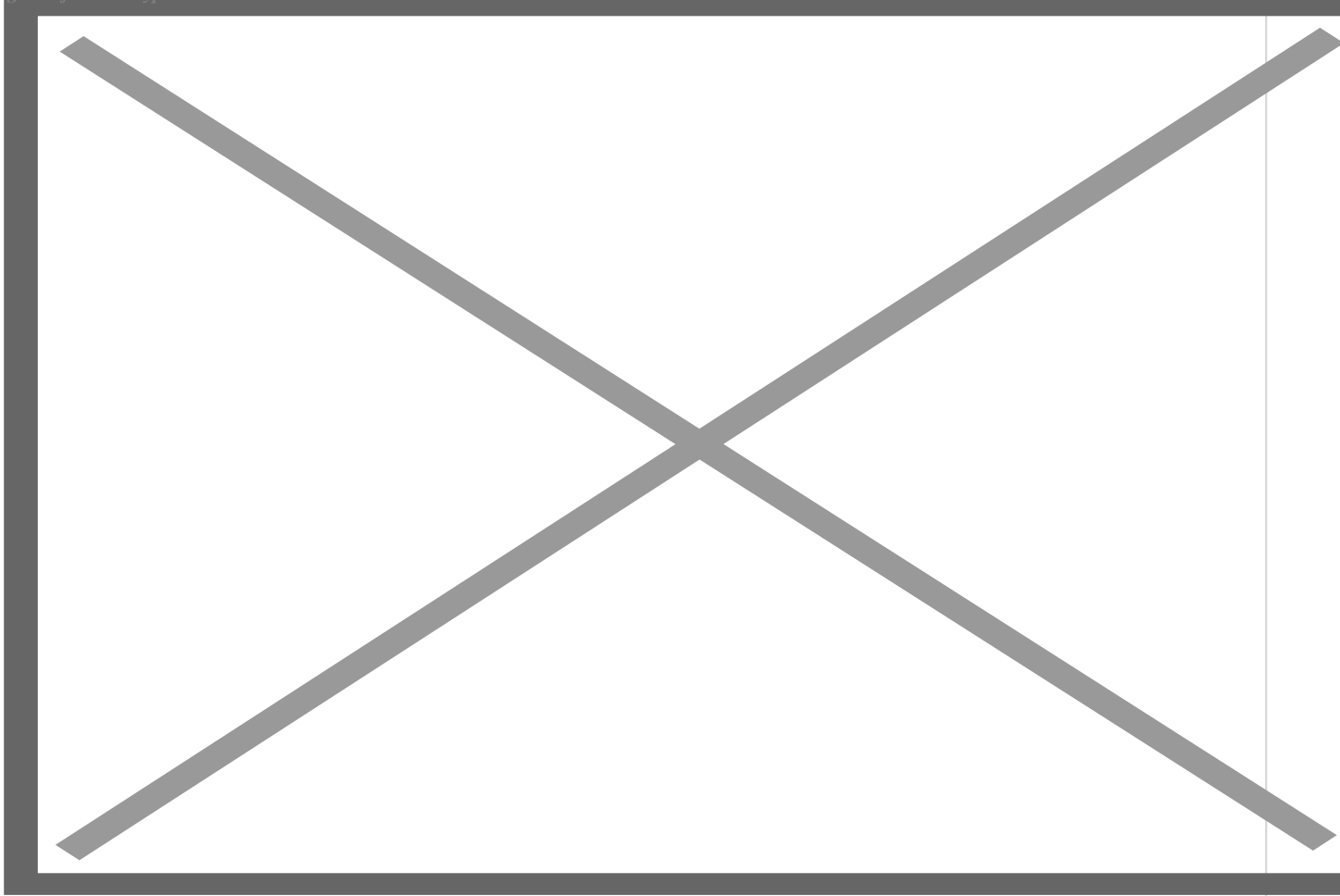


Food prices hit record highs in Spain amid worsening cost of living crisis

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A woman shops at the oil section, with partially empty shelves of sunflower oil, at a Caprabo supermarket in Barcelona, Spain

Madrid, November 16 (RHC)-- Food prices in Spain hit record highs last month in the wake of a month-long strike by truckers earlier this year, which brought the country's supply chains to a halt, official data shows. In October, overall food prices climbed 15.4 percent from a year earlier, according to the National

Statistics Institute.

The cost of fresh vegetables jumped by 25.7 percent on an annual basis, eggs were up 25.5 percent, milk increased 25 percent and the price of grains rose by 22.1 percent. Food prices were up 2.3 percent over the previous month.

The country witnessed a month-long strike by truckers in March and April, which brought Spanish supply chains to a halt, caused food shortages, triggered a bout of inflation and hit quarterly economic growth.

Truck drivers began another open-ended strike on Monday as hundreds marched through the capital Madrid demanding changes to road freight rules and protesting at the cost of living.

The strike came a day after a large rally against the Madrid region's public health policy and 11 days after Spain's main unions held a general demonstration against rising living costs. People in Madrid held a massive rally on Sunday against the government's plans to overhaul regional primary care services. The protesters warned that the government's plans would "destroy" local healthcare.

Soaring inflation and high energy prices have sparked mass protests and strikes across the European Union in recent weeks. Since the start of Russia's military campaign in Ukraine in late February, disruption in supply chains has led to higher fuel and food prices, driving inflation to record levels and causing the cost of living to soar.

The Paris-based International Energy Agency (IEA) said in a report earlier this month that the continent must act immediately to prevent a shortage of natural gas next year.

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