

Workplace elections, September 23-30, 2022

SOLIDARITY
UNITY
DEMOCRACY



Electoral campaign manifesto

Despite the repeated refusal of our demands, long nights examining documents sent at the last moment by management, hours spent deciphering reports and proposals to find potential adverse effects on staff, *SUD*'s current delegates are all running for reelection with the same motivation and fighting spirit as in 2018. This year, we hope you will help us elect additional members to the Social and Economic Committee (CSE) to better defend your interests.

During the last election, we warned about deteriorating working conditions, growing job precarity, the erosion of our purchasing power and the emergence of a two-speed AFP with the localization of posts. What have we seen since?

- **A fusion of desks** that created unease among editors and a **reform of the newsroom** that created tension.
- **A reduction in posts.** According to documents provided by management, AFP cut 62 HQ-status jobs, including 18 journalist posts, between 2018 and 2021 as part of the CEO's transformation plan. And the bloodletting isn't over: four posts are to be cut!
- **A historic reduction in real wages.** If management has made a gesture (€20 gross at the end of 2021, then the inflation package negotiated this summer), it is still far from sufficient given the rise in prices. Since the previous workplace elections in 2018, INSEE's consumer price index (without tobacco products) has risen by 8.5%. And by how much have our wages risen? Roughly 3% on average, although by considerably less for some (excluding promotions and the hikes from the SPQN legal battle waged by *SUD*, the CGT and FO).
- **The reduction of expat posts**, which fell from 174 in 2018 to 149 in 2021, a drop of 25 posts or 14%. Management never honored its promises concerning the number of expats and recently admitted it never even tried to honor the promise concerning the number of posts eligible for expatriation.

What can we conclude from these grim findings? That despite committed and combative delegates, *SUD* could not stop management implementing its plans. While we improved our score in 2018, *SUD* still only took 17.37% of the vote, which was insufficient when faced with other unions who under the banner of being "responsible" accept all of management's nefarious plans.

But is it responsible to give in to management's blackmail, which only encourages it become a repeat offender in proposing changes that erode work conditions and staff benefits, or are poorly thought through? On more than one occasion we've had to fix problems *SUD* had pointed out during negotiations but was ignored.

Our 2018-2022 record

For the entire 2018-2022 mandate, the *SUD* delegation sought to provide a competent and combative defense of staff interests.

Our delegation of nine elected or appointed members was drawn from all staff categories:

(This list is only visible on intranet Aurore, here: <http://u.afp.com/wvTu>)

Some figures

- **Active and diligent participation in more than 40 meetings of the CSE** (Social and Economic Committee) – see the transcripts on Aurore
- **Constructive interventions in dozens of meetings and negotiation sessions** with management.
- **Publication of more than 60 tracts, with most available in English as well** (see www.sud-afp.org).

Some of our main successes

SPQN ruling

Thanks to *SUD*'s tenacity (threats to pursue the legal process after the appeal court ruling of September 2019), we reached a **collective agreement ending the dispute over the SPQN raises**.

The result: Lump sum payments for those present before the signature of the "Grand Accord" of March 10, 2017 that were much higher than €1,000 management initially offered and a leading union was ready to accept. Plus, general wage hikes of 0.7% at the beginning of January 2020 and 2021, for *all* staff (while management wanted to exclude staff hired after the entry into force of the "Grand Accord").

See our tract: <https://www.sud-afp.org/spip.php?article601>

Defending stringers

Increases to the pays scale for stringers in 2020 and 2022. *SUD* has consistently fought to avoid a drop in real earnings for stringers. During the Covid lockdowns we sharply criticized management's insufficient measures.

See our tract: <https://www.sud-afp.org/spip.php?article614>

2019-2023 Aims and Means Contract (COM)

The current COM, which defines the amount and conditions of the public financing of AFP within the framework of European competition rules, was negotiated behind closed doors by the CEO. After our request for the document was refused by management, *SUD* successfully seized the CADA (Commission for Access to Administrative Documents). We published the text of the COM, with our comments and analysis, which showed that **AFP's financial problems are essentially the result of political and ideological choices**.

See our tract: <https://www.sud-afp.org/spip.php?article625>

Our priorities for 2022-2026

Protecting our purchasing power

Our wage scales are no longer regularly adjusted for inflation like they were before 2012. Even if the measures adopted this summer go in the right direction, they clearly don't go far enough given how much prices have risen and are likely to in the coming months. *SUD* wants our wage scales adjusted (so retirement contributions are also increased) regularly to fully compensate for inflation. Otherwise, it is us who are financing more of AFP's public interest mission in place of the French state which de facto reduces its funding. We can't rely on gift certificates (which as they aren't taxed means we lose out as taxpayers), uncertain profit-sharing and small neighboring rights payments.

