



# COMPANY ETHICS CHARTER AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**2023**

## CONTRIBUTING TO THE CREATION OF AN INFORMED COMMUNITY AND A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.

1. AFP's founding statute, established by a 1957 Act of Parliament, requires the Agency to provide complete, accurate, impartial and trustworthy information around the world in multiple languages and on multiple platforms, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
2. AFP has rigorous newsgathering procedures in place, and is committed to strict adherence to a specific code of ethics and special rules to protect sources. These guidelines are available for consultation on AFP.com.
3. Through its international network of digital investigative journalists, AFP is fully committed to the fight against disinformation.
4. AFP is committed to promoting news literacy.
5. Through its coverage, AFP is committed to helping raise public awareness of societal issues, notably climate change and technological developments.
6. AFP is committed to promoting diversity, inclusion and equal opportunities among its staff, and to fighting all forms of discrimination.
7. AFP has put in place measures to ensure a safe working environment for its staff, both in the office and in the field.
8. AFP is committed to implementing responsible practices in procurement and customer relations.
9. AFP is committed to ensuring the necessary transparency with regard to its various stakeholders.
10. AFP is committed to implementing a responsible and sustainable strategy to reduce its carbon footprint.

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**01**

# THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR MISSIONS



# 1. THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR MISSIONS: MISSIONS ENSHRINED IN OUR STATUTE

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A UNIQUE STATUS FOR ACCOMPLISHING OUR MISSIONS

**The Act 57-32 of January 10, 1957 gives AFP a unique status.**

This law establishes AFP as a "sui generis" body with the status of a legal entity.

AFP is an independent organisation whose mission is to collect complete and objective information and make it available in return for payment.

Our statute defines the rules for the appointment and functions of the authorities responsible for our administration and management, namely our Chairman-CEO and our Board of Directors. The statute also defines the rules for the appointment and functions of the supervisory bodies responsible for guaranteeing our long-term future and the respect of our fundamental obligations in the performance of our missions.

Our statute ensures our independence from both public authorities and private interests. It provides us with the means to deliver accurate, impartial and trustworthy information and defines us as a company with a global reach.

# 1. THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR MISSIONS: MISSIONS ENSHRINED IN OUR STATUTE

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## FUNDAMENTAL STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS

*Agence France-Presse may not under any circumstances take into account influences or considerations likely to compromise the accuracy or objectivity of the information it provides; it may under no circumstances fall under the control, de jure or de facto, of any ideological, political or economic grouping;*

*Agence France-Presse shall, to the full extent of its resources, develop its activities and perfect its organisation with a view to providing French and foreign users, on a regular and uninterrupted basis, with accurate, impartial and trustworthy information;*

*Agence France-Presse must, to the full extent of its resources, ensure the existence of a network of offices giving it the character of a news organisation with worldwide reach.*

*(Article 2 of the statute)*

# 1. THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR MISSIONS: GOVERNANCE GUARANTEEING THE PROPER CONDUCT OF OUR MISSIONS

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MANAGEMENT BODIES

The Board of Directors is our management and administrative body. Chaired by the Chairman-CEO, it includes representatives of the French press, the audiovisual sector, the government and the Agency's staff, as well as independent figures appointed by the Board. It meets at least four times a year.

The Board is vested with the broadest powers for the management and administration of the Agency.

It delegates its day-to-day management powers to the Chairman-CEO, who is supported by an Executive Committee comprising the Global News Director, who has authority over editorial production, and the Managing Director, who assists the Chairman in the preparation and implementation of decisions.

The Board of Directors retains many essential prerogatives, such as approving the annual accounts and the budget, and authorising equity investments, loans, advances, borrowing, etc.

Every member of the Board of Directors must comply with the internal rules of the Board of Directors, which specify the terms and conditions for the exercise of his or her mandate, and with the Director's Charter, which sets out his or her rights, obligations and duties in terms of confidentiality, loyalty and good faith.



# 1. THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR MISSIONS: GOVERNANCE GUARANTEEING THE PROPER CONDUCT OF OUR MISSIONS

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SUPERVISORY BODIES

**The Board of Governors**, an independent administrative authority, ensures that our fundamental obligations are respected. It may make observations to the Chairman on the implementation of our strategy, and is consulted before any strategic decision is taken, as well as on the Contract of Objectives and Means that sets out the Agency's relationship with the government. The Chairman reports to the Board of Governors on our activities, our management and our compliance with our commitment to full and complete independence in the exercise of our editorial missions. In addition, AFP users, professional press organisations, and the Agency's financial commission may refer to the Board of Governors any fact that may constitute a breach of the obligations set out in Article 2. Each year, the Board of Governors submits to Parliament a report on our economic, financial and social situation and on the fulfilment of our obligations.

**The Financial Commission** receives the Agency's draft annual budget and verifies the balance of revenue and expenditure. It is responsible for the general verification of our financial management and the clearance of accounts, and is empowered to discharge the directors. It addresses all observations concerning financial management to the Chairman and to the Board of Directors. It ensures annually that the financial compensation paid by the State does not exceed the net costs generated for the accomplishment of our missions of general interest. It is assisted in this task by two auditing firms.

# 1. THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR MISSIONS: RESOURCES TO FINANCE OUR ACTIVITIES AND ENSURE OUR INDEPENDENCE

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OUR RESOURCES

AFP is a *sui generis* organisation with no share capital or shareholders. This unique legal status means that we are not controlled, de jure or de facto, by any economic grouping that might compromise the objectivity of the information we produce.

We are required, to the full extent of our resources, to maintain a network of bureaus so that we are a global news organisation. We derive most of our resources from the sale of our information services to our clients around the world.

Our clients on all continents are media companies - newspapers, magazines, television and radio stations, digital publications – and also institutions, governments and public authorities, international organisations and non-media companies.

