



## The News

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*by Sarah Heath*

French workers' unions have decided to harden their resolve and extend plans to protest against pension reform. There will be two new days of demonstrations on Saturday and next Wednesday. Yesterday, the sixth day brought together just over 1.2 million demonstrators throughout France according to the Ministry of the Interior, but 3.5 million according to the CGT – an "historic" figure.

Meanwhile, pension reform is also being negotiated at the Senate which is working through the text. Last night, left-wing MPs left discussions after the right-wing majority attempted to speed up the debate. The clause on pushing back retirement age will be voted on this afternoon.

In the rest of the news, there was a tense atmosphere last night at the National Assembly. The Minister of Justice, Eric Dupont Moretti admitted to having made inappropriate gestures towards Republican MP, Olivier Marleix who reminded him of his indictment. Mr Dupont Moretti apologized, saying that his gesture was not directed at him.

There will be a national tribute today to Gisèle Halimi on this International Women's Day. Emmanuel Macron will preside over a ceremony at 4 o'clock at the Paris courthouse in honour of the lawyer and feminist activist, who died in 2020. The occasion will be not however, be attended by one of her sons, Serge Halimi, who has refused to participate in the midst of pension reform, which he considers "penalizing for women".

There were further telephone conversations yesterday between Joe Biden and Emmanuel Macron. The American and French presidents discussed the war in Ukraine, and in particular, the military support to be provided in the face of continued Russian aggression.

And finally, residents in the Nord and Pas-de-Calais have been told to be careful after the two départements have been placed on orange alert by Météo France for snow and ice. Between five and ten centimetres of snow is expected in the coming hours.