

Germany Braces for Transport Disruption Amid Weeklong Rail Strike



Berlin, May 5 (RHC)-- Commuters, travelers and companies depending on Germany's railway network brace for transportation disruption as drivers with Germany's Deutsche Bahn announced a week-long strike amid failed negotiations on wage.

The German engine drivers' union, GDL, has called on more than 19,000 train drivers, switch-yard engineers and conductors to halt work through May 10th for a total of 127 hours.

Freight train drivers stopped work on Monday afternoon, while passenger train drivers followed on Tuesday. Claus Weselsky, the GDL chief, defended the walkout, telling journalists at a news conference on Monday in Berlin that Deutsche Bahn was "responsible for the escalation" of the strike, because its management had been involved in discussions for months without aiming for a solution.

The GDL's points of contention with Deutsche Bahn are a five-percent pay increase, a reduction in working hours from 39 to 37, as well as the right to independently represent staff such as train stewards.

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