We also form partnerships with agencies in territories with client networks that complement our own, and to which these partner agencies distribute our news services.

Finally, AFP has a network of digital investigative journalists present on all continents, providing operators of news sharing platforms, news content aggregators and search engines with multilingual content to combat the spread of false information.

# 1. THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR MISSIONS: RESOURCES TO FINANCE OUR ACTIVITIES AND ENSURE OUR INDEPENDENCE

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## COMPENSATION FOR OUR MISSIONS OF GENERAL INTEREST

AFP also receives, within a framework set by the European Commission, financial compensation from the French state for the fulfilment of its missions of general interest.

This compensation is intended to cover the net costs incurred by AFP in gathering and processing international news beyond what would be necessary for a national news agency solely dedicated to the pursuit of a commercial activity.

The compensation cannot exceed the balance of our net costs for ensuring our global presence.

A Contract of Objectives and Means (COM) signed between AFP and the French state every five years sets out the objectives relating to the missions defined by law and the indicators for measuring their achievement, as well as the methods for calculating the compensation for the net cost of the missions of general interest.



# 1. THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR MISSIONS: PROTOCOLS PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF OUR MISSIONS

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## REFERENCE DOCUMENTS FOR OUR JOURNALISTS

To ensure the proper implementation of our fundamental obligations and our editorial strategy, our journalists rely on reference documents that set out the precise rules of good conduct to be adopted in order to provide the most accurate and impartial information possible.

The Agence France-Presse Charter and the Agency's ethics code of Editorial Standards and Best Practices set out the rules of conduct for our journalists in carrying out their work. They are supplemented by AFP's 20 Principles of Sourcing and by the Stylebook which lays out the rules on writing as well as other rules with which AFP journalists must comply.

The Agence France-Presse Charter says that our mission is "to provide accurate, balanced and impartial coverage of news wherever and whenever it happens in the world on a continuous basis". It sets out our duties in fulfilling this mission, including being independent and defending freedom of expression while ensuring the safety of those who work for us.

The AFP code of Editorial Standards and Best Practices was drawn up after extensive internal consultations and reference to international documents, including the 1971 Munich Declaration on the rights and duties of journalists.

The code sets out the guidelines for accurate, balanced and impartial news coverage in 10 universally accepted principles.

It also looks at specific areas of concern, such as coverage of children, death, elections and conflicts. It sets out the rules of good conduct and ethics for AFP journalists, such as preventing possible conflicts of interest and refusing gifts and other benefits.

The code also deals with the coverage of economic and financial news, warns about using unpublished information for financial advantage, how to deal with any personal or family links with companies that are being covered, and the duty of journalists to report company news accurately, fairly and impartially.

Lastly, it offers guidance on covering conflicts and working in hostile environments. The code has guidelines on journalists' safety, duty of care to victims, whether to assist people in difficulty, the use of graphic images and coverage of hostage situations.

# 1. THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR MISSIONS: PROTOCOLS PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF OUR MISSIONS

## The AFP Stylebook

The AFP Stylebook defines the Agency's grammar, spelling and other rules for its journalists. Presented on the Agency's intranet in A-Z format with a search engine, the Stylebook is the reference document for our journalists in their daily work. From A for Abbreviations, Acronyms and Alerts to Z for Zika, it standardises the way we write our stories and gives guidance on language for complex issues such as the use of the words *terrorist* and *genocide*.

We are aware of the leadership role we play for newsrooms. The words we choose and the expressions we use appear in all media – on websites, TV and radio. This is why it is so important that we choose our words carefully and make accuracy our top priority.

Journalists are expected to be transparent in their work methods, and for this reason we have made the AFP Charter, Editorial Standards and Best Practices, and 20 Principles of Sourcing available online.

This transparency aims to increase awareness and understanding of our editorial procedures at a time when public trust in the media has greatly diminished. It also means that we all have an even greater responsibility to implement these written rules. Everyone must know these rules, and all new recruits must learn them.

While our charter and ethics code lay out fundamental principles that rarely need updating, our Stylebook is in a constant state of evolution as new words and phrases enter the language. We encourage debate within our editorial teams about changes to the Stylebook.

# 1. THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR MISSIONS: PROTOCOLS PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF OUR MISSIONS

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AN INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

Article 2 of our statute outlines our mission: "Agence France-Presse must, to the full extent of its resources, ensure the existence of a network of bureaus that give it the character of a worldwide news organisation",

AFP has a unique multilingual network that includes production in six core languages: French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, German and Arabic. We produce text, video, photo and infographics, along with fact-checks in 24 languages. To maintain this global reach, we employ 2,400 staff of 100 different nationalities in 260 cities in 151 countries. The network is organised according to seven major geographical zones: France, Europe, Africa, North America, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Middle East.

AFP's Paris headquarters is responsible for the overall management of the global coverage.

A very active mobility scheme for journalists, as well as the existence of a dense network of expatriates, means that the high standards required in our profession can be exercised everywhere.



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## RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM



## 2. RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM: ON THE FRONT LINE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DISINFORMATION

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DIGITAL INVESTIGATION AT AFP

Since its launch in 2017, AFP's digital investigation unit has grown to become the world's largest network of fact-checking journalists. AFP has more than 130 digital investigative journalists working in some 30 bureaus and covering more than 80 countries in 24 languages, reinforcing our commitment to the fight against the manipulation of information and the spread of disinformation. The work of the digital verification team is governed by the AFP Fact-Checking Stylebook, which can be consulted on the AFP Fact Check site.

Our fact-checking reports can be consulted in English on the AFP Fact Check site, and in two dozen other languages on their respective fact check websites.

Created in 2017, the AFP Fact Check website publishes fact-checks of dubious, misleading or false information circulating online. AFP journalists analyse viral posts, including images and videos, to detect falsehoods. They pay particular attention to claims that convey hate speech, racism, health misinformation and other harmful material. Our independence allows us to investigate any claim, no matter where it comes from: from politicians in power or in opposition, from international organisations, from companies or from other media. Our journalists work in accordance with AFP's code of ethics.

