



END OF THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS THE CSQ REGRETS NEGOTIATING IN CRISIS CONTEXT

While the collective agreements of the public sector workers came to an end yesterday, March 31, 2020, the François Legault government still hasn't given us a new negotiation framework.

"Only a few days ago, François Legault was ready to negotiate in haste the employment contracts of hundreds of thousands of public sector workers. He imposed an inflexible and non-negotiable framework with the goal of renewing the collective agreements before March 31, 2020. It's deplorable that by the time the deadline came to pass, the government still hasn't given us a new negotiation framework," denounces the CSQ president, Sonia Ethier.



Reminder of the facts

- On **March 13**, the Treasury Board Secretariat (SCT) offered us, as well as the other trade unions, to put the negotiations on hold for a few weeks, because of the coronavirus crisis.
- On **March 15**, Prime Minister François Legault invited the trade unions to accept an accelerated negotiation framework for the health and social services sector with the goal of "ensuring industrial peace with the public sector employees" in the current pandemic context.

At the time, the basis for negotiation offered by the prime minister consisted of renewing the health and social services collective agreements for a three-year period. François Legault offered salary raises corresponding at most to inflation and also promised important temporary measures in the form of premiums for the year 2020-2021 for the workers involved in the COVID-19 fight. The prime minister mentioned that he wanted to settle everything in a few hours.

Following that meeting, numerous discussions happened with the government chief negotiator, who suggested multiple formulas to conduct an accelerated negotiation.

- On **March 21**, we were given the government's official negotiation framework for an accelerated negotiation. The government was then offering to renew the public and parapublic sectors' collective agreements for three years, and the negotiation operation had to be finished on March 31, 2020, at the latest.
- On **March 24 and 25**, we held a General Negotiation Council (GNC) to communicate the highlights of our discussions with the government to our delegates. For the first time in its history, that proceeding was held virtually, bringing together over 250 people.

During that event, we received the mandate to present the SCT with a counter-offer to the government's proposal. That counter-offer stipulated, among other things, that we refused to renew the collective agreements for a three-year period in such a short time.

Instead, we asked for the extension of the collective agreements for a 24-month period, the implementation of guarantees to protect our members purchasing power and a real capacity to quickly improve some working conditions (see Info-Nego number 14 for more details).

- On **March 26**, we had discussions with the SCT, that wanted to submit its proposal in the context of the accelerated negotiation framework. The submitted proposal aimed to conclude a global arrangement (sectoral and intersectoral) allowing to renew the collective agreements for three years. It was, however, an incomplete proposal for which different elements were to be clarified over the next few days.

The SCT proposal was in the end exactly the same as the one submitted December 12, 2019, including the same salary parameters (but for a three-year period, 1.75% for 2020 and 2021, and 1.5% for 2022) and the \$1,000 lump sum for the employees at the maximum of their salary scale. Concrete proposals for the pension plan and parental rights were also presented.

Despite the alleged urgency, the SCT representatives were still unable to clarify the concrete proposals related to government priorities or the temporary measures and premiums for the employees involved in the emergency measures (COVID-19 premiums).

- On **March 27**, we relayed our detailed proposal to the SCT about the temporary non-recurring measures to put in place in conjunction with the COVID-19 epidemic for the employees working in the healthcare and education networks.

- On **March 28**, the SCT only gave us partial precisions on the COVID-19 premiums: those would apply only to the healthcare workers in direct physical contact with virus carriers. The extent of those premiums was still unknown.

The SCT also informed us that discussions related to some issues that are normally addressed by sectoral tables would now have to continue at the central table.

- In the evening of **March 30**, the CSQ negotiation team was summoned to get precisions. The employer's proposal was reasserted.

Only modifications announced: the creation of inter-round committees. Issues of pensions, parental rights and global health were postponed and would have to be dealt with by committees. We were also told about the extension for six months of the premiums for specialized workers, psychologists, some CHSLD personnel categories and those working with challenging behaviour clients.

The SCT spokesperson confirmed that the global offer, while still incomplete, represented a response to our March 25 counter-offer. None of the elements put forward by the CSQ had been kept, and the government insisted on negotiating for three years.

And now...

The collective agreements have come to an end. Discussions with the SCT are planned over the next few days. All of the trade unions continue the talks with the government. No ultimatum on the end of those discussions has been given so far, although our counterparts still maintain that they want to conclude an arrangement in a short time.



MOBILIZATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The COVID-19 crisis shouldn't keep us from mobilizing. But how, while we are all confined? Let's use social media.

Here is what you can do to broadcast the message to as many people as possible and set the record straight:

✓ Use Facebook photo filters and corresponding messages [in French only]

Ça va bien aller : « Vous aussi, dites au premier ministre que nous voulons pouvoir continuer d'affirmer que ça va bien aller! »

Le Québec peut compter sur nous : « Parce que le Québec peut compter sur nous, les travailleuses et travailleurs de la santé, de l'éducation et de l'enseignement supérieur. Avant, pendant et après la crise, nous serons toujours là! »



✓ Share Facebook tiles and corresponding messages [in French only]

Share the messages explaining to the population our position, the essential work and commitment of the healthcare, education and higher education workers.

Ça va bien aller : « La crise qu'on vit montre bien que nos services publics sont essentiels. Nous avons besoin de tout notre monde pour passer au travers. Le Québec peut toujours compter sur nous. Les conventions collectives des secteurs de la santé, de l'éducation et de l'enseignement supérieur arrivent à échéance. Nous voulons pouvoir dire que ça va bien aller. M. Legault, donnez-nous les moyens d'aider davantage la population du Québec. »

Le Québec peut compter sur nous : « Nous, les travailleuses et travailleurs de l'éducation et de la santé, prenons soin de la population, même en temps de crise. Le Québec peut compter sur nous. Les conventions collectives des secteurs de la santé, de l'éducation et de l'enseignement supérieur arrivent à échéance. Les problèmes d'organisation du travail ne sont pas disparus. Ils seront toujours là après la crise. Prenons le temps de bien faire les choses. »

✓ Take to all the comment sections to show your support and set the record straight.

Be it on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, newspapers' websites, CTV, CBC, etc., your support counts. It's important to win over the public opinion so the population knows it can count on us!

Have a good digital mobilization!

To view the French version of this newsletter, visit the [Info-Négo](#) section of our website.

TO STAY ABREAST OF THE NEGOTIATIONS...

Follow the evolution of public and parapublic sector negotiations by visiting the [CSQ website](#) and subscribing to the [newsletter](#).



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