SUD also calls for the creation of new seniority bonuses at 25 and 30 years. Currently, after 20 years at AFP you aren't guaranteed any wage increases, especially as management has clearly declared its opposition in principle to general wage hikes.

The end of chronic understaffing

Video and fact-checking, the editorial priorities of the Agency, were developed while holding global staffing levels stable. That is at the expense of text posts and the jobs of technical and administrative staff. The result: longer hours, more stress, more nights and weekends on-call. Meanwhile, the reform of the newsroom meant to create synergies and improve our treatment of environmental subjects led to a reduction in the number of beat journalists when it should have resulted in more. The same for the creation of the Desk Francophone Unique, which functions with less people through less specialization.

AFP needs to recruit to fulfill its public interest mission as well as improve our working conditions. As chance would have it, there are numerous CDDs, stringers and interns who are competent and motivated and wish to integrate in the Agency. *SUD* wants a pathway for young journalists to be hired on a CDI without having to take multiple local contracts. Those who do accept going abroad on a local contract should be guaranteed a CDI after three years.

Ending arbitrariness

Who knows how many journalists received bonuses this year? And who? Management has never published this information on *Aurore*. Trade unions have received some information, but not the names. Management has also begun what is in effect promoting people by a half-category, but it did so without consulting unions. Furthermore, the lack of transparency in the nominations process, particularly for local posts, undermines confidence as does the lack of an effective appeal process.

Expatriation

The other side of the mobility coin should be wages and benefits that allow journalists to maintain their living standards while abroad and continue making contributions towards a decent retirement. Unfortunately, expat contracts are becoming reserved for management posts, which we see clearly in the creation of the French night desk in Asia. That's unacceptable! Especially as AFP failed to respect its commitments regarding expatriation in the 2017 accord.

Télétravail

The current agreement expires at the end of the year. Management wants to simply prolong it for a year. On the contrary, *SUD* wants to renegotiate the deal to include at least a small

reimbursement for expenses, as employees in many companies now receive. French government employees receive €2.50 per day up to €220 per year. This is a reasonable amount that will not ruin the Agency financially but help lighten the burden of increasingly heavy energy bills. Concerning the choice of days to work from home, there is often little flexibility, which is surprising considering we are supposed to be autonomous in our work under forfait jours contracts.

AFP's independence

When one speaks of guarding AFP's independence, most people tend to think of editorial independence vis-à-vis political and financial interests, and that is of course primordial. But in its search for savings and new funding, management has shown it is ready to compromise AFP's editorial and operational independence. Content sharing and partnerships with social networks and tech giants, outsourcing of certain functions with the loss of technical know-how, all these increase the risk that one day AFP will no longer be able to defend its independence.



Our financing

We hear a lot from management the phrase: "We don't have the resources." Well, this is due in large part to the fact the French state has frozen its funding for AFP and doesn't always pay the full cost of our public service mission. This is de facto a disengagement in a period of high inflation. During the negotiations on the renewal of AFP's public funding with Bercy and Brussels, SUD will vigorously defend AFP's public interest mission and its financing.

On all these issues, SUD will remain mobilized and continue to inform staff regularly as we've done these past four years. We're ready to push management to abandon its purely financial mindset which is detrimental to Agency's mission and its staff.

Give **SUD** more seats at the table!

Vote for both our lists of candidates and alternates!

<p>1</p>  <p>Comité social et économique Titulaires</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1/ XXXXXXXXXXXX - Reportage Vidéo2/ XXXXXXXXXXXX - Infographie et Innovation3/ XXXXXXXXXXXX - Desk Anglais4/ XXXXXXXXXXXX - Desk Francophone Unique5/ XXXXXXXXXXXX - Photo (province)6/ XXXXXXXXXXXX - Desk Francophone Unique7/ XXXXXXXXXXXX - Reportage Sport8/ XXXXXXXXXXXX - Pôle Numérique / Culture9/ XXXXXXXXXXXX - Desk Espagnol	<p>2</p>  <p>Comité social et économique Suppléants</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1/ XXXXXXXXXXXX - Reportage Sport2/ XXXXXXXXXXXX - Desk Francophone Unique3/ XXXXXXXXXXXX - Pôle Entreprises / Macro4/ XXXXXXXXXXXX - Desk Francophone Unique5/ XXXXXXXXXXXX - Photo (province)6/ XXXXXXXXXXXX - Desk Espagnol7/ XXXXXXXXXXXX - Desk Francophone Unique8/ XXXXXXXXXXXX - Documentation Multimédia9/ XXXXXXXXXXXX - Expatrié continent américain
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Please don't cross out any names – it hurts the entire list