Beat: Politics

THE 1,3 M FRENCH PROTESTERS THINK PENSION REFORM IS UNFAIR & USELESS

PM E.BORNE TRAVELLED TO BRUSSELS

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USPA NEWS - Today, Thursday February 16, 2023, is the fourth strike against throughout France, to protest against the pension reform (especially article 7 which provides for the passage of the legal age of roll-up from 62 to 64 years old) and with the deadline for voting in parliament Friday, February 17 at midnight. The main leaders of the Unions, including Laurent Berger (CFDT Union), Philippe Martinez (CGT), JeanLuc Melenchon (Leader of LFI Far Left Party) demonstrated in the town of Albi (near Toulouse) a small town, as a symbol of small territories "forgotten by the openers" according to the demonstrators.
There were 1.3 million (300,000 in Paris) demonstrators at the national level according to the CGT, 440,000 for the Ministry of the Interior, including 37,000 in Paris. The inter-union announces a general strike blocking the whole of France on March 7, 2023, if the government does not withdraw this pension reform. "The mobilizations will be there, on March 7,
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According to an Elabe poll for BFMTV, a general blocking action is supported by 58% of French people, or 6 out of 10 French people. Since the beginning of the strikes (January 19, 2023), the demonstrators have protested in a calm and peaceful manner by exercising their strike right, knowing that the strike days are not stirred. On the other hand, the elected members of the National Assembly (except those of the National Rally of Marine Le Pen party), behave in the hemicycle, in a very unworthy way. the opposition NUPES (Socialist + Ecologists + LFI Far Left) filed eighteen thousand (18,000) amendments by some of the same party, exhibited the head of Olivier Dussopt the Minister of Labor, on a balloon, posing on a photo, in creating this balloon/head with their foot, others send insults into the Hemicycle and even threats and have insulted the same Minister of Labor "Assassin". In 7 months, the methods of the deputies of Nupes, and in particular LFI, divide among the activists present at the demonstration against the pension reform. Public opinion, which is "wise", is indignant at the unfortunate spectacle of parliamentarians who have inappropriate and non-exemplary attitudes .

MEANWHILE PM ELISABETH BRONE TRAVELLED TO BRUSSELS TO DISCUSS ENERGY WITH URSULA VVON DER LYEN
Meanwhile, Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne has traveled to Brussels to meet the President of the European Commission, Ursula Von Der Lyen, to discuss several European issues, but not pension reform. Madame Borne traveled accompanied by Catherine Colonna, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Laurence Boone, the State Secretary for European Affairs.
This visit, which took place in the midst of a national strike in France with very disruptive SNCF and air traffic. The disruptions were

limited in transport, with 4 out of 5 TGVs in circulation and normal traffic in the metro in Paris. Nevertheless, 30% of flights at Paris-Orly have been canceled. And in energy, the hydroelectric power station of Grand'Maison (Isère), the most powerful in the country, was on strike on Wednesday.
During her visit to the European Union, Elisabeth Borne, the PM, meets the President of the European Commission of Ursula von der Leyen, will also meet the commissioners Frans Timmermans in charge of the European green pact, and Valdis Dombrovskis in charge of the economy , to discuss European Energy.

URSULA VON DER LYEN IN TURMOIL OVER SMSGATE
Urusla Von Der Lyen, meanwhile, has been in turmoil since The New York Times is suing the European Commission on the grounds that the institution has not made public the text messages exchanged by its president Ursula von der Leyen and the CEO of the pharmaceutical giant Pfizer throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

The request from the New York Times, the first media outlet to reveal the SMS affair in April 2021, was filed on January 25, but has only been visible since Monday (February 13) on the public register of the Court of Justice of the European Communities. .

It concerns the so-called "SMS" case. As a reminder, suspicions relate to text messages exchanged between Ursula von der Leyen and the CEO of Pfizer Albert Bourla about the negotiation of a contract for 1.8 billion doses of vaccines against COVID-19.

When journalist Alexander Fanta, from the news site netzpolitik.org, asked for access to these messages, the Commission replied that it had not "identified" them and that it could no longer find them.

These statements by the Commission prompted a complaint from EU Ombudsman Emily O'Reilly in January 2022, who called the EU executive to order and urged the Commission to "carry out a more thorough search for relevant messages.". Transparency Commissioner V?ra Jourová replied that the search for text messages between Ms von der Leyen and Mr Bourla "had not yielded any results".

Consequence: in July 2022, the European ombudsman severely criticized the European Commission and considered that the lack of will to find these text messages was a warning signal.

"The processing of this request for access to documents leaves the regrettable impression of a European institution which is not frank on matters of major public interest", she added.

But for Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas, "no one can negotiate the complexity of these contracts, by SMS or alone. It was a very well-structured procedure between the Member States and the Commission," he said on October 26. (Source: euractiv)

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