

At a glance

◆ Strike alert

More protests are planned for this Saturday October 2 and Tuesday October 12. The CFDT union chose a Saturday so that more workers would be able to attend without losing another day's wages. Big city centres may well be congested. Hospital staff may suspend some non-urgent treatment. The SNCF and other transport workers will provide "minimum service". The press may strike on those days and we can expect strong student participation. *FW*

◆ Oh dear, dopy Hadopi

The long-delayed first warnings from Hadopi (Haute Autorité pour la diffusion des œuvres et la protection des droits sur Internet) are in the post. Internet service providers must by law hand over names and addresses of computer owners detected making illegal downloads of music and films.

Amazingly, Hadopi itself kicked off its existence with a breach of copyright. Its launch in January was marred by the discovery that the new and expensive logo was itself in breach of copyright. The logo used a script especially designed for France Telecom in 2000 which the firm says will never be available for the general public. *FW*

Hadopi

Haute Autorité
pour la diffusion des œuvres
et la protection des droits
sur Internet

Hadopi

Haute Autorité pour la diffusion des œuvres
et la protection des droits sur Internet

left: The first logo that infringed a France Telecom copyright

◆ Joly funny

MEP Eva Joly, the candidate presumptive of the new Europe Écologie party and ex-financial investigating magistrate has been awarded the annual Press Club de France prize for political humour for 2010. The prize goes to the French politician who makes the most *drole* remark of the year deliberately or by mistake.

Joly earned the distinction for her remark in an interview with *Libération* in August: "I know Dominique Strauss-Kahn – I investigated him." The favourite to beat Sarkozy in 2012 will not appreciate this pleasantry which has been repeated everywhere in the media and on the internet. First, because an alliance with Europe Écologie is essential for his Socialist party to win and second because the jury left out the last bit of her comment: "...there was a suspicion of guilt, it was normal to check it out. And I cleared him. It is very ancient history". *FW*

◆ Economic Dati on inflation

Viewers on Canal+ were startled to hear interviewee and former Minister of Justice Rachida Dati protest against rapacious international investors, saying: "When I see some of them asking for profitability at 20.25% with a level of fellation practically nil..."

Congratulations to interviewer Anne-Sophie Lapix for keeping a straight face. No doubt this particularly Freudian slip will be a regular favourite on TV comedy shows well into the future. *FW*

◆ Toyota to manufacture new hybrid vehicle in France

Toyota has announced that it will be building a new hybrid vehicle at its plant in Onnaing, near Valenciennes. The factory is already producing 670 Toyota Yaris cars per day. It will receive an investment of €53 million to gear up for the production of the new model, likely to be a hybrid version of the Yaris, in 2012.

Toyota already provides two hybrids for the European market, built at factories in Japan: the full-size Prius and mid-size Auris Hybrid.

Hybrid technology makes use of a standard petrol engine, combined with an electric motor for use at low speeds, to provide significantly improved fuel consumption. French car manufacturers have so far tended to concentrate on improving the fuel efficiency of existing diesel engines, instead of committing to hybrid technology. *MW*

Flu vaccination conundrum

The flu jab is now available free to 13,000 over-65s and other vulnerable people, including asthmatics and those with weak hearts. They should have received their invitations last week. Your doctor or a nurse can give you the injection.

This year the health mandarins have chosen three vintage *vir*, including the one that had everybody in a state of hysteria last winter, the 'pandemic' swine flu A (H1N1). If you get yourself vaccinated and come into contact with a fourth or fifth virus – tough luck.

The choice by the health authorities is largely dictated by watching the types of flu circulating in

the southern hemisphere while we are basking in the summer sunshine.

The question is whether you run more risk from having the vaccination than not. Consider this Delphic reply from a certain Dr Dupagne, cited in *L'Express*: "We have no solid evidence at the moment to show that having the anti-flu vaccination exposes the patient to serious risk. Neither do we have any solid evidence to show that being vaccinated has never caused any serious medical consequences." He added: "Vaccination halves the risk of the likelihood of being sick in bed and unable to work for several days every 10 or 15 years." *FW*



Financial own goal for French football

The Fédération française du football (FFF) is slowly clearing up the debris after its disastrous participation in the World Cup. Apart from mediocre performances on the field in South Africa, Les Bleus went on strike, refusing to train, and some of them insulted chief coach Raymond Domenech.