We are also one of 80 partners in the "Third-Party Fact-Checking Program" launched by Meta. The disinformation that we investigate, with total editorial independence, thus includes content flagged by Facebook, Instagram and their users.

AFP is also a member of the independent International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) and a signatory to its charter of principles.

### **The InVID-WeVerify Plugin**

In 2017, AFP, through its Medialab unit, published a browser extension as part of the European InVID project, then the WeVerify project, which allows journalists, fact-checkers, human rights activists, educators and anyone else to check false images and videos circulating on the internet and especially on social networks. This plugin is used by more than 100,000 active users per month, including the world's leading fact-checking newsrooms.

### **Partner in the code of conduct for the European fact-checking network**

At the end of 2021, we joined five other European fact-checking organisations as the lead members of a project to develop a Code of Professional Ethics for independent fact-checkers. The project, launched with the support of the European Commission, involved some 40 fact-checking outlets who were members of the wider group of the European Fact-Checking Standards Network.

## 2. RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM: ON THE FRONT LINE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DISINFORMATION

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DIGITAL INVESTIGATION AT AFP

### Partnership with the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO)

As a world leader in digital investigation, we are involved in a number of projects to combat disinformation, including participation in several hubs of the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) network launched by the European Union. As a member of the CEDMO (Central European Digital Media Observatory) hub, we work with Czech, Polish, Slovak and Greek partners to fight disinformation in Central Europe, by offering training to media, and developing artificial intelligence tools to detect false information. For France, the DE FACTO platform, launched in January 2022, is led by Sciences Po, AFP, CLEMI and XWiki SAS. AFP also participates in the BELUX hub which covers Belgium and Luxembourg.

The Agency also participated in the launch of the Hungarian language website Lakmusz.hu, dedicated to the fight against disinformation, in partnership with local media and Hungarian university researchers.

### Digital Investigation Training

We have created an open multilingual interactive training platform combining different tools and techniques of digital investigation. It is available to our fellow journalists and journalism students around the world. In addition, we organise workshops based on this platform (via specific training programmes and by developing fact-checking video formats) so that everyone can learn investigative methods. This training is organised around different modules that lead to a certification from us with the support of the Google News Initiative.

## 2. RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM: PROVIDING MEDIA EDUCATION AND ENCOURAGING PLURALISM

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MEDIA EDUCATION

AFP has forged several partnerships with the French Ministry of Education and the Centre for Education in Media and Information (CLEMI).

### **A website dedicated to education**

We have created a website dedicated to education for teachers and students in primary and secondary schools. Created in 2017 and updated in 2020, it is accessible to people with Category 3 visual impairment, and offers downloadable content.

On this platform, students and teachers have access to a multitude of educational resources appropriate for different scholastic levels. These include: multimedia documentary files produced by journalists from the multimedia documentation department, animated graphics, infographics, videos, quizzes and workshops on media and news literacy, as well as eyewitness accounts from reporters in the field. Some of the content is in several languages.

### **Press and Media Week in Schools**

AFP participates in the Press and Media Week in Schools. This popular event is attended by more than 300,000 teachers every year.

On our "Webduc" site, teachers and students have access to all our text, photo, computer graphics and video material, in six languages. During the school press and media week, we also offer media education workshops with the Entre les Lignes association.

### **Front page competition**

We are a partner in the Front Page competition for which students produce a front page from a selection of news items and images from the Agency. This exercise is aimed at students from French-speaking primary and secondary schools. Schools in Quebec joined the competition in 2021. We take part in prize giving ceremonies at a national and school level.

### **Partnerships with schools and associations**

AFP teams work with primary and secondary schools, leading media education workshops and giving talks about the history of AFP and the work of news agency journalists.

At the request of the CLEMI, we regularly take part in seminars and webinars aimed at teachers and students, to explain our profession and discuss Media Education topics.

We are also a partner of the Entre les Lignes association, for which our journalists, both active and retired, run Media Education workshops in schools across France.

## 2. RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM: PROVIDING MEDIA EDUCATION AND ENCOURAGING PLURALISM

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MEDIA EDUCATION

### **Educational visits to AFP**

Every year we receive visits from some 30 schools in association with CLEMI, the Centre for Education in Media and Information. Our visitors are mostly teachers and students from media classes in secondary schools across France. The visits create a better understanding of AFP's work, its network and its history. They include a tour of our production services where our journalists describe their work.

### **European Media Education Projects**

We are partners in several European Media Education projects including YouCheck! and YouVerify! Within the framework of these projects, we work with other European partners on new Media Education resources to develop critical thinking among a wide audience.

### **The Correspondent Blog**

We created the Correspondent blog in April 2012 with the aim of offering the general public access to AFP's behind-the-scenes stories and allowing AFP journalists to tell their own stories about the events they cover around the world.

This blog allows us to tell the story of the passion that drives our 1,700 journalists and of the difficulties, dilemmas and sometimes dangers that we face in the exercise of our profession. It showcases the reach of our worldwide network and the often enormous resources that we devote to gathering and publishing balanced, accurate and impartial news.

## 2. RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM: PROVIDING MEDIA EDUCATION AND ENCOURAGING PLURALISM

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OUTREACH, SCHOLARSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS

We share our values and our on-the-ground experience with a wide audience, both professional and non-professional, by establishing partnerships with universities and journalism festivals, and by encouraging our staff members, especially our journalists, to participate in events, conferences and televised debates.

We strive to ensure that our newsroom is as faithful a reflection as possible of the societies we cover. Diversity is an important consideration in our recruitment, including via the various scholarships we offer in France. We have established a partnership with the association "La Chance pour la Diversité dans les Médias", which awards work-study contracts to young people from within this association.

