

**JOINT STATEMENT ON PENSIONS ISSUED BY FRENCH UNIONS:
CFDT, CFTC, CGC, CGT, FO, FSU and UNSA**

On Monday, 6 January 2003, all seven trade unions, which are members of the Pensions Policy Council, defined the main outlines of a joint approach regarding future negotiations on pension schemes.

They decided to present their joint proposals for firming up pension schemes of private and public sector employees, given demographic developments and the current programmed drop in the relative level of pensions for private sector employees – so that young generations regain have confidence in the continuity of the “pay-as-you earn” pension scheme.

Unions, therefore, assert the need for a reform, that cannot ignore the distribution of wealth that is produced. While taking into account the specific features of the different pensions schemes, they think it is possible for public and private sector employees’ medium- and long-term interests to converge around a number of objectives:

- To aim at a high level of pensions, by defining and guaranteeing a high level of replacement in relation to earnings; improve minimum pensions; guarantee the purchasing power of pensions and their indexation on earnings of the economically active population, which is the keystone of the pay-as-you-earn scheme.
- To guarantee employees’ right to retire on a full pension at 60. Retirement at 60 should remain the collective benchmark, around which individual choice should be introduced or improved.
- To give priority to employment policies, so that young people have access to stable employment and older employees may continue to work if they so wish. This could contribute to putting an end to ageism against young people and those over 50.
- To define specific measures for several categories, in order to:
 - take into account hard, unhealthy, dangerous or restrictive jobs, so as to offer early retirement to employees concerned;
 - validate certain periods of compulsory inactivity, namely, studies, apprenticeship, contract work (whatever its nature) and first-time job seekers;
 - harmonise family benefits and survivors’ pensions;
 - remove inequality suffered by those who have paid into several schemes, successively.
- To obtain full pension rights before 60 for employees, who started working early and have paid 40 years of contributions.
- To reform the compensation system between different pension schemes to make it more transparent and based on greater solidarity, thus leading to removing over-compensation.
- To guarantee sufficient financial resources and ensure regular, identified income into the “pensions reserve fund”, so that it may play its role of smoothing the way from 2020 onwards.

The union view is that, just as new discussions on pensions are about to begin, these basic principles should be taken into account and receive the active support of employees and pensioners.

This is our first strong and united statement.

CFDT, CFTC, CGC, CGT, FO, FSU and UNSA have, therefore, decided to organise a national day of action with demonstrations throughout the country on Saturday 1 February 2003.