

French Deliveroo cyclists urge boycott in pay dispute

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Deliveroo cyclists in France have urged clients to shun the food delivery service for a day to protest new pay rules

Cyclists whisking meals for the food courier service Deliveroo in France called on clients to boycott the company Wednesday, after management imposed new pay scales they say will lower their wages.

"Today we want clients to know what's going on. Just for today, we're asking them not to order via Deliveroo or to connect to the site, to support the movement," said Jean-Daniel Zamor, president of a Paris collective of freelance food deliverers.

Zamor said the wheeled couriers would also gather Wednesday night at the Place de la Republique for a protest, which would be followed by efforts to block deliveries from several restaurants.

About 50 riders turned up at the traditional rallying point in Paris to press their case against the new pay scale.

"Before, I used to make about 100 euros a day, now it's 80," one of the couriers said.

Another complaint is that they are not paid while they wait in restaurants to collect the client's order.

Riders have already been carrying out blockages and protests in recent days, after British-based Deliveroo said it would no longer guarantee a minimum of 4.70 euros (\$5.25) per delivery in Paris—a rate that changes for each city.

The company also cut pay for shorter trips while increasing it for longer routes, which many of the riders shun because they are not worth the effort.

"Deliveroo was the platform that paid more or less the best, but now it's aligning itself with its rivals," Zamor said. "It's increasing insecurity for the entire sector."

'Gig economy'

Like other big cities around the world, Paris and other French hubs such as Marseille have seen a proliferation of food delivery bikes and mopeds zipping around the streets in recent years.



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Usually the couriers are freelance workers who have often battled for a guaranteed number of hours' work and other benefits.

Deliveroo France has said the new pay rules will lead to higher earnings for "more than 54 percent of all orders."

On Wednesday, it said it was "allocating even more money to cover couriers' expenses, paying them more for longer deliveries at their own request."

It also alleged that "those calling for a boycott are not Deliveroo workers and do not represent them."

Zamor rejected the claim, saying the new system would cut riders' earnings by 30 to 50 percent.

He said riders planned further action at the weekend, striking in several cities, including Paris.

France is, after Britain, the second-largest market for Deliveroo, operating in 200 cities with 10,000 restaurant partners.

Since its London launch in 2013, Deliveroo has expanded into 500 towns and cities across Europe, Asia, Australia and the Middle East.

But at times it has drawn criticism for its reliance on freelance couriers, with many saying the so-called "gig economy" workers should be considered employees.

Last month, a court in Madrid said Deliveroo wrongly hired more than 500 riders as self-employed contractors, meaning that it owed 1.2 million euros to Spain's social security system.

Deliveroo said it would appeal the ruling.

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