Internationally, we are forging partnerships with university journalism departments, particularly in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, to enable young local talent to join our editorial staff.



## 2. RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM: DRIVING CHANGE AND SUPPORTING THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIETY

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### BALANCED TREATMENT OF THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE THE NEWS

We believe it is essential to be proactive on diversity and gender issues. We are committed to gender equality in our production and to covering the whole of society, including minorities and people with disabilities.

We have editorial rules on the correct language to use in coverage of issues such as gender and diversity. We cover the role of women in society, sexual orientation, discrimination and sexual violence in a way that reflects the growing importance of these issues. Rules on this coverage are included in the Stylebook and updated as necessary.

AFP is committed to increasing the representation of women in its production. The Global News Management has carried out evaluations of our content to detect any shortcomings or stereotypes and suggest improvements.

A first report on the representation of women in the Agency's daily text, photo, video and infographics production was published in 2017. It was followed by a set of recommendations on how to cover issues that concern women, including updating the guidelines on the coverage of sexual violence, the need to interview more women experts and the feminisation of titles in French language coverage. These updated guidelines were added to the Stylebook.

Following this initial report, a second, more in-depth evaluation of our content was carried out in partnership with the University of Toulouse II between 2018 and 2020.

Two of the Agency's journalists conducted a study on diversity within AFP in early 2021. Their report, which proposed a number of improvements, led to the creation of a Diversity Committee to strengthen diversity within the workforce.



## 2. RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM: DRIVING CHANGE AND SUPPORTING THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIETY

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### BALANCED TREATMENT OF THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE THE NEWS

In 2022 the Global News Management assigned a journalist at the Paris HQ the mission of studying ways to improve the representation of women and the treatment of diversity issues in our editorial content.

The aim was to see how the major international media approach these issues and to talk to the journalists at the Agency involved in covering them.

At the end of the mission, specific proposals were submitted to the Global News Management, including a proposal for the appointment of a diversity editor to focus on diversity in the newsroom and in coverage.

## 2. RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM: DRIVING CHANGE AND SUPPORTING THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIETY

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AN OBSERVER AND A DRIVER OF CHANGE

The Agency is committed to developing its coverage of the world and to attracting new audiences. Our statute and editorial charters do not allow us to advocate a cause, but they do commit us to reporting impartially on societal phenomena.

Like society, our editorial team is dynamic, and open to debate and change. We therefore believe that it is our duty to cover and highlight changes in society with nuance and sensitivity, from global and cross-cultural perspectives. This includes offering enriched production (text, infographics, photo and video) and providing specific thematic coverages to clients. We have prioritised coverage of global warming and the impact of new technologies and created two dedicated editorial teams, the Digital and Planet Hubs.

A New Audiences group was created to ensure that our production keeps pace with the times. This group, made up of young journalists, published a report in 2020 recommending that the Agency increase its coverage of the future of the planet, the digital world, gender, diversity and equality issues and subjects of interest to young audiences, such as video gaming.

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## OUR SOCIAL COMMITMENTS



### 3. OUR SOCIAL COMMITMENTS: OFFERING A WORK ENVIRONMENT WHERE EVERYONE IS PROTECTED

0001

#### CONTRACTUAL COMMITMENTS

AFP employs 2,400 staff in 151 countries, which means that we are subject to as many different legal frameworks as the number of countries in which we work. About half of our staff have employment contracts under French law. The rules of the French Labour Code in terms of health, safety and working conditions must be respected, in accordance with the provisions set out in our internal regulations, our contractual commitments and our charter of international human resources practices. These guarantee a protective environment for all staff, based on trust, mutual respect and the principle of treating everyone with dignity.

#### **In France: the Company Agreement**

We ensure the protection and fair treatment of our employees, guaranteed by a Company Agreement negotiated with Agence France-Presse's representative trade unions. This agreement defines the basis for all aspects of our employees' lives at AFP, from the day they are hired to the day they leave the company. It also deals with the company's social and environmental responsibility, health in the workplace, and trade union rights. This Company Agreement aims to improve on the general rules laid down by the French Labour Code and adapt them to our specific needs. This agreement applies to all employees hired under French law, regardless of job category, and guarantees transparency and fairness.

#### **Internationally: the HR Practices Charter**

The aim of this charter is to define HR practices in countries where AFP employs local staff to whom the Company Agreement governed by French law does not apply. It is designed to guarantee the rights of all AFP employees worldwide. It defines the terms and conditions of recruitment, remuneration, working hours, leave, social security, training and skills development, and career management.

### 3. OUR SOCIAL COMMITMENTS: OFFERING A WORK ENVIRONMENT WHERE EVERYONE IS PROTECTED

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#### TRADE UNION DIALOGUE AND LABOUR RIGHTS

Social dialogue is above all reflected in the existing Company Agreement, the result of numerous exchanges with the trade union delegates. The provisions of the agreement are now set out in a single document: the Company Agreement. In order to ensure the continuity of social dialogue and the effectiveness of this right for all the Agency's employees, management regularly adjusts the resources allocated to staff representatives. This matching of resources to the needs expressed by staff representatives is the reflection of a rich and regular social dialogue.

#### **Implementation of means to ensure the effectiveness of trade union rights**

To ensure that staff representatives have the flexibility to carry out both their mandate and their professional duties, management and staff representatives agreed on the need to make specific provisions.

#### **Number of staff representatives and time allocation**

There are a number of supernumerary members of the Social and Economic Committee, comprising: one trade union delegate per representative trade union organisation; trade union section representatives of unrepresented trade union organisations.

Additional time credits are given to CSE and CSSCT Secretaries and to trade union representatives participate in negotiations and discussions.