The federation's treasurer Bernard Desumer announced this week that the FFF is to repay €4.5 million to the team's sponsors. This was made easier

by the players who did not take the bonuses of €2 million they were legally entitled to. The final result was a loss of €1.36 million in what should have been a bumper year.

Desumer denied feeling worried that all this is being announced just before the big debate about the game's future, the États généraux du football, on October 28 and 29. He told journalists: "It is not a problem for us to show a loss, because our objective is not financial, but to see to the

development of the game. We provide €40 million a year to develop the amateur game. To avoid a loss, all we had to do was to reduce that assistance which was something we did not want to do."

The États généraux, called for by President Sarkozy last June, will concentrate on three themes: the modernisation of the organisation of the sport, its financial competitiveness and the role of football in society. *FW*

Unemployment figures go up again



Raymond Domenech

As ministers watch anxiously to see if the economy is really in recovery mode, the unemployment figures for August come as a mild but not unexpected disappointment.

The month showed an increase of 15,900 in the number of jobseekers after two months of better figures. There is particular concern over the 1.6 million who have been out of work for more than a year – up 26.7% on 2009. Marie-Claire Carrère-Gée, the President of the Conseil d'orientation pour l'emploi (COE) commented: "These jobseekers should be the subject of a national effort. They must urgently receive special help and advice from the Pôle-Emploi. Each business should make a special effort to provide at least one of them with a job or participation in an in-company training scheme."

A noteworthy jobseeker was the sacked French national football coach, who was spotted by a Europe 1 listener in Paris XVème signing on: "I was there for my appointment at the Pôle-Emploi when who should I see walk in but Raymond Domenech to ask to see an adviser and to get his *dole* money," gasped a breathless Nicolas. "It's only natural, all the staff were all over him to take him off into a quiet corner."

The disgraced football coach was earning a basic salary of €12,000 a month and will be able to claim up to the maximum of €5,600 per month net for 36 months.

Meanwhile, he has launched a legal action against the Fédération Française de Football at the *Prud'hommes*, the French employment tribunal, for wrongful dismissal for a serious fault, which means no redundancy pay. *FW*

Consumer groups furious over code of honour to control bank practice

Finance Minister Christine Lagarde has announced the new restrictions on banks and loan organisations. She has followed the President's preference for voluntary undertakings rather than laws, on the grounds that laws are open to smart marketing dodges which run counter to the spirit of the law.

Following the Pauget-Constans report on bank charges in July, she asked the CCSF to make recommendations. The CCSF is a joint committee of bank and consumer association representatives. However, consumers' groups such as the CLVC

and UFC-Que Choisir are outraged. They point out that banks have never kept such promises in the past. Lagarde has replied that she believes in competition but if the banks do not cooperate then legislation will follow.

The banks have now undertaken to make their charges easier to understand and to improve communications with customers, especially those in difficulty. A standard list of 10 different charges will feature prominently in banks' leaflets as from January 1. All banks will use the same terminology presented in the same way. For the

estimated 1% of customers in difficulty, a new lump sum charge will be in place from June 30, 2011 and will be clearly explained in the paperwork. There are to be warnings when the balance of an account nears its limit and the number and amounts of separate charges in the event of difficulty are to be capped. Charges for bounced cheques are to be halved and all other charges will be "moderate".

The CCSF is to monitor bank charges in future, under the new law on the control of finance and banks before the Senate on September 30. Its first annual report in September 2011.



New display
Permanent exhibition
unique in the
South of France

Sud-Ouest Piscines
37 years of experience

ARTECH
and its new-look pool covers

132, av. de La Roque - Z.A. La Nauve - 24100 CREYSSE

Tel: 05 53 74 54 00 - Fax: 05 53 74 54 09

www.sud-ouest-piscines.com