

France contends with widespread strikes as unions take to streets against pension reform

French unions and demonstrators have taken to the streets on Thursday in widespread industrial action against the government's projected pension reforms.

President Emmanuel Macron's administration seeks to raise France's official retirement age from 62 — lower than much of Europe and the U.S. — to 64. This is the head of state's second attempt to overhaul the pension system, after scrapping a 2019 proposal to introduce a point-based retirement plan during his first mandate due to public uproar. Macron cemented his pensions focus during this New Year address, stressing, "This will effectively be the year of retirement."

The pension reform is "just and responsible" and must be carried out, Macron said Thursday, according to Reuters.

Early indications suggest the latest bill is proving equally lackluster with the French public, with 68% appearing "hostile" to the measure, according to an IFOP study.

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