#### **Procedures for dialogue with management:**

- Monthly meetings of the Individual and Collective Complaints Commission, during which management answers questions put by members of the CSE (works council);
- Meetings between unions and management to discuss reorganisation plans before they are formally presented;
- Monthly meetings of the psycho-social risk prevention committee.

#### **Effectiveness of social dialogue**

Since the signing of the Company Agreement in 2017, management and employee representatives have signed more than 10 amendments to this agreement. Management and union representatives also meet to negotiate different issues. Issues open to negotiation are extremely wide-ranging and often exceed the obligations of the parties under the Company Agreement. Examples of topics on which negotiations have been initiated in recent years: trade union rights, working time, social measures implemented during Covid-19, teleworking, neighbouring rights, professional equality and quality of life at work, skills forecast management (GPEC), and journalist mobility.

### 3. OUR SOCIAL COMMITMENTS: ENSURING OUR EMPLOYEES' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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HIRING, CAREERS AND TRAINING

The Company Agreement signed in 2017 brings together all the provisions governing the status of AFP employees hired under French law. Chapter 2 of the agreement covers the entire career path of our employees, from recruitment to departure from the company.

As part of the mandatory negotiations on the Management of Jobs and Career Paths and Diversity of Professions, we introduced a forward planning policy for jobs and skills management, based on an analysis of jobs. This process consists of anticipating foreseeable changes in jobs, professions, skills and qualifications linked to forecastable economic, demographic and technological trends, as they relate to our corporate strategy. It enables our organisation to become more dynamic and our employees to have the information and tools they need to take charge of their career development.

We therefore attach great importance to the career development interview, which gives our employees the opportunity to review their career path with their managers, to prepare for possible changes and to anticipate the necessary training. These interviews are regularly offered at headquarters, and will gradually be rolled out across the AFP network. These interviews feed into the staff reviews, which allow the HR department and managers to take stock of employees' situations. They are also an opportunity to adopt a more proactive approach aimed at anticipating possible staff movements.

To ensure better career management for all the network's employees, we decided to create a human resources manager position in each of AFP's international regions. These regional HR managers implement the Agency's skills management policy at the local level.

**We are committed to enabling each of our staff to develop their skills and employability, by encouraging internal mobility and offering training.**

We encourage internal mobility, which is a key part of our human resources development policy. We are keen to ensure that all our employees have opportunities for career development.

Mobility, both professional and geographical, is governed by the provisions of the Mobility Charter, which guarantees transparency in the mobility process.

**We maintain a large network of expatriate positions.** International mobility gives our employees a real opportunity for professional development. An explanatory booklet provides information to employees taking up new international postings (specifically regarding remuneration and social security cover), to help them get settled and inform them of the modalities of their return.



### 3. OUR SOCIAL COMMITMENTS: ENSURING OUR EMPLOYEES' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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HIRING, CAREERS AND TRAINING

**We inform employees of career opportunities in a transparent manner.** Job vacancy notices are advertised via various internal channels so they are seen by as many employees as possible. A weekly newsletter and a mobility calendar keep all employees in the network up to date on available job offers and recent appointments.

Applications, appointments and job advertisements are **assessed annually** to identify areas for improvement.

Each year, we set guidelines for professional training in a **skills development plan** that matches the needs of employees with the company's strategy. All the training courses taken by employees are listed annually by theme in a **training report**.



### 3. OUR SOCIAL COMMITMENTS: PREVENTION AND SUPPORT IN HEALTH AND SAFETY

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STAFF HEALTH AND SAFETY

**AFP has set up preventive measures that go beyond its legal obligations in the areas of employee health, safety and working conditions.**

**These preventive measures are ensured by the following people and structures:**

- **A medical service at the head office**, consisting of the company doctor and two nurses. It provides effective monitoring of the Agency's employees and regularly conducts actions aimed at prevention and increased health awareness among employees;
- **Psychological support** is offered to all our employees via a subscription to an external psychological support platform: consultation with psychologists, information and questionnaires;
- **A dedicated journalist safety manager**
- Quarterly meetings of a **health, safety and working conditions committee** which may be preceded by meetings of a planning committee to deal with issues relating to workspace organisation;
- **A psychosocial risk prevention committee**, a joint body that meets monthly. The committee comprises members of the human resources department, the secretary and members of the CSSCT (health, safety and work conditions committee), the secretary of the CSE (works council), staff representatives for the prevention of harassment and discrimination, the company doctor, the company social assistant, and the manager in charge of journalists' safety. Employees who find themselves in need of help may refer their case to the committee. Its mission is to propose collective mental health preventive actions and alert procedures.
- **A committee for updating the Single Occupational Risk Assessment Document**. This body aims to ensure that the document is regularly updated and to agree on new preventive actions to be implemented. It meets annually and is made up of human resources department members, the company doctor, the health and safety manager and members of the CSSCT.

### 3. OUR SOCIAL COMMITMENTS: PREVENTION AND SUPPORT IN HEALTH AND SAFETY

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STAFF HEALTH AND SAFETY

#### Information resources for staff

AFP makes the following information available to staff: documents on serious incident procedures, electrical risks and road risks; prevention advice for each risk identified in the Single Occupational Risk Assessment Document; procedures for reporting harassment and discrimination; workload alert mechanism; guidelines for teleworking.

#### Protection of journalists facing risks

Staff safety constantly poses new challenges for AFP to address: cybersecurity and cyberbullying issues; restrictions on press freedom; hostility towards journalists in the field; wars; etc. In this context, the mental health of staff is also a priority.

AFP has strengthened its training programmes for reporting in hostile environments, including hiring a safety adviser to work with teams close to the front lines in Ukraine. It has appointed an experienced journalist to its editor-in-chief's department to be in charge of safety and prevention (training, protective equipment, etc.) and strengthen the security aspect of editorial operations.

