Mass Protest Erupts in Lisbon Over Living Costs

Thousands of demonstrators gathered in central Lisbon on Saturday to protest against rising living expenses, stagnant wages, and economic inequality. The large-scale rally, organized by a coalition of Portuguese trade unions and civic groups, marked one of the country's most significant public mobilizations in recent months. Protesters marched from Marquês de Pombal Square to the Assembly of the Republic, carrying placards demanding higher wages, affordable housing, and stronger labor protections.

The protest reflected widespread frustration with the government's response to inflation, housing pressures, and escalating energy prices. Lisbon's housing market remains a central grievance, as property rents and selling prices have surged beyond the reach of many middle- and low-income citizens. Demonstrators accused policymakers of prioritizing foreign investment and tourism-driven property development over domestic affordability.

Union representatives emphasized that wage stagnation, coupled with the increasing cost of essentials, has eroded living standards. Public-sector employees, including teachers, healthcare workers, and transport staff, participated in large numbers, warning of possible strikes if wage negotiations fail to yield results.
Authorities deployed security personnel across the downtown area, ensuring the demonstration proceeded largely peacefully, though brief scuffles were reported outside the parliament building. Temporary road closures and transport disruptions affected traffic in the city centre for several hours.

The protest signals growing discontent with the ruling coalition's economic policies ahead of the 2026 local elections. While the government continues to highlight Portugal's steady post-pandemic recovery, public sentiment indicates deepening social strain caused by persistent inflation and weak wage growth. The Lisbon protest underscores a broader European trend where inflationary pressures, unaffordable housing, and labor unrest are reshaping the political climate across multiple EU states, increasingly drawing attention to questions of economic justice and equitable growth

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