



## Public-sector contract talks

**Front commun will launch an unlimited general strike early in 2024 unless a deal is reached**

**Québec City, December 20, 2023** – A mandate to use the ultimate pressure tactic by launching an unlimited general strike was confirmed once again by delegates to the decision-making bodies of the CSN, CSQ, FTQ and APTS. The delegates stated that if no acceptable deal is achieved for the 420,000 workers they represent, the strike will be rapidly launched at the most appropriate moment early in 2024.

“The message from our decision-making bodies can be summarized in two words: openness and determination,” said CSN first vice-president François Enault, CSQ president Éric Gingras, FTQ president Magali Picard and APTS president Robert Comeau, speaking on behalf of the *Front commun*. “After 11 days of strike action, backed by the historic mobilization of 420,000 workers and Quebecers’ support for our claims, we’re willing to negotiate an agreement that will benefit our members and all Quebecers, but we’re also determined to achieve the conditions that will enable us to maintain pressure for as long as required to reach this goal.”

### A deal is possible, if the political will is there

On the day after the decision-making bodies’ meetings, *Front commun* spokespersons emphasized the fact that a deal can be achieved before the end of the year, but only if the government agrees to guarantee that workers’ purchasing power is protected; to provide a pay increase that will ensure real gains and allow for a general catch-up; and to improve conditions of work and practice so that public systems can deal with a labour shortage that is causing them severe problems. The unions have demonstrated their openness as to the duration of the agreement, among other things, but given the volatility of the economic situation, the government must provide 420,000 workers with a guarantee that they will not see their purchasing power crumble over the coming years.

As the holidays approach, the *Front commun* will continue to negotiate, going into overdrive to reach an agreement as soon as possible that will benefit 420,000 workers as well as all Quebecers. Such an agreement is possible if the government finds solutions to respond to workers’ priorities. Given the current state of our public systems, the status quo is not an option, and attacks are even less appropriate. Mandates to respond to union proposals should be given today at sectoral tables so that an overall agreement can be reached.

“The ball is now in the government’s court,” said the union spokespersons. “Our members are mobilized and determined. We have a clear mandate to launch an unlimited general strike in order to achieve the working conditions that are required to put an end to the labour shortage. We will act according to this mandate, if necessary, at the appropriate moment early in 2024. What we want now, above all, is to negotiate seriously.”

### Some facts and figures to clarify the issues at the bargaining table

- Average salary of Front commun public-sector employees: \$43,916
- Wage lag: 16.6%;
- Overall compensation lag: 7.4%
- Percentage of workers represented by the *Front commun* who are women: 78%

### The Front commun

Together, the CSN, CSQ, FTQ and APTS represent over 420,000 public-sector workers who are employed by the Québec government in schools, health and social services, and higher education.

Source: *Front commun* (CSN, CSQ, FTQ, APTS)

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