- All journalists returning from difficult areas are debriefed in order to identify possible mental health issues. AFP also makes a psychological support platform available to staff.
- Cybersecurity has become a major issue in ensuring the safety of journalists and operations, globally and more specifically in certain countries particularly exposed to cybersecurity threats. A training programme and regular information sessions have been implemented.
- The presence of our journalists and our production on social networks increases exposure to cyberbullying, particularly for fact-checking journalists and women journalists. Detailed instructions are regularly issued to deal with cyberbullying and to support journalists who are victims.

### 3. OUR SOCIAL COMMITMENTS: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE AT WORK FOR OUR EMPLOYEES

0005

QUALITY OF LIFE AT WORK (QLW)

#### Working hours

Working hours for head office staff were the subject of negotiations between the management and trade unions. As a result, the conditions at AFP are more favourable to employees than legally required and reflect a real commitment by the Agency in terms of quality of life at work and work-life balance. For example: the number of days of leave is greater than the legal requirement, daily rest time has been increased to 13 hours for all employees, and break time treated is actual working time within the limit of 30 minutes per day.

#### Teleworking

At the headquarters, the number of permitted days of telework is set at a maximum of two days per week for eligible employees. A large majority of employees have currently opted for a telework arrangement. Our agreements also include specific provisions on telework for employees who have unexpected difficulties for commuting; employees with disabilities; parents of children under 16 years of age with disabilities; and employees who have formalised their request to retire

#### Head office

The head office, located in the centre of Paris, has recently undergone major renovations. Particular attention has been paid to soundproofing, to the creation of spaces for working both individually and collaboratively, and to the creation of social spaces and rooms specifically for resting and breastfeeding. AFP also invests annually in the renovation of its offices around the world.

#### The Right to Disconnect

The principle of the right to disconnect is included in all employment contracts (permanent and temporary), and is also included in the guidelines on teleworking. The management has published notes on the correct use of electronic messaging and a charter of best practices regarding the disconnection of devices during meetings.

### 3. OUR SOCIAL COMMITMENTS: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE AT WORK FOR OUR EMPLOYEES

0005

QUALITY OF LIFE AT WORK (QLW)

#### **Meeting times**

In its agreement on professional equality, quality of life and working conditions, management has stated that meetings should, as far as possible, not start before 9:00 a.m. or end after 6:00 p.m. in order to take into account employees' family and personal constraints and to ensure a good work-life balance.

The number of meetings and their duration must be reasonable.

#### **Parental support**

Several provisions have been put in place and are included in the parental support guide: maternity leave in excess of the legal provisions, continued pay throughout paternity-new child leave; leave for MAR (Medically Assisted Reproduction) examinations when it is necessary to travel a long distance for them; leave to care for children when they are sick; the parental leave period up to three years counts fully towards company seniority; day care co-financing; adjustment of working hours on the first day of school; etc.

#### **Support for family events**

The number of days allotted for family events exceeds the number provided for by the Labour Code, and specific events are identified. A policy allowing employees to donate days off to one another has also been put in place.

### 3. OUR SOCIAL COMMITMENTS: ENSURING EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE AND SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

0006

#### EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Since the establishment of the Gender Equality Index, AFP has always scored over 75 points out of 100. These significant scores are the result of AFP's continuous actions and commitments over the years in favour of gender equality, specifically through its various policies.

##### **Salary policy**

AFP is committed to ensuring equal pay for women and men in equivalent positions.

The management ensures that the budgetary distribution of bonuses and promotions is at least proportional to the numbers of women and men in each professional category. However, in order to reduce pay and career development differentials between women and men, our agreements allow overrepresentation of one sex over another when it comes to awarding bonuses and promotions.

##### **Training Policy**

AFP is committed to ensuring equal access to training for men and women, which is taken into consideration when organizing training programmes. This commitment is reiterated by the training department in its communications to managers.

We offer personal development training programmes aimed primarily at women (for example assertiveness training and public speaking). We also offer sexism prevention training.

##### **Editorial policy**

We have launched several initiatives to increase the representation of women in editorial content.

### 3. OUR SOCIAL COMMITMENTS: ENSURING EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE AND SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

0007

ACTION IN SUPPORT OF EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

**AFP's proactive approach to promoting the employment of people with disabilities is structured around three main components:**

- Hiring and retention
- Communication and information
- Working with ESATs (establishments or services providing assistance through work)

AFP has a Disability Committee, made up of members of the Human Resources and Purchasing Departments, the Company Doctor, the Social Assistant and the Secretaries of the CSE and CSSCT.

AFP has two designated representatives for disability issues: one representing management and the other representing the works council (CSE).

### 3. OUR SOCIAL COMMITMENTS: PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND COMBATTING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

0008

DIVERSITY

Young people who have completed preparatory courses offered by “La Chance” or “Égalité des Chances” or been awarded scholarships by these organisations are prioritised for work-study contracts and are automatically entitled to sit the written test.

In May 2021, the Agency set up a 14-member diversity committee, including representatives from all the Agency's regions and professions. The committee's mission is to propose measures to management aimed at increasing diversity in the workforce and to monitor the implementation of our diversity strategy. The committee has a dedicated email address for receiving staff suggestions and contributions, and published its first report in June 2022.

Since the creation of the diversity committee, AFP has signed up to France's Diversity Charter through which it undertakes to raise awareness among managers and staff, provide training in the application of the principle of non-discrimination, encourage diversity, integrate the topic of diversity into social dialogue and regularly assess progress.

AFP job offers affirm our principle of inclusiveness with the following statement: *AFP is committed to equal opportunities and greater diversity within its teams. We therefore encourage all applicants to apply, so as to preserve the wealth of profiles, cultures and languages that constitute the strength of our network .*

In 2022, the Agency created the new position of diversity editor to help promote diversity in the workplace and also in our editorial production.



