

French Workers Go Out on Strike, Disrupting Public Services, Airports and Schools



Paris, October 11 (RHC)-- French public sector workers went on strike on Tuesday against President Emmanuel Macron's plans to cull jobs and toughen pay conditions, forcing airlines to cancel hundreds of flights and disrupting school activities. Civil servants, teachers and nurses marched through cities across France, from Toulouse in the south to Strasbourg in the east, before the day's biggest rally in Paris.

It is the first time in a decade that all unions representing more than five million public workers have rallied behind a protest call. Protests last month against labor law reform that were led by private sector unions failed to persuade Macron to change policy course, but the French labor movement has traditionally been more muscular in the public sector.

"We want to make our voices heard after months and months of attacks against the public sector and its workers," said Mylene Jacquot, head of the civil servants' federation at the moderate CFDT, France's biggest trade union. Strike notices were lodged in schools, hospitals, airports and government ministries over plans to ax 120,000 jobs, freeze pay and reduce sick leave compensation.

The civil aviation authority said 30 percent of flights at airports nationwide had been canceled but there

was no disruption on the rail network.

Macron has come under fire in recent days from political opponents and the unions for treating workers with contempt after he was recorded describing a group of workers at a struggling factory as “kicking up a bloody mess.”

As crowds gathered near Paris’s Place de la Republique, protesters held aloft a placard with portraits of Macron, his prime minister and finance minister reading: “The ones kicking up the bloody mess.”

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