

With negotiations, EVERYBODY WINS!



The Common Front successfully harmonizes its demands!

The four federations in the public and parapublic sectors met on June 12 to wrap up a long process of consultations on demands on central table matters for the upcoming round of collective bargaining. The federations successfully harmonized their demands and agreed on the following components:

- a catch-up raise of 1.75% per year, plus an annual raise of 2% aimed at protecting our purchasing power for the duration of a collective agreement that would expire on December 12, 2012;
- improvements to how our pension plan works;
- universal social legislation on family-work-study balance;
- the creation of a technical management-labour committee to assess the situation of skilled workers and make recommendations to the parties.

Discussions with the other partners in the Common Front – the FTQ and the Secrétariat intersyndical des services publics (SISP) – have enabled us to achieve a comprehensive harmonization of the demands that will be put forward and defended by the Common Front. A crucial stage in the process of preparing to file our demands on October 30 has now been successfully completed!

The CSN intends as well to use this round of bargaining to make real progress on the issue of salary relativity, in the wake of the pay equity process. The CSN federations want a quick start on this work with government and if possible with the other union organizations.

The CSN federations have also agreed to co-ordinate with each other and possibly with other union organizations in sectoral negotiations on certain issues that affect most or all government employees. Topics on which the federations would like to co-ordinate their efforts include the division of arbitration costs, regional disparities, premiums and the employer's share of insurance costs.

A first positive meeting with the government

On June 6, there was a first meeting in Québec City between Conseil du trésor chair Monique Gagnon-Tremblay and the leaders of the Common Front, namely CSN president

Claudette Carbonneau, CSQ president and SISP spokesperson Réjean Parent and FTQ president Michel Arseneault.

It was a satisfactory meeting. This first contact with Québec's Conseil du trésor was aimed primarily at preparing favourable conditions for the start of the upcoming round of collective bargaining in the public and parapublic sectors this fall. Union leaders told Monique Gagnon-Tremblay that they wanted to begin negotiations as quickly as possible so that the new collective agreement is ready to come into force on April 1, 2010 – the day after the decree imposed by Premier Jean Charest in December 2005 expires.

The Common Front is keen to conduct negotiations at a good pace and reach an agreement that provides concrete solutions to the urgent problems affecting our public services. The representatives of the Common Front were therefore insistent with the minister about the importance of providing the leave for union work needed for the bargaining process to begin in June 2009. Ms. Gagnon-Tremblay proved to be very open to working with the Common Front to reach a satisfactory settlement in negotiations quickly, without a decree.

The Common Front succeeded in agreeing with the Conseil du trésor on an approach and a calendar of work that is more favourable to a satisfactory outcome in collective bargaining for the 475,000 workers who are at the heart of our public services.

Nego: everybody wins!

For the negotiations that get under way in October, the theme is be victory. After testing a number of slogans, the one that was unanimously adopted at the last meeting of the CCSPP, held on June 12 last at the CSN, was "With negotiations: everybody wins" The federations opted for a slogan that speaks to the thousands of workers in public services concerning their collective bargaining, but that is also meaningful for the more general population. For example, one of the variations on the slogan can be "Public services: everybody wins!" It's a slogan that lends itself to many variations, and you'll find these being used in our communications materials and in your workplaces.



A colourful, action-packed

At the June 12 meeting, the federations also unanimously adopted a fairly substantial and above all colourful information-action plan for the months of June to December 2009. Here are the main highlights.

Training for local information officers and local action officers

The training sessions will be given as soon as possible between September 21 and October 23, 2009, so that the local information and action officers can get to work quickly.

The round of Common Front activities

The Common Front will conduct a historic round of visits to and activities in the various regions of Québec in October. The elected leaders of the CSN, FTQ and SISF will hold meetings and take part in big public rallies in all parts of Québec to promote the Common Front and raise public awareness of the importance of our public services in each region. The visits will be backed by a vast media campaign. All public-sector employees are cordially invited to participate in the regional meetings and rallies. See your local union for more information.

Building momentum for filing our demands

The regional visits and meetings will culminate in a festive evening rally in Montréal on October 29 to which everyone is invited. On October 30, there will be a demonstration in Québec City to mark the filing of our contract demands. This national demonstration will be echoed in actions carried out the same day in all workplaces to send a clear message to our employers: the countdown to a satisfactory settlement has begun! You will receive more information about these two events shortly, but you are invited to note them on your calendars and begin preparing the mobilization now! Unions are also invited to organize activities in all workplaces highlighting the filing of our demands.

Turn the lense on negotiations

A new initiative in the upcoming round of bargaining is a video contest called [re:public], open to everyone regardless of their video expertise. Participants are invited to create a short video (30 seconds to 5 minutes) on the theme of "Citizenship and public services". The contest is aimed at recognizing the value and importance of public services in our society and the vital role of the hundreds of thousands of people who work to deliver them. More specifically, the contest puts workers centre stage, camera (or cell phone!) in hand, filming scenes of their daily life, celebrating a happy event or denouncing an unacceptable situation.



The contest will be officially launched on September 8, 2009 at the Cinémathèque québécoise, in the presence of the jury members and partners. The videos submitted will be posted on line at www.secteurpublic.info, and an on-line vote will be held in February 2010. The winners will receive their award from the official jury on March 18, 2010, at the Montréal Human Rights Festival. Full details on the contest are available on the web site.

The Zapartistes on our screens

Many of you have already had a taste of the Zapartistes' biting humour. The members of this comedy team are masters in the art of intelligent, left-leaning humour. In 2009-2010, you can be the first to see the Zapartistes on www.secteurpublic.info, thanks to our innovative webTV. Starting in October, join the Zapartistes twice a month for video clips about the latest news in bargaining that will no doubt make you laugh (even if some situations are enough to make you cry). You can share your favourite clips on the web by e-mail or through your social networks. It's a fun way to get people talking about us!

The official launch for the webTV is on Tuesday, September 29, at Club Soda with the Cabaret des négos du secteur public, a cabaret show in which the Zapartistes will present their latest skits and brand-new numbers for CSN public-sector members. Come and invite others to make it a big turnout. You can get your free tickets by contacting Gaétane Gaumont, at 514-598-2177.