### 3. OUR SOCIAL COMMITMENTS: PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND COMBATTING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

0009

COMBATTING SEXIST BEHAVIOUR , HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

#### **Representatives for the prevention of sexism, harassment and discrimination**

While the Labour Code limits the scope of such representatives to sexist behaviour and sexual harassment, AFP has extended their role to include moral harassment and discrimination.

Management has authorised the Works Council to designate a supernumerary representative.

These three representatives have been trained in how to address each of these issues. Their contact details are included in the list of staff representatives available on the company's intranet site.

#### **Procedure for reporting harassment or discrimination**

For anyone who believes they have been a victim of or a witness to sexist behaviour, harassment (moral and/or sexual) or discrimination, this procedure provides the relevant information on time limits for complaints and the process for submitting a complaint, holding interviews, issuing conclusions and following up with the employees concerned. As these types of issues can potentially lead to disciplinary action, the procedure is appended to the Agency's internal regulations.

Information leaflets will be made available on the company intranet to provide information and examples on what each issue covers and indicate the relevant people to contact.

#### **Training**

For the past several years, AFP management has worked with an outside company to provide specific training on the prevention of sexist behaviour and sexual harassment.

These issues are also covered in management training on labour laws.

**04**

## **OUR BUSINESS ETHICS**



## 4. OUR BUSINESS ETHICS: PREVENTION OF ILLICIT PRACTICES

0001

### PREVENTING ILLICIT PRACTICES, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, INFLUENCE PEDDLING AND CORRUPTION

We conduct our business with integrity and ensure that our relationships with customers, suppliers and other stakeholders comply with applicable laws and with our principles.

We are committed to preventing and detecting all forms of illicit practices, corruption and influence peddling. To this end, we have defined different types of behaviour to be prohibited. Thus, our employees may not engage, directly or indirectly, in activities that would place them in a conflict of interest. Favours or undue advantages may not be offered to or accepted from third parties.

#### **A framework guaranteeing the Agency's independence**

The statute of Agence France-Presse, as set out in Act 57-32 of 10 January 1957, provides that "the Agency may not under any circumstances take into account influences or considerations likely to compromise the accuracy or objectivity of its information; it may not under any circumstances come under the de jure or de facto control of an ideological, political or economic grouping".

These fundamental obligations are set out in the journalists' code of ethics, which defines the rules applicable when there are conflicts of interest, when gifts or other benefits are offered, and when there is a risk of the Agency's activities and name being used to advertise or promote commercial products. Staff are regularly informed and reminded of their obligations under the journalists' code of ethics.

#### **Mechanism for preventing conflicts of interest among members of the Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors' rules of procedure stipulate that all Board members must inform the Board of any mandates held by them and of any conflicts of interest, including potential conflicts of interest, that may involve them either directly or indirectly.

More generally, the rules of procedure stipulate that every Board member must act with total independence and in the interests of the Agency. Specifically, Board members must refuse to accept any advantage likely to compromise their independence, they must respect the confidentiality of privileged information to which they have access, and they must inform the Chairman of any family relationship they may have with a senior manager of the Agency.

#### **Internal whistleblowing system**

Conduct or situations against AFP's regulations can be reported via a dedicated email address.

## 4. OUR BUSINESS ETHICS: PREVENTION OF ILLICIT PRACTICES

0001

PREVENTING ILLICIT PRACTICES, CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, INFLUENCE PEDDLING AND CORRUPTION

### **AFP Board of Governors Whistleblowing System**

Any matter likely to constitute a breach of the obligations set out in Article 2 of our statute may be referred to the Board of Governors by users, professional organisations or the Finance Committee. If the matter referred is the result of a decision by the Board of Directors, the Board of Governors may suspend the execution of the decision and ask the Board of Directors to hold a second deliberation. If the matter is the result of serious misconduct on the part of the Chief Executive Officer, the Board of Governors shall, after receiving the opinion of the Board of Directors, order the termination of their functions.

### **Financial audits**

The Finance Committee, whose members are drawn from the French Court of Auditors, is responsible for the general audit of the Agency's financial management. Each year it approves the Agency's accounts. To this end, it is assisted by contractual auditors who ensure that the accounts are regular and accurate and that they give a true and fair view.

In addition, an internal auditor conducts regular audits of the bureaus comprising the Agency's global network.

## 4. OUR BUSINESS ETHICS: PRIVACY AND DATA SECURITY

0002

### CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Each staff member is contractually obliged to observe absolute discretion with regard to all information about our activities of which he or she may have knowledge, where both employees and third parties are concerned, throughout the duration of his or her contract and after its termination.

The Agency's "**20 Principles of Sourcing**" document sets out the rules of our journalistic practices relating to sources, notably that of not disclosing the identity of a confidential source to any outside party. Where coverage of minors is concerned, AFP journalists must ensure that the laws of the country in question are respected.

**The rules of procedure of the Board of Directors** stipulate that all Board members are bound by a duty of discretion with regard to the discussions in which they participate and must respect the confidentiality of all information they receive.

Board members shall not take any initiative that could harm the interests of the Agency and shall act in good faith in all circumstances. They shall refrain from using the privileged information to which they have access for their personal benefit or for the benefit of anyone else.

### Processing of personal data

A Data Protection Officer ("DPO") as well as referents within each of the Agency's departments have been appointed. They ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation ("GDPR") in the various data processing operations carried out by the Agency. In 2022, a dedicated software solution for organising and documenting compliance actions was acquired. This solution allows us to centralise all the information relating to our data processing operations, and thus to identify weaknesses and areas for improvement in our compliance.

Each new project is now analysed from a data protection perspective in order to implement technical and organisational protection measures from the design stage. We also strive to raise staff awareness of the importance of high levels of personal data protection.

Individuals may exercise their rights by writing to a dedicated internal email account.

