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March against inflation turns up political heat in France

Марш проти інфляції викликає політичну жару у Франції

Тисячі протестувальників, у тому числі нещодавно коронований французький лауреат Нобелівської премії з літератури, вийшли на вулиці Парижа, демонструючи гнів проти стрімкого зростання цін і посилюючи тиск на уряд президента Франції Емманюеля Макрона. Марш за підвищення зарплати та інші вимоги був організований лівими опонентами Е. Макрона. Страйки на транспорті загрожують пов'язати зі дефіцитом бензину, що псує нерви мільйонам працівників та інших автомобілістів, залежних від транспортних засобів, утворюючи гігантські черги на заправних станціях. Уряд Е. Макрона також обороняється в парламенті, де він втратив більшість на парламентських виборах у червні. Це значно ускладнює його центристському альянсу реалізацію внутрішнього порядку денного проти сильних опонентів, і парламентське обговорення бюджетного плану уряду на наступний рік виявляється особливо складним.

<https://apnews.com/article/inflation-business-france-macron-d815b1397fd5f1d63e98147f1b870c78>



People gather for a march against the high cost of living and climate inaction in Paris, France, Sunday Oct. 16, 2022. Marchers are demanding wage increases, greater taxation of windfall profits and other steps to lessen the bite of rising inflation, heeding the call of left-wing parties and trade unionists hoping to crank up pressure on the government of French President Emmanuel Macron. (AP Photo/Aurelien Morissard)

PARIS (AP) — Thousands of protesters, including France's newly crowned Nobel literature laureate, piled into the streets of Paris on Sunday, in a show of anger against the bite of rising prices and cranking up pressure on the government of President [Emmanuel Macron](#).

The march for wage increases and other demands was organized by left-wing opponents of Macron and lit the fuse on what promises to be an uncomfortable week for his centrist government.

Transport strikes called for Tuesday threaten to dovetail with wage strikes that have already hobbled fuel refineries and depots, sparking [chronic gasoline shortages](#) that are fraying nerves among millions of workers and other motorists dependent on their vehicles, with giant lines forming at gas stations.

Macron's government is also on the defensive in parliament, where it [lost its majority](#) in legislative elections in June. That is making it much harder for his centrist alliance to implement his domestic agenda against strengthened opponents, and parliamentary discussion of the government's budget plan for next year is proving particularly difficult.

In a firebrand speech to the Paris march, far-left leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon charged that Macron is “fried” and that his leadership is plunging France into “chaos.”

He predicted that Macron's ministers would have to ram the budget through parliament's lower house without giving lawmakers a vote — a controversial prospect that provoked loud boos from the crowd.

Organizers claimed that more than 140,000 protesters marched. Paris police said they didn't have an immediate estimate for the size of the dense flag-waving crowd that filled squares and streets. There were a few outbreaks of vandalism on the margins, with garbage bins set on fire and bank machines smashed. Riot police kept order.

Demonstrating at Mélenchon's side was French author Annie Ernaux, who won the Nobel Prize for literature this year. Mélenchon — twice beaten by Macron in presidential elections — declared the protest “an immense success.”

Organizers called it a “march against the high cost of living and climate inaction.” As well as calling for massive investment against the climate crisis, they also demanded emergency measures against high prices, including freezes in the costs of energy, essential goods and rents, and for greater taxation of windfall profits.

Lawmaker Christophe Bex of the left-wing party France Insoumise — or France Unbowed — called the march “a demonstration of strength” to show “that another world is finally possible if we are all together and all united.”

Another marcher, retired railway worker Eric Doire, said: “What we want is for everyone to live decently with the purchasing power they had before.”

John Leicester in Le Pecq and Masha Macpherson in Paris contributed to this report.