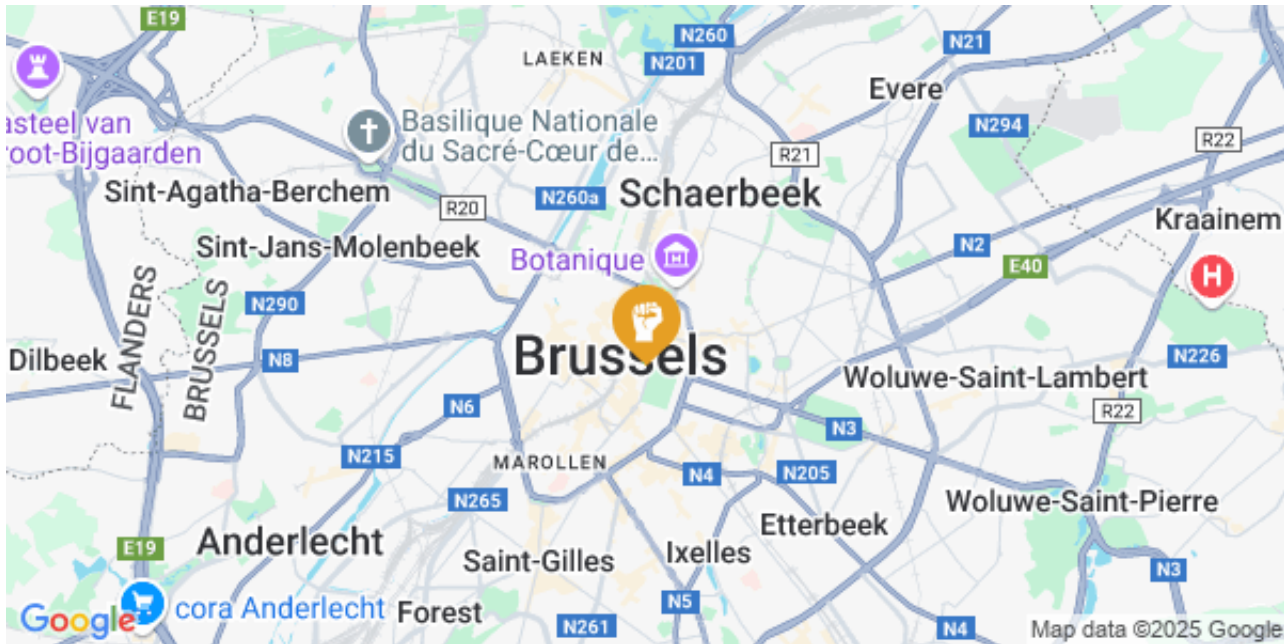


Labor Action



30

MAR

13:52 UTC

Belgium Tactical: BRU, CRL airports cancel all departures, arrivals due to 24-hour nationwide general strike on March 31; reconfirm itineraries

Current Situation

- Reports indicate that two trade unions, Algemeen Belgisch Vakverbond (ABVV) and Algemeen Christelijk Vakverbond (ACV), have called for a 24-hour nationwide general strike in both the public and private sectors on March 31. The strike is being held against the Federal Government's proposed austerity measures, which include budget cuts, pension reforms, and changes to labor market policies.
- The national railway company, Nationale Maatschappij der Belgische Spoorwegen (NMBS), has announced significant disruptions to rail traffic due to the slated strike. Only one in two Intercity (IC) trains, which connect major cities, will operate. Additionally, one in three Local (L) and Suburban (S) trains, serving regional and short-distance routes, will operate. Peak-hour (P) trains, intended for commuter travel during rush hours, will not operate. Furthermore, train services in Luxembourg province and the southern part of Namur will be entirely suspended. Further details are available [here](#) (in Dutch).
- In Brussels, the Maatschappij voor het Intercommuniaal Vervoer te Brussel (MIVB), Brussels' public transport operator, has advised passengers to seek alternative travel options during the strike hours on March 31. Further details are available [here](#).
- De Lijn, the public transport operator in Flanders, announced that services will be significantly disrupted on March 31, with only 50 percent of buses and trams operating. In Antwerp and

Limburg, four out of 10 buses will run, while two out of three buses will operate in East Flanders. In Flemish Brabant and West Flanders, bus services will be reduced by 50 percent. Further details are available [here](#).

- Moreover, Brussels Airport (BRU) announced that all arriving and departing flights will be canceled on March 31 due to the strike. Details are available [here](#).
- Brussels South Charleroi Airport (CRL) also announced the cancellation of all arriving and departing flights due to the strike. According to airport officials, the cancellations are due to staff shortages associated with the slated strike. Further details are available [here](#).
- Additionally, Brussels Airlines, the national carrier, confirmed that nearly all of its 200 scheduled flights for the day will be canceled. Flights are also disrupted on March 30. Details are available [here](#).
- Multiple teachers' unions, including ACOD Onderwijs, Christelijk Onderwijzersverbond (COC), Christelijk Onderwijzersverbond (COV), and Vrij Syndicaat voor het Openbaar Ambt (VSOA) Onderwijs, have also confirmed their participation in the strike. Over 30 percent of schools will be closed, though they will still offer childcare for students.
- Separately, port operations at the ports of Antwerp, Ghent, and Zeebrugge will also be disrupted during the strike hours. Port workers have announced that they will stage one-hour work interruptions per team or shift.

Source: [Brussels Times](#)

Assessments & Forecast

1. Based on the mobilizational capabilities of the organizing unions, the slated labor actions are expected to be widely adhered to.
2. With that, severe disruptions to multiple sectors are expected. Public transport services, including buses, rail, and tram systems, are expected to experience severe delays and disruptions throughout the strike period. Overcrowding on public transport lines is anticipated both before and after the strike. Increased traffic congestion is also likely in major cities as commuters switch to personal vehicles or cab services to bypass public transport disruptions.
3. Moreover, in addition to the cancelation of all flights at BRU and CRL airports on March 31, disruptions to flight services and airport operations are likely on March 30 and in the immediate aftermath of the strike. Such disruptions could include possible short-notice flight delays and cancellations, as well as extended wait times at check-in, security, and baggage claim areas. Moreover, delays are expected to persist after the end of the strike, as the airports deal with a potential backlog of flights.
4. With education workers also participating in the strike, disruptions to education-related services, including at primary and secondary schools, can be expected nationwide. Disruptions to other sectors are likely, as parents may need to stay home to care for children or seek alternative childcare arrangements.
5. Furthermore, the strikes are likely to cause significant disruptions to maritime operations and port services nationwide, with shipping pilots, shipping escorts, and rescue services expected to participate. Transport services on all vessels, including ferries, container ships, cargo ships, cruise ships, and tugboats, are also expected to be impacted.
6. With container terminal services and commercial port services likely to be affected, disruptions to supply chains and logistics are highly likely. Residual disruptions may persist beyond the strike period as operators work to clear backlogs.
7. Moreover, considering heightened anti-government sentiments related to the austerity measures, protests are highly likely to take place in urban centers nationwide on March 31. Such protests could see turnouts from the low hundreds to high thousands, with larger turnouts expected in Brussels and Antwerp. Given elevated sentiments, the potential for unrest remains heightened at any demonstrations against the austerity measures.

Recommendations

1. Those operating or residing in Belgium on March 31 are advised to reconfirm itineraries due to the slated general strike.
2. Maintain heightened vigilance in the vicinity of any anti-government protest on March 31 due to the elevated potential for localized unrest.
3. Allot for severe disruptions to multiple sectors, including travel-related services, throughout the strike duration.