

Silence ! We're restructuring



Among the numerous developments at the start of the year at AFP:

- **The appointment of a deputy commercial and marketing director:** the creation of this new post at the top of AFP was little welcomed by those at the bottom of the agency which haven't had a pay increase in five years and have seen their work conditions deteriorate thanks to the elimination of posts.
- **The CEO's New Year message¹:** a speech that answered neither the call for divulging the amount of his salary², nor the question whether he intends to seek a third term. It was a speech that contrasts sharply with the reality on the ground and criticism from employees and their representatives. We recommend reading an **alarmist parliamentary report** written by centrist Senator Michel Laugier, who cannot be dismissed offhand as an ideological fellow traveller of SUD³. Laugier wrote there is a large risk that AFP's new financing mechanism, introduced in 2015, ends up being a "**time bomb**". And then goes on to suggest a new reform of AFP's statute.
- **The reorganization of a technical service** using methods which raise concerns about how future changes may be forced through, including in editorial services.

A dangerous precedent

The reform underway, using practices we oppose strongly, concerns the **technicians in French regional bureaus and those working in the User Support service (SUSU)**.

To begin with, an audit...

Against a background of dysfunction (due to a lack of resources and numerous, contradictory reforms of the IT Directorate- DSI), management solicited an audit from an external expert. He proposed to split the staff of the current User Support service into two entities: (1) a newly created **Department for Technical and Editorial Operations** (DOTE) which will be shifted to editorial management and (2) the **User Support** service which will remain under the DSI and which will be reinforced with technicians from the French regional bureaus working remotely.

This audit *was never disclosed* (neither to the technicians nor to employee representatives). *Management has just repeatedly reassured everyone that everything will work better* after this restructuring ... as the author of the audit has been hired to lead the new department (while other technician posts have been eliminated).

Forced job changes

The restructuring will essentially split the existing User Services to create a unit outside of the DSI to provide technical support to video operations and to prepare for special events. A dozen technicians from SUSU will be appointed to work in the DOTE beginning on February 1. As for the traditional user support services for the rest of the agency, they will be provided by the five remaining technicians who will be aided by the technicians in the French regional bureaus

¹ Intranet link (Aurore) <http://u.afp.com/o449>

² Open letter to CEO Hoog by CGC-FO-SUD unions - <http://u.afp.com/4VdT>

³ "L'AFP : bombe à retardement ou champion français ?" - <http://u.afp.com/o4Uk>

who will intervene remotely by computer (at least that is until they reach retirement in the next few years).

Management will *appoint* technicians unilaterally to the new DOTE, *without asking their opinion*. One post will magically disappear as part of this restructuring (as management is evidently banking on one person leaving...).

Working conditions changed without consulting CHSCT

This restructuring was given a negative (but non-binding) evaluation by the Works Committee. However the Health and Safety Committee (CHSCT) will only be consulted about the new office space to be attributed to the DOTE at rue Vivienne. **Management refuses to acknowledge there will be a change in working conditions.**

However there will be new shifts and more permanencies, which will certainly have an impact upon the work conditions and private lives of the technicians.

Unconvincing plan

According to several technicians management's project doesn't provide "*any added-value*" from an operational point of view. Worse, it will slow down the resolution of problems which up to now have been handled swiftly.

- From now on, when a request for support comes in the technician must fill out an **incident ticket** before taking any action. They won't be able to address other problems that users raise when they arrive on site as each of these requires a new ticket to be filled in beforehand.
- And of course calls for support made by staff may be answered by technicians working in a regional bureau, who won't be able to drop by to fix the problem...

Another concern is whether the service has enough staff to manage in illness, missions, training, vacations. Management says *choices* will have to be made. Decrypted: *less service, poorer service*.

Ignoring distress calls

The technicians were consulted during the audit, but not on the restructuring. That is all the more surprising in that it is the **third reorganization of the service in 10 years** (the last took place just two years ago).

These zig-zags have left their traces. A workplace psychologist who was brought in **warned of the risk of "creating situations of severe distress susceptible of engaging the responsibility of AFP"**.

That distress is widespread among the technicians in SUSU, and SUD's employee representative launched an alert under a procedure contained in France's labor code. Management's response: the alert was unjustified; keep moving, there's nothing going on here!

You can't win if you don't play

Management is introducing changes that have no support among staff. Less than a year after the Grand Accord was signed we see that the sacrifices conceded without a struggle are not leading AFP out of its impasse.

**Staff need to change their playbook in 2018!
Stop being submissive, it is time fight for the future of AFP!**

Paris, 25 January 2018

SUD-AFP (Solidarity-Unity-Democracy)

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