



The News

January 5th, 8am ©

by Emma Phillips

The government's consultation with unions on pension reform have come to an end after two days of meetings at the Prime Minister's offices at Matignon. Union heads say the government has failed to convince. The general secretary of the CGT, Philippe Martinez, has complained of the "dogmatic position" of the government. He says there will be more strike action ahead from January to challenge the bill on pensions. Meanwhile, the Minister of Labour, Olivier Dussopt, in an interview with newspaper *Le Parisien*, did not rule out the legal retirement age rising to 64.

Doctors will be taking to the streets today after two weeks of being on strike. France's general practitioners have complained that there has been a lack of real communication and progress with the Minister of Health François Braun. In Paris, today's demonstration will start at 1 p.m. at the place du Panthéon and will proceed to the Ministry of Health. Doctor demands include the doubling of the price of a GP consultation, from 25 to 50 euros.

The price of private health insurance is set to rise by 4.7% this year. French health insurance representatives say this is down to inflation and the deployment of the measure "100% health" which makes essential medical care accessible to everyone in France.

France is continuing its military aid to Ukraine. President Emmanuel Macron has promised his counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky the delivery of light combat tanks to tackle the Russian invasion. This is the first time that Western-designed tanks will be supplied to the Ukraine armed forces.

EU member states decided on a range of measures yesterday to prevent the spread of the latest Covid outbreak from China to Europe. EU states are giving careful consideration to all passengers from China having to show a negative test.

The funeral of former pope Benedict XVI will be taking place today. His body has been lying in the Vatican for the past three days for the public to say their final farewells after his death on Saturday at the age of 95. His funeral will get underway at 9.30am in Saint Peter's square in the Vatican.