

German Train Drivers Begin Week-Long Strike Over Pay



Berlin, May 4 (RHC)-- The union representing German train drivers has called for a nearly week-long strike in a long-running dispute over low wages, unsatisfactory working conditions, and a stronger union representation.

On Sunday, the German Train Drivers' Union (GDL) announced that its members would launch the strike from 3:00 pm local time on Monday (1300 GMT) for freight trains and 2:00 am local time (0000 GMT) Tuesday for passenger trains.

The work stoppage will continue until 9 am local time (0700 GMT) on May 10, the union said, adding that rail operator Deutsche Bahn (DB) is "trampling on GDL members' constitutionally protected rights."

The union is pushing for the right to represent all on-board personnel rather than just train drivers. It is also calling for shorter working hours and a 5-percent pay rise for some union members.

The planned strike will be the longest industrial action by German train drivers. They staged several walkouts last year that affected over 5.5 million people and cost the German economy some 160 million dollars.

GDL's 43-hour walkout last month reportedly led to the cancellation of two thirds of long-distance trains.

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