

Thousands of Students Protest Government Reforms in Spain



Madrid, February 27 (RHC)-- Thousands of students have poured into the streets of the Spanish capital, Madrid, and the city of Barcelona to protest against planned government education reforms. The students staged the rallies on Thursday to show their anger at a new plan of the Education Ministry - known as the 3+2 Decree - that will reduce the duration of undergraduate studies from four years to three years while extending the duration of master's programs from one year to two years.

The demonstrators called for the resignation of Education Minister José Ignacio Wert Ortega, and the cancellation of the government plan. The government argues that the measure will allow families to save up to 168 million dollars a year and help students enter the job market sooner.

Students, however, say the plan will only benefit the rich and will put a financial burden on those willing to pursue postgraduate degrees, devaluing students' bachelor's degrees.

In Madrid, clashes broke out between two rival groups of protesters, who took issue with each other's protest methods, with one of them urging peaceful demonstrations. Similar anti-government rallies were also held in Barcelona, where a group of protesters stormed the Stock Exchange building and pelted it with paint and eggs. The protesters also forced their way into the rectory of the University of Barcelona and launched an occupation of the premises.

Spain has been hit by a wave of anti-austerity demonstrations and strikes since the country's economy fell into recession in 2008. Spaniards are angry at the government's austerity cuts, arguing that such measures have resulted in many economic difficulties over the past years.

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