

Air France Pilots Join Nationwide Strike Over Labor Reforms



Paris, June 13 (RHC)-- About a quarter of pilots in Air France have gone on strike, joining a nationwide industrial action by train drivers and garbage collectors over the unpopular labor reforms proposed by the French government.

Air France pilots began their four-day work stoppage on Saturday, demanding that the government scrap the contentious labor reforms and guarantee better working conditions. The action comes at a time that the country is hosting the Euro 2016 soccer tournament, which is expected to attract around two million foreign visitors.

Air France said up to a fifth of its domestic and international flights were canceled over the weekend. Some football fans fear that their experience of the sporting event might be hindered by a string of strikes hitting France.

Air France pilots' action comes as workers at the rail sector have been holding on-off strikes for several months. A work stoppage by garbage collectors has also left rubbish piling up around Paris this week.

Over the past few months, France has been witnessing violent demonstrations and strikes over the Socialist government's changes to the labor law. Paris says the proposed labor reforms focus on maximum working hours, holidays and breaks, and are aimed at curbing the unemployment rate.

Protesters and trade unions, however, say the government wants to make it easier and less costly for employers to lay off workers. The draft labor bill was recently forced through the lower house of parliament, but it must be debated in the Senate for final approval.

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