobs.** No more downsizing, an end to the dismantling of the agency's network in France, an end to casualisation via short-term, freelance and outsourced labour contracts, particularly by sending HQ-status journalists abroad under local status. We need to reverse chronic understaffing and improve working conditions for all. People leaving the company should be replaced one-for-one. People doing permanent jobs on insecure contracts should be hired on full status, and freelancers should be given basic income guarantees.
- **Defend our purchasing power.** Management has still not settled an outstanding bill due over years of miscalculated holiday pay for HQ status staff. As regards wage increases, there is still no level playing field: much depends on how well one is viewed by management. We want wage hikes for all, and an improvement of the standard career plan so that everyone can expect fair and regular rises throughout their career.
- **Give us back our future!** AFP's development strategy will become relevant, and gain support from staff, if it returns to the basics laid down in Article 2 of our statutes: to produce comprehensive, high-quality information accessible to all. Such a strategy would make the best possible use of staff skills, and provide training rights and motivation for all. There are also organisational problems: for example the way AFP's Paris editorial services have been split between separate buildings should be reviewed.



New Rights for FREELANCERS

If you are an HQ-status freelancer, this may well be the first time you have been invited to vote in an AFP election.

That gain is thanks to SUD's perseverance in fighting for an end to an unjust income criterion. Many regular freelancers were previously excluded from voting – and many still don't get certain basic rights, such as the standard seniority bonus - because their total income from AFP is under € 3,500 a year.

We have been the only AFP union to fight for an end to that discrimination. Thanks to our court action, the number of freelancers eligible to vote in these elections has gone up from 70 to 250.

The first step in defending the rights of people on insecure labour contracts is to give them a vote.

At a time when AFP is announcing cuts to the numbers of freelancers, and planning to slash the sports budget, make good use of your new rights:

Show your collective power by voting en masse for SUD.

2009-11: Our Record

- **SUD helped speed up the hiring of people on insecure contracts governed by French law. By bringing in the French labour inspectorate we forced AFP out into the open on this largely hidden issue. As a result, management agreed to open talks with the unions.**
- **SUD won new democratic rights for around a thousand AFP employees around the world who were previously barred from voting for our representatives on the AFP board on account of their nationality. And by going all the way to the French Constitutional Court on this issue we also showed how the CEO was plotting to undermine AFP's 1957 statutes.**
- **SUD was on the front lines in 2008-2010 to fight the plans of CEO Pierre Louette to turn AFP into a state-owned joint-stock company. We actively backed the sos-afp.org petition, which is still needed to counter Emmanuel Hoog's plans.**
- **SUD has kept staff regularly informed in French, and whenever possible in English too. On the Works Committee, David Sharp has relentlessly defended staff interests, fought immoral management plans and raised issues of journalistic and business ethics. To find out more, visit our English-language web site: www.sud-afp.org**

SUD's initiatives show that we don't have to take things lying down. Help ensure David Sharp's re-election to the Works Committee! Make sure that SUD wins both elected reps and official recognition!

Among our candidates - your potential SUD union officials

Journalists: David Sharp (Anglo Documentation), Claus Tulat (France Desk), Hugues Jeanneaud (Africa Desk, ex-Bordeaux freelancer), Corine Mollet (Sport Multimedia), Paz Pizarro (Graphics), Didier Saltron (France Desk); **White-collar (cadres):** Benoît Chatorrier (Personnel), **Secretarial/Blue-Collar:** Brigitte Vouhé (Personnel), Jacques Duvivier (Back-Office).

Electronic Voting. You cast four distinct votes: for full and alternate members of the Works Committee and for full and alternate shop stewards. **Please vote SUD in each case. Don't cross out any names, as deletions penalise the whole list.**

