

Inflation, wages, working conditions: Alors on danse?

This year, the AFP fête will take place on September 21. Last year, it was to mark the move back into the renovated HQ building. What are we celebrating this year?

Inflation which hit 4.8% in August? Since our wages were last increased in March 2022 (with the retroactivity), we estimate we've lost 4.0% in purchasing power.

Satisfactory staffing levels? While certain services are short-staffed, management has limited CDDs to the bare minimum. And the perspectives for young journalists to get a permanent position, even those who have worked at AFP for years, are slim.

Never-ending renovations? There are still problems with the windows and many toilets are in dismal condition. And some of us will have to squish in tighter to welcome a subsidiary into the building.

Far from us to refuse the idea of management organizing any festive events. We understand well that staff appreciate having the chance to socialize together. But we can't lose sight of what is most important. Moreover, since it is de facto a party for just those of us who work at HQ while these past months have seen a flurry of mobilizations by local staff for wage increases. There is a risk this party will be poorly received by some of the Agency's staff.

By happenstance, the annual wage talks (NAO) start the same days as the AFP party, six months after the failure of the previous negotiations.

How much is this 4.0% loss in purchasing power since our last raise? For the average monthly gross wage of €5.141,15 in 2022 this 4.0% is €205.65. Multiply that by 18 and it comes out to €3,702 for the entire period. Make the calculation for your own salary! Don't we have the right to seek this money from management? Our April 28 tract demonstrated the impact of inflation on our wage scales and called out the fact the lowest rung has now fallen below the minimum wage (<http://u.afp.com/iF6V>).

Yes, we've suffered an enormous loss in purchasing power! This is the fault of the government, which did not include any adjustments for inflation in the 2019-2023 Aims and Means Contract (COM). And our management as well, which did not ask for more funding as other medias did.

If we can't get made whole for inflation now, when the government is renewing AFP's COM, what will this show? It will show that the financing system for AFP doesn't work. That our 2017 workplace agreement doesn't protect staff. That trade unions have not succeeded in mobilizing staff to defend our purchasing power.

Yes, we need to shake a leg, but not only on the dance floor.

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