## 4. OUR BUSINESS ETHICS: PRIVACY AND DATA SECURITY

0003

DATA SECURITY

Our **IT charter** sets out the essential principles to be respected by all those who use our information system. This charter sets out the rights and obligations of all parties in accordance with the legal framework, respect for individual rights and freedoms and the principle of the secrecy of journalists' sources. This charter also commits us to guaranteeing the proper functioning and security of our information systems.

### Digital data security

Our IT charter specifies that, with some exceptions, users are only authorised to access data necessary for the performance of their duties, in addition to public or shared data.

To protect the information system, the IT department deploys and maintains security solutions aimed at limiting exposure to cyber threats. This includes features to protect the system from viruses and from files and processes that are deemed suspicious.

The IT department regularly assesses its security level by conducting security and vulnerability audits. It also works to ensure business continuity of its information system in the event of a major risk. Systems of alert are in place and are monitored. Awareness initiatives are periodically conducted to familiarise users with good practices and teach them to detect computer anomalies so that they can be reported to the IT department.

### Information security for third parties

Our IT charter states that users are prohibited from entering or attempting to enter the information systems of third parties without authorisation. It also requires users to respect the intellectual property rights of third parties. As soon as third-party data is integrated into our information system, it is secured in the same way as our own data.

## 4. OUR BUSINESS ETHICS: EXERCISING OUR DUTY OF CARE AND ENSURING TRUST-BASED CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

0004

### RESPONSIBLE PROCUREMENT

Our **responsible purchasing charter** formalises our commitments and those we expect from our suppliers. It aims to foster a respectful relationship, conducive to the development of collaborative partnerships and to strengthening the integration of ethical, social, environmental and economic issues in our respective operations.

We guarantee our suppliers, service providers and subcontractors fair treatment in the context of competitive bidding, and transparency throughout the purchasing process. We are committed to maintaining long-term relationships based on trust, including responsible financial relationships.

We ensure that we conduct our business with integrity, honesty and fairness in accordance with applicable laws, prohibiting all forms of corruption, favouritism, conflicts of interest or other unlawful practices and respecting intellectual property rights. We demand the same commitment from our suppliers.

Our responsible purchasing charter requires our suppliers to respect the laws and regulations in force in all the countries where they operate, as well as the conventions of the International Labour Organisation, and to guarantee the respect of all human rights and internationally recognised fundamental freedoms.

Lastly, we ask our suppliers, service providers and subcontractors to present their CSR actions, specifically with regard to the environment, so that we can take these actions into consideration and value them as competitive advantages.



## 4. OUR BUSINESS ETHICS: EXERCISING OUR DUTY OF CARE AND ENSURING TRUST-BASED CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

0005

### CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

Our business activities are conducted in compliance with the regulatory and legislative framework of each country in which we do business. We are committed to treating our customers honestly and fairly, with a focus on quality relationships and continuous improvement of our services.

Given the speed and scale of news flows, customer relations are key. We strive to build relationships with our customers based on respect and trust, and to uphold our statute by providing accurate, impartial and trustworthy news.

We are committed to providing our clients with easily accessible and relevant content and to ensuring the continuous optimisation of metadata and associated content suggestions. We also offer our media clients visibility on upcoming events and coverage through access to our online news agendas.

Analysis of customer feedback and usage data is crucial and allows us to continuously adapt to the changing information society. We strive to foster relationships between our sales teams, development teams and editorial staff to improve existing products and services and to create innovative products adapted to new information uses and technologies. We also have a dedicated team of journalists whose role is to liaise with clients' newsrooms in order to provide a service that is ever more closely geared to their needs and that often even anticipates their needs.

**05**

## **OUR ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS**



## 5. OUR ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS: RESPECTING AND PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

0001

### PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

**We have been applying the principle of continuous improvement in environmental protection for many years, with a focus on two areas:**

#### **Controlling our energy consumption**

At the head office we are heated by the CPCU (Parisian Urban Heating Company) which draws more than half of its energy from biomass, green energy and recovery.

We make the most of projects to modernise the facilities (heating, ventilation, air conditioning and electricity) to save energy.

We are gradually equipping our offices with LED lighting.

We are replacing our IT equipment with new generation equipment that consumes less energy (screens, desktops, servers) and promoting the "single workstation".

We are seeking to optimise the sharing of equipment.

We have contracts with energy suppliers who promote renewable electricity.

As a result of these efforts, energy consumption at headquarters fell by 18% between 2009 and 2019.

#### **Deploying responsible policies**

Our digital transition policy focuses on the dematerialisation of processes and archives and has enabled us to substantially reduce our paper printing.

We have set up a selective sorting system at headquarters in the form of voluntary collection in intermediate sorting bins placed near workspaces. We work with collection companies that guarantee the recycling of all our waste (cardboard, plastic, glass, IT equipment, ink cartridges, lighting, batteries, etc.).

We are promoting more responsible mobility by creating space for employees' bicycles at headquarters and replacing our diesel vehicles with petrol or electric vehicles.

#### **We encourage eco-actions throughout the world**

In a context marked by the acceleration of climate change, we have embarked on a new, more proactive phase with the aim of building a strategic climate plan and thus sustainably reducing our organisation's carbon footprint.

#### **Energy sobriety plan**

Ten measures are being implemented with the aim of reducing our energy consumption by 10% by 2024. An ambassador has been appointed to ensure the implementation of these measures.

## 5. OUR ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS: RESPECTING AND PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

0001

### PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

**Our carbon footprint:** In 2023 we carried out a diagnostic of our carbon emissions from 2022 in order to establish a sustainable environmental policy.

**Creating a network of committed employees:** climate ambassadors have been appointed in France and abroad, to inspire and help implement our environmental policy. In addition, the environmental committee of the works council is responsible for monitoring the environmental consequences of measures on which there has been an information-consultation process between management and the works council.

**Editorial priority given to the future of the planet:** the global news management has made coverage of climate change a top editorial priority and specific training on environmental issues is offered to all our employees.



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