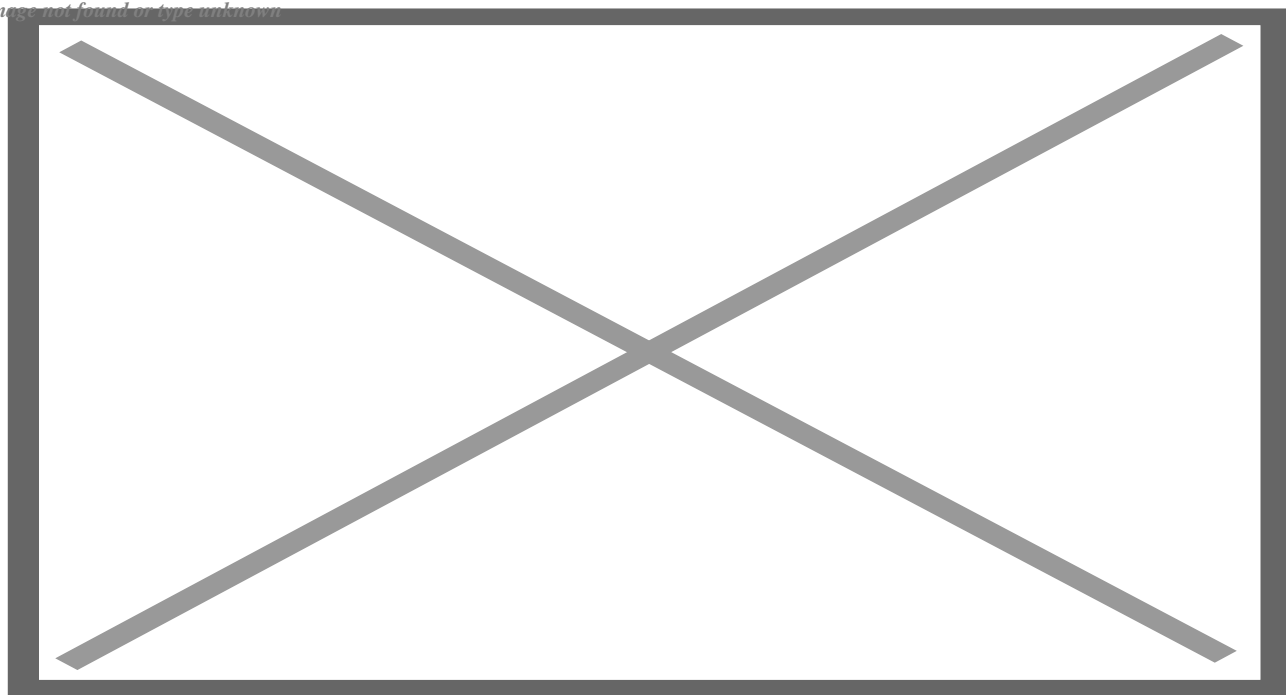


# *French intellectuals, Nobel laureate urge nationwide rallies against Macron's failure to improve economy*

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?French President Emanuel Macron (file photo)?

Paris, October 10 (RHC)-- Scores of French intellectuals have urged the nation to rise in protest against President Emmanuel Macron's failure to improve economic conditions amid rising inflation. The 69 signatories, including France's first Nobel literature prize winner Annie Ernaux, denounced the head of state for failing to close up the yawning gap between the country's rich and poor classes, read a text published by Le Journal du Dimanche weekly paper on Sunday.

They also called on the public to hold rallies next week to pile up pressure on Macron, whom they said had failed to help the poor cope with high prices, while some companies were reaping astronomical profits as a result of soaring inflation.

"Emmanuel Macron is using inflation to widen the wealth gap, to boost capital income at the expense of the rest," said the signatories, who included other writers as well as film directors and university teachers. They added: "It is all a matter of political will."

The president, it noted, should have instead capped soaring energy prices and raised tax on the country's mega-companies. The march, planned for October 16, is organized by the hard-left France Unbowed party "against the high cost of living and climate inaction."

Paris and much of the rest of Europe have blamed Russia for rising costs of living throughout the continent, saying Moscow's February-present military operation in Ukraine has caused grain and energy prices to skyrocket.

Russia denies claims that it has been using the operation to prevent grain exports to the rest of Europe. Back in July, Moscow and Kiev, which jointly account for nearly a third of global wheat supplies, signed a landmark deal through mediation of the United Nations and Turkey to relieve a global food crisis that was triggered by blocked Black Sea grain deliveries.

On the other hand, Western sanctions imposed on Russia over the operation in Ukraine have prevented Moscow from duly servicing the Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines that link Russia and Europe via the Baltic Sea, supply much of the continents natural gas.

In response, Moscow has either choked up or lessened its gas exports to the rest of Europe, saying it would only resume the gas flow after the economic sanctions were lifted.

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