

# *General strike hits Italy amid pandemic*

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Rome, January 30 (RHC)-- Public and private sector workers staged a nationwide 24-hour general strike to denounce government measures adopted to counter the spread of coronavirus in Italy. The industrial action - called by the Confederation of base unions COBAS - was joined by public servants and self-employed workers in several cities, including Milan, Rome and Naples.

In a note, unions have explained that the ongoing health crisis has exacerbated a structural crisis of the capitalist economy, with a generalized impoverishment and a worsening of living conditions for millions of male and female workers. Also, students and teachers of Italian high schools held rallies in Rome and other cities demanding a prompt return to the classroom after almost 10 months of remote learning.

Students across Italy have been holding demonstrations, open-air lessons and strikes in protest over the adoption of the distance learning policy by the government in response to a second wave of COVID-19 in October. About 10 million students have been affected by coronavirus restrictions in Italy as schools have remained open in most European countries.

As if the COVID crisis and its grave effects on the Italians weren't enough, Italy has also been hit by a political crisis with Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte resigning earlier this week, forcing the country's head of state to start a round of formal consultations with all political groups to establish if a new government majority can be formed.

Meanwhile, talks between Italy's President Sergio Mattarella and party leaders to resolve the crisis concluded over the weekend. With the country on the brink of a crushing socio-economic failure, President Mattarella must now decide on the way forward and ensure Italy has a new government.

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