

Beat: Politics

## **1M PEOPLE DEMONSTRATED ACCORDING TO CGT UNION, IN FRANCE AGAINST PENSION REFORM**

**368.000 ACCORDING TO MIN INTERIOR**

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**USPA NEWS** - The seventh demonstration (since January 19, 2023), against the pension reform, which took place on Saturday March 11, 2023, brought together almost 1 million people in France, according to CGT figures, and 368,000 according to the minister of the Interior. The 1st event was like last January 19. According to an Elabe poll for BFMTV published on Saturday, 63% of French people approve of the mobilization against the reform, and 54% support the use of strikes and the blocking of certain sectors. In Paris, the demonstration of 300,000 people, according to the CGT, and started at the Place de la Republique towards the Place de la Nation, at 2 p.m., and there were 48,000. Some (about thirty) vandals were arrested by the police.

The trade unionists sent a letter to the snuff of the republic Emmanuel Macron, asking him to receive them.

President Macron declined this request to meet with them. The French Public opinion is very angry, with respect to the government, and distances itself even more from parliamentarians, given the very heartbreaking spectacle of the debate that has taken place in the National Assembly for the past two months.

### **THE 13 UNIONS SENT A LETTER TO PRESIDENT MACRON ASKING HIM TO RECEIVE THEM**

The trade unionists addressed a letter to the President of the Republic, asking him to receive them to discuss the withdrawal of the pension reform. "These massive mobilizations, everywhere in France and in all the professional sectors of the private and the public received the constant support of the French population. And yet you and your government remain silent in front of the expression of this powerful social movement", regret the representatives of 13 trade union organizations and student federations. This silence "constitutes a serious democratic problem" and could "inevitably lead to a situation which could become explosive"

### **PRESIDENT MACRON RESPONDED TO THE LETTER FROM THE TRADE UNIONISTS BY DECLINING TO RECEIVE THEM**

The President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron, replied by mail on Friday to the letter from the inter-union last Thursday, which asked to be received to discuss the withdrawal of the pension reform. The Head of State, explains that he will not receive the unions to let the national representation do its job in Parliament, where the pension reform is currently being discussed, "I do not underestimate the dissatisfaction you express to yourselves. -speech like the anxieties expressed by many French people worried about never having a pension", he assures however. Parliamentarians represent the plurality of opinions in our society, probably more than ever (...). As guarantor of the institutions, it is my duty to preserve this parliamentary time which is currently taking place and which is the very essence of our democracy", he wrote in this letter. He believes that the time for consultation with the unions passed: "The government worked for several months with all the social partners and parliamentary groups to draw up a bill that takes these discussions into account. Following these consultations (...) many changes have been made to the initial project", he explains, taking as an example his renunciation of raising the legal age of departure to 65 years.

President Emmanuel Macron nevertheless assures that "the government is, as it has always been, at your disposal to move forward through dialogue, find innovative solutions, without compromising on the need to restore a lasting balance to our pension system because our responsibility is to guarantee future generations their pensions and pass on to them a viable pay-as-you-go pension system".

Indeed, the text of this reform is being studied in the Senate at the moment, before returning to the National Assembly, for a final vote which will take place on March 16, 2023. Knowing that the unions have planned a new national demonstration

The joint committee (constituted) of seven deputies and seven senators, will have until March 26, 2023, at midnight for a final validation of the land reform of the retirement.

### **THE TRADE UNIONISTS ARE ANGRY WITH THE PRESIDENT'S REFUSAL TO RECEIVE THEM**

The inter-union group made up of thirteen (13) unions wrote a letter addressed to the President of the Republic at this stage of the general strike started since March 7, asking him to receive them."In the urgency of this moment, and the gravity of its consequences, the trade union organizations constituting the intersyndicale express, together, the request to meet you", explained the unions. French President Macron, replied by mail on Friday to the letter from the inter-union last Thursday, which asked to be received to discuss the withdrawal of the pension reform.

Trade unionists are very angry with President Macron's response, which they hoped to be received by the Head of State, given the deaf dialogue with the government and the head of this government, Elisabeth Borne, the Prime Minister. Trade unionists believe they are despised, and continue to have this balance of power between civil society and government.

They promise to continue the blockades, namely, the fuel refineries, electricity as well as the strike of the garbage collectors whose garages are piling up in the cities, to articulate some in Paris where the rats come out of their sewers and arrive at the surface and frighten some Parisians. Next week will prove decisive, either to bring appeasement back to a majority of the French people or to revolt it, because the text of the reform has been voted on, in the Senate which is mainly on the right with 195 for verses 112 against votes. It is a start of victory for the government, pending the final vote at the National Assembly next week. This evening, at 5 p.m., the PM Borne organized a meeting with the Minister of Labor, Olivier Dussopt and the government spokesman Olivier Veran, certainly to prepare for this decisive Porch week.

The secretary general of the CFDT, Laurent Berger, regretted on Friday the refusal of the president of the Republic to meet the unions, as they had requested in a solemn letter on Thursday. "Sad disregard for workers and social democracy," he tweeted.

"Macron's refusal to accept the inter-union letter, the fact of accelerating the voting procedure in the Senate, all the same gives the sign of a kind of headlong rush by this government. We think it will rather stir up anger than anything else," commented Murielle Guilbert, co-delegate general of Solidaires, (Source AFP).

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**Editorial program service of General News Agency:**

United Press Association, Inc.  
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168  
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA  
(702) 943.0321 Local  
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile  
[info@unitedpressassociation.org](mailto:info@unitedpressassociation.org)

[info@gna24.com](mailto:info@gna24.com)  
[www.gna24.com](http://www.gna24.com)