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Macron's unpopular plan to raise France's retirement age is enacted into law

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By The Associated Press



Bicycles burn during a protest outside the Paris City Hall on Friday, the day France's Constitutional Council approved an unpopular plan to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64.

Michel Euler/AP

PARIS — French President Emmanuel Macron's unpopular plan to raise France's retirement age from 62 to 64 was enacted into law Saturday, the day after the country's constitutional body approved the change.

Macron's signature and publication in the Official Journal of the French Republic allowed the law to enter into force. The authorized changes will start being implemented in September, French government spokesperson Olivier Veran said.

On Friday, the Constitutional Council rejected some parts of the government's pension legislation but approved the higher minimum retirement age, which was central to Macron's plan and the focus of opponents' protests.



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The nine-member council's decision capped months of tumultuous debates in parliament and fervor in the streets. Spontaneous demonstrations took place in Paris and across the country after the ruling.

France's main labor unions, which organized 12 nationwide protests since January in hopes of defeating the plan, have vowed to continue fighting until it is withdrawn. They called for another mass protest on May 1, which is International Workers' Day.

The government argued that requiring people to work two years more before qualifying for a pension was needed to keep the pension system afloat as the population ages; opponents proposed raising taxes on the wealthy or employers instead, and said the change threatened a hard-won social safety net.

Opinion polls show Macron's popularity has plunged to its lowest level in four years. The centrist president, who made raising the retirement age a priority of his second

term, plans to make a televised national address on Monday evening, Macron's office said.



EUROPE

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"The president's remarks are very much awaited" and will both seek to appease tensions in the country and explain decisions that have been made in the past months regarding the pension reform, government spokesperson Veran said.

Macron was first elected in 2017 on a promise to make France's economy more competitive, including by making people work longer.

Since then, his government has made it easier to hire and fire workers, cut business taxes and made it more difficult for the unemployed to claim benefits.

emmanuel macron france



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