



## The News

**January 19<sup>th</sup>, 8am** ©

*by Emma Phillips*

There are large scale strikes planned across France today as many people prepare to resist the government's pension reform. More than 200 protest events are planned across the country. In Paris, the march will be setting off at 2 p.m. from the Place de la République. Public security will be ramped up while the protests are ongoing. 3,500 police and gendarmes will be deployed in Paris alone and 10,000 throughout France according to the Ministry of the Interior

With the strikes in force, today is a "journée noir" on public transport, with a black out on several services. An average of 1 in 10 TER trains will be running today. In the Paris region, metro running times are severely disrupted. It is the same story in many other cities.

A large proportion of the country's teaching staff will be joining the strike today. Unions have announced that 70% of primary school teachers will be striking today.

Yesterday staff at the gas and electricity provider EDF deliberately diminished the electricity production of certain hydraulic dams, in order to protest pension reform. Although the power difference was the equivalent to a nuclear reactor, no power outages were observed.

In the meantime, Emmanuel Macron will be in Spain today, accompanied by a dozen ministers. The President will be signing a treaty of "friendship" and cooperation on migration, defence and energy issues.

Last night in the Assemblée Nationale, the bill on introducing "advanced nurse" positions in medical practices was adopted on its first reading. In certain cases, the bill would allow advanced nurses to issue prescriptions instead of a doctor. The overall aim is to prevent accessing medical care becoming impossible in certain areas of the country. The measure has been criticized by general practitioner unions.

In New Zealand, the Prime Minister is bowing out. Jacinda Ardern announced her resignation last night, claiming that she no longer "had enough in the tank" to do the job. She has served as Prime Minister of New Zealand since 2017 and will continue to do so until February 7<sup>th</sup>.

And finally a word on handball, France are now even closer to the quarter-finals at the World Championships in Poland. Les Bleus won last night to Montenegro 35-24. France is now at the head of group 1. France's next match is tomorrow against Iran.