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**France**

# **Pensions: “We choose to give priority to human beings and the right to a dignified life”**

- News from around the world -

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**Emmanuel Macron repeated it in his New Year speech: he wants to push through his pension reform. Against all the arguments of common sense, he decides alone. The balance of forces is the only possible language with this government. Strikes and demonstrations will therefore be essential.**

This is why we call on all French people, all professions, all our friends and relatives to go on strike and/or to vigorously support the strike, notably by participating in the strike funds and by gathering en masse in the streets for the demonstrations on January 9 and the following days.

Together, let us demonstrate our commitment to social progress and solidarity in our common life. We want a more humane society, committed to offering each generation a life of dignity. We know that much can be done to improve the present. Many are already retiring too late and often too poor. Especially women. But nothing can be improved if we start by allowing the gains of previous generations to be destroyed.

Emmanuel Macron's points-based retirement system condemns the entire population to retire later, without knowing what their income will be. Everyone will lose out. Women once again more than men.

"Universality", this alibi hammered out by the government to destroy the special schemes, no longer exists in the government's own plan: police, aviation, Paris Opera, transport... The struggle has already resulted in the first - albeit insufficient - victories of employees to have their rights respected.

The government's accounting argument is a red herring. We know how to count. Seven to 17 billion euros per year are apparently needed to maintain the balance of our pay-as-you-go pension system. But if contributions are missing, why kick out the highest earners from funding and entitlements to their pensions? Yet the sum is colossal: 70 billion euros in fifteen years! Why throw such a huge sum into the arms of private insurance companies to ensure the good health of our current system?

This reform goes against the conquests of our country's social history. Yes, there are more pensioners in the country than before. Yes, we have succeeded in lifting a considerable number of pensioners out of poverty compared to the recent past. And we know how to finance it. Because due to the strong increase in productivity, the activity of each employee provides more means to finance more pensions. So it is not a demographic problem. It is a question of the distribution of the wealth produced by work. Raising wages, equalising men's and women's salaries, increasing employment - that would finance far more than pension schemes will ever consume. Ensuring a right to retirement at an age that allows people to take full advantage of it, securing the income of retirees, is a societal choice. When life expectancy is stagnating and healthy life expectancy is falling, it is time to change the priorities of that society.

By supporting the mobilization, by participating in it for the new phase of the struggle on 9, 10 and 11 January, we are choosing to give priority to human beings and the right to a dignified life.

**First signatories** : Simon Abkarian actor and director, Ariane Ascaride actress, Eliane Assassi senator and president of the communist group (CRCE) in the Senate, Clémentine Autain LFI MP of Seine-Saint-Denis, Olivier Besancenot spokesperson for the NPA, Laurent Binet writer, Marie-George Buffet PCF MP, Luc Carvounas PS deputy, Eric Coquerel national secretary and coordinator of the Left Party, Charlélie Couture artist, Jean-Pierre Darroussin actor, Laurence De Cock historian, Vikash Dhorasoo international footballer, Didier Eribon sociologist, Khaled Gaiji

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president of Friends of the Earth France, Susan George honorary president of Attac France, Robert Guédiguian director, producer and scriptwriter, Reda Kateb actor, Mathilde Larrère historian, Yvan Le Bolloc'h actor, Marie-Noëlle Lienemann senator Gauche républicaine et socialiste (GRS), Edouard Louis writer, Elli Medeiros artist, Jean-Luc Mélenchon president of the LFI group at the National Assembly, Gérard Miller psychoanalyst and director, Gérard Mordillat writer and director, Jérôme Rodrigues Yellow Jacket, Fabien Roussel MP for the North and national secretary of the PCF, François Ruffin LFI MP for the Somme, Didier Super singer, Aurélie Trouvé spokesperson for Attac, Cali artist, Tardi author and cartoonist, Shirley and Dino actors.

PS:

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