

New Strike Announced by German Train Drivers as Talks Over Pay Rise Derail



Berlin, February 19 (RHC)-- Germany is witnessing yet another round of strikes by train drivers as talks over a long-running wage dispute derail. The German Train Drivers' Union (GDL) announced nationwide strikes on Wednesday after talks with rail operator Deutsche Bahn (DB) failed to bear any results, Deutsche Welle reported.

"Due to a lack of progress (in the negotiations), the GDL's committees have unanimously decided to proceed with industrial action," said GDL head Claus Weselsky. After the rejection of an ultimatum in a months-long wage dispute, the rail operator described the threat of a walkout as "excessive."

DB had three days to accept nine demands by GDL, including a shorter working week and a five-percent pay rise for some staff. "There's no reason for this. The state of negotiations is such that we should be able to reach an agreement," DB head Ulrich Weber said. "Ultimatums won't get us anywhere."

Weber further said that the state-owned rail company had offered another meeting with the union officials on February 26 to submit its own proposal over the standoff. Weselsky, however, argued that the rail company is trying to run out the clock, saying, "All we want is for Deutsche Bahn to commit to this

framework agreement," referring to the nine-point plan.

The new industrial action, whose time and length are yet to be determined, marks the seventh strike in Germany in less than a year.

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