

# *European Cities Hit by Taxi and Rail Strikes*

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London, June 12 (RHC)-- Traffic in several of Europe's biggest cities has been severely disrupted as thousands of taxi drivers and train workers staged strikes in protest at changes to the travel industry.

Taxi drivers blocked roads and held rallies on Wednesday in the British capital London, the French capital, Paris and the German capital, Berlin. Similar protests were also held in the Portuguese capital, Lisbon, the Spanish capital, Madrid, and the Italian city of Milan.

The taxi drivers are angered by an upstart of an American app-based service booking service, which digitally links passengers and freelance drivers. The taxi industry argues that Uber's operations act like a taxi service without incurring the costs of a license, undercutting traditional players.

In Paris, several hundred taxis blocked major highways leading to the capital before driving a cortege of vehicles in the city for a rally against the company. The protest led to more than 250 kilometers of tailbacks in the Paris area.

The demonstration by Paris taxi drivers coincided with a 24-hour national train strike against a proposed railway reform. The walk-off left thousands of train passengers stranded.

The French train strike takes place just a week before the country's lower house examines the proposed railway reforms to tackle the rail sector's soaring debt. The reforms include plans for more competition

among France's rail services. However, the rail unions argue that the measures will not help contain the debt.

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