



## France's Le Pen Accuses Gov't of 'Pickpocketing' French in Attempt to Cut Budget Deficit

### Description

**FRANCE : On Wednesday, French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said the government would implement a social security reform for the unemployed in 2024.**

The reform provides, in particular, for reducing in the payment period for unemployment benefits from 18 months to "not less than 12 months."

Attal's announcement was made after a report showed that the budget deficit in the country stood at 5.5% of GDP in 2023, which is 0.6% more than predicted by the finance ministry.

"The reform of social security for the unemployed is a fraud with one single goal of pickpocketing the French to save government accounts that are in deficit due to the authorities' incompetence," Le Pen wrote on X on Wednesday, adding that the system was working well and there was no need to reform it.

Meanwhile, Attal himself said that the only goal of the reform was to convince the French to return to work.

France's unemployment rate stood at 7.5% of the labor force in the fourth quarter of 2023, growing by 0.4% percentage points in a year, data provided by France's National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies.

Earlier in March, French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said that the government was planning to cut budget expenditures by 20 billion euros, that is by 10 billion euros in 2024 and 2025 each.

To return to a 3% budget deficit — the goal that the finance ministry is planning to achieve by 2027 — it is necessary to save about 50 billion euros between 2025 and 2027, the French Court of Audit said.

**BY SPUTNIK**

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