

Austrian train workers strike for pay, 8,000 connections disrupted

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Travellers stand at the central station in Vienna [Lisa Leutner/Reuters]

Vienna, November 28 (RHC)-- Austrian rail traffic has ground to a halt, impacting about 8,000 connections and some one million passengers, as workers hold a 24-hour strike after another round of pay negotiations fell through. Monday's strike affected transport at all levels, from public transport to regional services and long-distance night trains, as well as rail freight lines.

The main rail workers' union had called for a 400 euro (\$417) monthly pay rise for the sector's 50,000 employees. They were offered 208 euros (\$217) instead, plus a one-off payment of 1,000 euros (\$1,042).

The union called Monday's "warning strike" after a fifth round of negotiations fell through on Sunday.

The head of the nation's rail network said services would be more or less back to normal by the following day. "I don't want to rule out the possibility of irregularities on one train or the other, but in general I expect that we will be back to serving our customers with the usual quality as of Tuesday," OeBB chief Andreas Matthaer told the ORF radio broadcaster.

Wedged between eight countries, including the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, and Switzerland, Austria is an important hub for European rail travel.

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