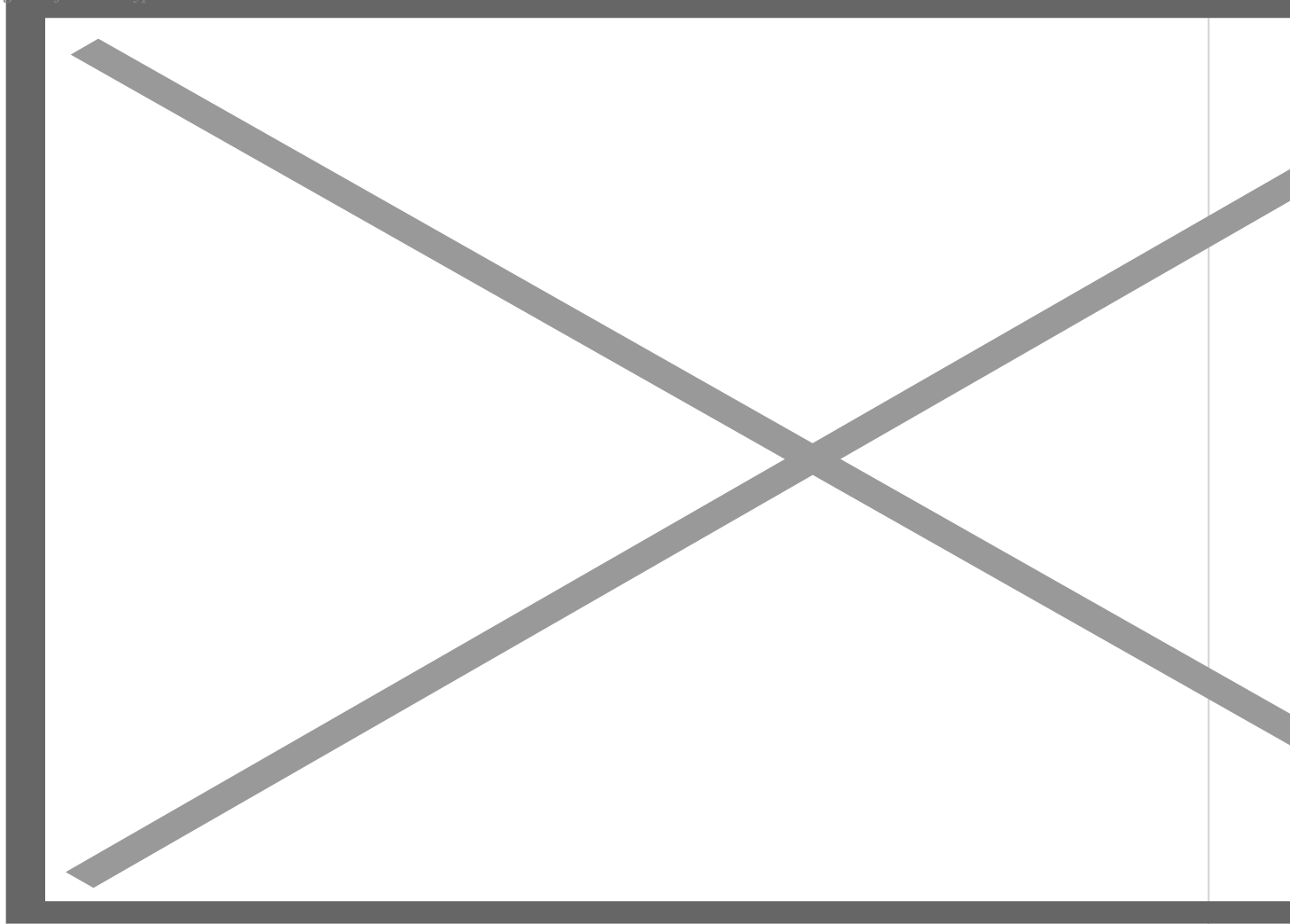


French government narrowly survives no confidence vote after Macron slashes pensions

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The French government narrowly survived a pair of no-confidence votes in Parliament, after President Emmanuel Macron rammed through an unpopular law by executive fiat, raising the retirement age from 62 to 64.

Paris, March 22 (RHC)-- The French government narrowly survived a pair of no-confidence votes in Parliament, after President Emmanuel Macron rammed through an unpopular law by executive fiat, raising the retirement age from 62 to 64.

The failure of the no-confidence votes sparked fresh protests across France, with police firing tear gas at demonstrators in Lille and Bordeaux, and protesters setting piles of uncollected trash on fire in central Paris.

French Member of Parliament Mathilde Panot, speaking just after the vote, said: "As you could have understood, the hundreds of thousands of people who are now gathering together every day in the entire country since last Thursday and since Macron bypassed the assembly will not stop just because this motion of no confidence has barely failed, just lacking nine little votes. Nothing has been fixed in the country, and the country continues to head toward a political crisis that Macron himself started."

Unions and French opposition parties have called a ninth nationwide day of strikes and protests on Thursday.

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