

# Three Good Reasons Why You Should Vote



The election to choose the two staff representatives on the AFP board - a journalist and a "non-journalist" - runs from June 10 to 20. SUD lays out three key reasons why you should take part.

## 1/ A Worldwide Election

AFP is a global company, but its staff do not all have the same rights. The board election is one of the rare events that symbolises staff unity all over the world. This is because almost all staff have been entitled to take part since 2011, when the French Constitutional Council struck down a clause restricting the election to certain nationalities. (Today, the only people who remain excluded from the vote are most of those on short-term contracts, and staff working for AFP in German).

**The right to vote has been won; the best way to defend it is to use it.**

For both staff working under non-French ("local status") labour contracts and freelancers everywhere, the fight to win new rights means using the vote.

For everyone - local or headquarters status - the best way to defend our professional and democratic rights is to elect representatives who will stick up for us.

## 2/ Major Issues at Stake

The board, AFP's key institution of governance, will be called on to make some important decisions in the near future. The agency's founding principles, thanks to which it has become a worldwide presence independent of both politicians and financial interests, are threatened by projects currently being drafted. In particular:

- The European Commission wants to impose its own version of free-market competition on the news industry, and to that end it seeks to severely limit both the scope and duration of AFP's "general interest mission." It thereby seeks to push the agency into a purely profit-seeking approach, with the creation of subsidiaries to serve specific markets, as is already the case in Germany.
- The current French government is on the same wavelength, as seen in the report drawn up recently by MP Michel Françaix and in CEO Emmanuel Hoog's strategic plan for 2014-2018. AFP's technical services are threatened with being spun off, and the planned creation of a new "low-cost" editorial entity could herald an internal race to the bottom in terms of journalists' rights.

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The CEO claims that these projects are aimed at putting AFP's revenues on a firmer footing. In fact they would do just the opposite, notably via plans to cut staff rights and benefits.

### 3/ Not Voting Means Letting Others Decide for Us

Don't be taken in by M. Hoog's fine words. The threats currently building against the agency and staff benefits are serious, and all of us should take a stance. We can do that by voting.

The board election should provide an opportunity to elect candidates who will defend both the agency's general interest mission and the collective interests of all staff. For our representatives to be taken seriously on the board, they need to be well elected, via a strong turn-out.

## Who to Vote For: Our Choices

**Journalists:** In each election since 2005, divisions in trade union ranks have ensured that the candidate closest to management has been elected. In this year's election Samir Douaihy – who played an important role in the recent battles to defend AFP's statutes and also opposed the absurd decision to split Paris editorial staff between the HQ building and the rue Vivienne premises – is supported by the CGT, FO and *SUD* trade unions. There is no other union-backed candidate, which opens up a historic opportunity.

### Journalists: Vote for Samir Douaihy!

**Among administrative and technical staff** the two candidates are both union activists. It is clear that both of them will stand alongside staff to defend AFP's statutes and oppose plans to spin off the technical services. However this election is interesting in that it provides the women and men of the administrative and technical services with a choice between two very different figures, and two very different approaches to trade-union action. Support the candidate of trade union pluralism and united across-the-board action.

### Non-Journalists: Vote for Benoit Chatorrier!

To read the platforms of the two candidates backed by *SUD* in all of AFP's six working languages: <http://u.afp.com/Ayy>

Paris, June 6, 2014

**SUD-AFP (Solidaires – Unitaires – Démocratiques)**



Français – Español

<http://u.afp.com/dhS>