

The axe falls

After work more, CEO now says earn less! Welcome to Mr. Hoog's Wonderland



We've known for a while that the CEO Emmanuel Hoog's "Grand Accord" entails AFP staff working more by drastically reducing or eliminating RTTs and cutting vacation for workers and technicians. But now management confirmed during negotiations on May 12 that their plan is not only for staff to work more, but to earn less, even much less.

The new wage scales that management intends to put into place will affect not only new hires, but many current employees. They will lead to cuts in wages and possibilities for advancement for laborers, employees and technicians. Administrative managers and journalists have mostly been spared (for the moment?). But looking a little closer it becomes clear ALL staff will lose under Mr. Hoog's Grand Accord.

Employees and Laborers: Down the rabbit hole

The proposed wage scale no longer classes staff by function, but by groups ranging from 1 to 5. Within each group jobs performed by employees and laborers are jumbled together.

Despite this scale being **confusing and nearly impenetrable**, a few observations can be made:

- There is no mention of traditional automatic promotions. A troubling omission.
- More troubling is that moving up in the table sometimes means that an employee will earn less! For example: an employee in Group 2, echelon 1 who earns a monthly base salary of €2,182 and gets a promotion to echelon 2 ends up earning ... €2,116 in base salary, or €66 euros less per month! Management is inventing the principle that **Promotion = Punishment**.
- The cuts in salary moving to the new wage scale can be considerable -- a superior category echelon 2 technical agent will lose €942 per month in base salary.

We'll leave it to your imagination to guess what our opinion of these "proposals" is.

Technicians: Off with their heads!

The new wage scale would lead to significant cuts in base wages for technicians:

- coefficient 115: drop between €1,149 and €1,569 gross per month
- coefficient 130: drop between €686 and €1,387 gross per month
- coefficient 145: drop between €400 and €893 per month
- coefficient 160: drop of €793 per month

These "proposals" which would lead to cuts of up to 33% percent in salary are unacceptable.

Administrative managers: eat me / drink me

Management wants to introduce two new coefficients. A new coefficient of 200, which we call a *low-cost* coefficient, and a coefficient of 410 which becomes the new upper level (it is currently 397). The new 410 coefficient (a gain of €150 per month in base salary from the 397 coefficient) is reserved for assistant directors. (/...)

For administrative managers, SUD demands that management:

- Renounce creating a coefficient of 200, which is in effect lower than the ceiling of 206 for press employees (coefficient 206).
- Adopt a value for the coefficient point value that is at least equal to that used for employees, instead of the current inferior value.
- Stop eliminating the prime de rendement when administrative and technical managers automatically obtain Career Plan Primes.

Journalists: time stands still?

The wage table for journalists is nearly unchanged. It contains a slight improvement for photographers and infographists, whose careers now follow those of other journalists. This is a change SUD called for the renegotiation of the wage scale in 2012.

We have called on management to extend automatic promotions through RED 6. In effect, the careers of many women stagnate at RED5 or RED5+, while many more men manage to climb to higher categories. Extending automatic promotion will eliminate this persistent discrimination.

Time to wake up Alice!

Even if the journalist pay scale, unlike those for other categories, hasn't been changed unfavorably, staff from ALL categories will be harmed by changes to benefits:

- **The reduction in RTTs won't be compensated by increases in wages.** The mechanism for guaranteed wage hikes, which management proposed one year ago¹, is unworkable. It doesn't guarantee anything except that investment and bringing AFP's labor practices into compliance with local laws will eat up most of any cash that comes available and we'll be left with the crumbs from the table for primes and promotions.
- Management's initial proposal (elimination of RTTs for desk journalists, employees and workers) as well as the counterproposals of the SNJ (14 RTTs) and the CFTD (12 RTTs), will result in longer working hours -- 37 hours according to management's latest proposal and 39 according to the SNJ's (according to documents provided by management). The consequence of this is that our hourly wage will drop. Payment for night hours will also cut back (currently +15%) as will overtime (for those who receive it).

Sacrifices for all, and we've still no idea just how deep the rabbit hole goes. Without answers from Mr. Hoog about the justification for and the financial savings to be generated from his proposals,² we can only come to one conclusion: if we accept the unacceptable, there is high probability that we'll have to do it again soon. After wage freezes in 2009, 2013, 2014, and 2015, the axe is now falling. When will it do so again?

For ourselves, as well as for the younger generations which are joining us, it is our responsibility to oppose starting down this endless spiral. ALL TOGETHER!

Paris, 16 May 2016
SUD-AFP (Solidarity-Unity-Democracy)

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¹ See our info bulletin on the negotiations of 18 May 2015: <http://www.sud-afp.org/spip.php?article347>

² See our statement: *Work more for less? Why?* <http://www.sud-afp.org/spip.php?article396>