



## PRESS RELEASE

01.31.2018

### AFP APPROVES THE 2018 BUDGET AND BOOSTS ITS MEANS FOR FIGHTING FAKE NEWS

AT A MEETING OF THE AFP BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON 31 JANUARY 2018, AGENCY'S CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER EMMANUEL HOOG PRESENTED A DRAFT 2018 BUDGET THAT PURSUES A STRATEGY ENGAGED IN 2017 TO BOOST SALES WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF VIDEO, SPORTS AND CORPORATE NEWS. HE ALSO BRIEFED THE BOARD ON AFP'S EFFORTS TO COMBAT FAKE NEWS. WITH THE TERM OF THE CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER EXPIRING IN APRIL 2018, THE BOARD STARTED ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEXT MANDATE.

The Board of Directors approved AFP's 2018 budget. Sales prospects point to **an increase of almost 2.5% in Agency turnover compared to the 2017 forecasts** (excluding state-supplied resources). This increase consolidates a trend noted in 2017 with the **triggering of real and dynamic** growth following the implementation of a recovery and commercial development plan approved at the end of 2016. Although the international news market is in a deep and continuing crisis, this plan -- aiming for the **net acquisition of 1,000 clients by 2021** -- enabled the Agency in 2017 to increase its sales by 0.5% from 2016, on equivalent terms.

This positive performance was in particular due to **video**, which now accounts for 12% of Agency sales and continues an upward trend it has enjoyed for several years with growth forecast at **18% in 2018**, from 24% in 2017. The AFPTV offering has matured with the establishment in 2017 of **distribution of live videos via the Internet** and the enrichment of customer services, via the "multiflux" platform. This enabled the Agency to win major new customers, such as the BBC.

The good results are also due to **corporate sector** work, including meeting the content requirements of brands and institutions with Agency production and that of the AFP-Services subsidiary, which is showing active progress. Since 2016 the business and institutions market has posted **annual average growth of nearly 7%**, a trend that should be confirmed in 2018.

With sales increasing by almost **4% between 2017 and 2018**, **sports** also represents an important growth source. The AFPTV-Sports offering will be further enriched in 2018 with the installation of a "Sport Marketplace" intended for non-media customers in the sports world.

In addition, with a **2.5M€ increase in its 2017** funding, the State continues to demonstrate its support for AFP in 2018, confirming the vital and strategic nature of the general interest missions assigned to the Agency, with due observance of European rules.

Operating costs will remain **well under control**, up 1% compared with the 2017 budget. Resources are prioritized for strategic development programs and for the **video and the sales force**. AFP is also pursuing **management and reorganizational efforts** for improved performance and efficiency.

The 2018 budget highlights an anticipated operating margin of 12.3M€ and forecasts a break-even result.

AFP also informed the Board of its intention **to revalue its assets in the 2017 financial statements** to be presented in April so that the Agency's balance sheet can convey a more faithful image of its real economic value. In accordance with accounting rules, the Agency's annual balance sheet tracks the depreciation of the value of certain assets, such as fixed assets. But there has not been a revaluation of assets in the past few years. This exercise will see an increase of several tens of millions of euros in the value of the Agency's net assets.



The AFP Board of Directors also confirmed the Agency's **leading role in the struggle against disinformation** and "fake news". Verification of information is at the heart of the Agency's mission and practices. The Global News Director, Michèle Léridon, said: "AFP intends to further strengthen its vigilance and its expertise in this domain, in which rumors and unverified so-called information proliferate, particularly on the social networks." As part of this effort, AFP played a major role in the Crosscheck project, with 37 partners, ahead of the French presidential election. A signatory to the Code of Principles of the International Fact Checking Network (IFCN), which has 43 international media as members, AFP has created "Factuel", a blog dedicated to cross checking information. It is developing data journalism and verification tools, particularly for news videos on social networks. The agency also participated in media education at schools. It is the only French media represented on a committee of experts set up by the European Commission on "fake news and disinformation online", launched by the Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, Mariya Gabriel.

At the end of the meeting, the Board of Directors, gathered under the chairmanship of the eldest member, Jean-Luc Evin, who is also the Agency Vice-President, laid down rules for an open procedure that will lead by April to the Board's election of a Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, as the current holder's term expires. A selection committee will accept applications until March 2.

The Board of Directors meeting also welcomed Ingrid Deltenre, former Director General of the EBU, and Roxanne Varza, Station F director.

*About AFP:*

AFP is a global news agency delivering fast, accurate, in-depth coverage of the events shaping our world from conflicts to politics, economics, sports, entertainment and the latest breakthroughs in health, science and technology. With 2,400 staff spread across almost every country, AFP covers the world 24 hours a day in six languages. AFP delivers the news in video, text, photos, multimedia and graphics to a wide range of customers including newspapers and magazines, radio and TV channels, web sites and portals, mobile operators, corporate clients as well as public institutions.

Join us on:



**Press contact:** Caroline Bulcke - Tel. : +33 (0)1 40 41 81 12 - [caroline.bulcke@afp.com](mailto:caroline.bulcke@afp.com)