

Hundreds protest Amazon expansion in France

January 30 2021, by Isabelle Ligner



Several hundred joined the protest at the site of the planned warehouse at Fournes

Hundreds rallied in several French towns on Saturday in protests against Amazon called by anti-capitalist and environmental groups, including at

one site where the US e-commerce giant plans a massive warehouse.

Amazon plans to set up a 38,000-square-metre (400,000-square-foot) facility in the small southern town of Fournes near the Pont du Gard, a Roman aqueduct bridge that is a World Heritage site.

While police said around 800 protesters took part in the protest there, organisers said 1,400 turned up. The protesters planted shrubs in front of huge banners reading "Stop Amazon" and "Not here or anywhere".

They formed a human chain to show the size of the project, floating multi-coloured balloons 18 metres (60 feet) up to indicate the height of the planned five-storey facility.

"It's two years that the citizens of Fournes and its surroundings have fought against the installation of a giant Amazon warehouse," said Raphael Pradeau, spokesman for French citizens' activist group Attac.

"At the start they were a bit alone against everyone, but they have succeeded in slowing the project thanks to legal recourse," he added.

"We want to show that these are not small isolated fights and that we can mobilise hundreds of people who are ready to return to stop the work", said Pradeau.



Demonstrators also gathered in the southern city of Perpignan

'Precarious jobs'

Sarah Latour, 38, came with her two sons aged eight and six, and the family planted a shrub in waste ground, where vines had once grown.

"These plants, these shrubs that we are planting today are a symbol of life that contrasts with the concreting that Amazon practises," she said.

"I came with my children because I don't want this destructive model for them."

About 200 people also rallied outside an Amazon facility in Carquefou, a suburb of the western city of Nantes, organisers said.

"We condemn Amazon for destroying more jobs than they create, and that these are insecure jobs," said Sophie Jallier, a spokeswoman for the organisers in Carquefou.

In the eastern town of Ensisheim, about 100 people gathered to protest a plan to build a giant warehouse on a 15-hectare site of former agricultural land.



Some protesters planted shrubs in the waste ground at the Fournes site

Banners read "Amazon, Fiscal Vampire" and "No mega warehouse."

"Today, we condemn an economic system that is at the end of its rope and which is using the planet," said Isabelle Schaeffer, a member of an environmental group in the Sud Alsace region.

Other protests were held in Augny, in the eastern Moselle region, and in Perpignan in the south.

Amazon practices "[unfair competition](#) with regard to businesses that pay their taxes in France", Eric Barbier of the environmental group Alteratiba said in Perpignan.

In addition, "most workers are on precarious contracts, hired during peak periods such as Black Friday or Christmas and are then thrown out".

Amazon France issued a statement saying it had "become the target of certain organisations that want to make the causes they represent known".

More than 11,000 French entrepreneurs relied on Amazon to develop their activities and create jobs, it added, and the company itself employed 9,300 people on competitive salaries with excellent career opportunities, it added.

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