

Belgian Police Clash with Anti-Austerity Protesters



Brussels, October 8 (RHC)-- Police in Belgium have clashed with protesters in the capital, Brussels, where thousands of people took to the streets to demonstrate against government austerity measures. On Wednesday, police used tear gas and water cannons to break up crowds of protesters in the city.

Belgium's three main unions said about 100,000 people gathered in the capital. The demonstration in the capital was part of a nationwide strike against budget cuts, tax policy changes, and a rise in the retirement age.

The Christian union, ACV, the socialist union, ABVV, and the liberal union, ACLVB, say the administration of Prime Minister Charles Michel is promoting policies which unfairly benefit employers at the expense of workforce. They say the austerity measures are targeting the poor and leaving the rich unaffected.

Workers will have to work until the age of 67, as part of a pension reform package agreed on by the one-year-old government. Reforms also include more control over those who qualify for unemployment benefits, as well as a deal on the indexation of incomes.

The unions are calling on the government to implement alternative policies. A national rail strike has been also planned for October 9th.

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