



## The News

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*by Emma Phillips*

The upcoming holiday weekend is threatening to be more messy than Christmassy on the country's trains. Around two thirds of trains scheduled should be running today as the strike at the SNCF gets underway. Three out of five trains should be running tomorrow and Sunday. The heads of the SNCF met with unions yesterday in a bid to avoid similar chaos over the New Year weekend. New measures have been brought to the table including new professional statuses and the creation of 200 additional positions in 2023. The unions have until noon to decide whether they accept the draft agreement.

The Minister of Health has said that the current situation in France's hospitals is critical. François Braun has expressed particular concern for the closure of several emergency services across the country. He says the next few weeks will prove difficult as health services battle with the triple epidemic of Covid, flu and bronchiolitis.

The New Year holds in store a rise in pay for the country's lowest paid public service workers. January 1 will see their salaries go up by 1.8%, in line with the same increase to France's minimum wage. The announcement came from the government last night.

Thousands of flights have been cancelled in the United States as a severe polar storm has hit the country. Chicago and Denver are particularly badly affected as the storm has brought heavy snowfall, powerful winds and temperatures which are expected to plummet to minus 55 over the weekend. US President Joe Biden has urged extreme vigilance.

Eva Kaili will be staying in prison. A court in Belgium has refused her request as part of the Qatargate case to be released with an electronic bracelet. The Greek MEP is accused of corruption, after allegedly accepting money in exchange for influencing decisions in the European parliament that would go in favour of Qatar.

And finally to football and the Women's Champions League, Paris Saint Germain Feminine lost out on 1<sup>st</sup> place after losing 3-0 last night to Chelsea. The Paris women's team finish 2<sup>nd</sup> in their group as they wait to hear who they will be up against in the quarter finals.

From everyone at Englishwaves, merry Christmas!