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Spain’s First General Strike in 14 Years: The Housing Numbers Behind the Shutdown

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Spain’s first general strike in 14 years shut factories, ports and transport on November 11, 2026, as unions said four million workers walked out over housing costs 18 days before a snap election. With a 750,000-home shortfall and average rent absorbing 98.7 percent of a young person’s salary, this study measures the stoppage, the housing figures behind it and the vote it now shapes.

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS & STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

Executive Summary MADRID Spain stopped on Wednesday, November 11, in its first general strike in 14 years and the first ever called principally over housing. The country’s two largest unions, UGT and CCOO, backed by tenant associations and smaller unions, shut factories, ports and transport under the slogan "Salaries. Housing. Prices." The walkout came 18 days before a snap general election on November 29, turning a dispute about rents into the defining test of Prime Minister Pedro SÆnchez’s campaign. The numbers explain why housing, not wages alone, filled the streets. Spain is short about 750,000 homes, a gap the Bank of Spain expects to pass one million by 2028, while the average rent of ‹1,176 a month now absorbs 98.7 percent of what a young Spaniard takes home. Unions said four million workers joined the strike; employers put participation near five percent. This study measures the stoppage, the housing figures behind it and the election it now shapes. Methodology This study rests on reporting published on November 11 and 12, 2026, cross-checked across Reuters, CNN, the Associated Press via Arab News, Daily Sabah and Astro Awani, with Spanish official figures from the grid operator Red ElØctrica, airport operator Aena, rail operator Renfe and the Interior Ministry. Housing figures come from the Bank of Spain and the Youth Council of Spain; wage and rent trends use the Funcas think tank’s analysis of Idealista portal data. Every figure is labelled by source, and where the two sides disagree on how many people struck, for example both numbers are shown rather than one presented as settled. Three limits shape what follows. First, Spain publishes no official rent statistics, so rent figures come from property-portal data and survey estimates, not a state series. Second,

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