

Thousands protest in Madrid amid Spain's high inflation

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People gather at Plaza Mayor square during a demonstration to demand salary raise for workers, Madrid, Spain, November 3, 2022. (Photo by Reuters)

Madrid, November 4 (RHC)-- Thousands of people have taken to the streets in Spain's capital, Madrid, for higher pay and better working conditions in the first mass protest since the cost-of-living crisis began across Europe. Angry demonstrators waved placards and chanted slogan as they packed the landmark Plaza Mayor square on Thursday.

Some protesters chanted slogans such as, "There is no dignity without wage hikes." Others waved placards that read, "Salary hikes or social strife!" Euro-zone consumer prices climbed at a record pace of 10.7% last month. Inflation in Spain also remains well above normal levels.

Tomas Perez, 52, a nurse and member of the UGT union at the protest rally, said workers were getting poorer every day. "When consumer prices jump 10% and salaries rise by 1% it means workers are losing purchasing power fast. We are getting poorer every day, and the worst part is that there is a minority getting richer at our expense."

Unai Sordo, secretary-general of Spain's largest union CCOO, said the demands to employers were only reasonable. Unions want an increase of 4%-4.5% this year and 2.5%-3% in the following two years, he said. "We know that wages will probably not be able to grow exactly in line with inflation."

European Union governments say the surging inflation, coupled with an economic slowdown, is due in large part to the war in Ukraine and the subsequent disruption of gas deliveries by Russia to Europe. In recent weeks, thousands of protesters have taken to the streets in some of the EU's major capital cities, calling on authorities to lift sanctions against Russia.

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