

# Geneva bans Uber in latest setback for US firm

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND: Authorities in Geneva have banned Uber for breaching local taxi laws but the beleaguered US-based company said on Tuesday it was appealing the order and denied any wrongdoing...



The Geneva banning is just the latest in a series of setbacks for Uber.  
(Image: Public Domain)

"This is the first time in Europe that we have had such a problem," Uber spokesman Thomas Meister told AFP, referring to the order on UberX, an app-based network in which drivers use their private vehicles as hired cars.

The commerce department of the canton said that the ridesharing platform is acting like a taxi dispatcher but was not properly registered as a taxi or limousine service.

Uber had until 4 March to do so, said Patrick Baud-Lavigne from the canton's department of security and economy.

"Seeing that they haven't done it... at the end of March we sent them a ban order," he said.

Uber has been operating in Geneva since September offering far cheaper rates than traditional taxis, sparking protests from cabbies who accuse it of unfair competition.

Uber drivers in Geneva face fines of between 100 Swiss francs (€95, \$102) and 20,000 Swiss francs.

Uber argues that it is a technology business and is "not a dispatch centre for taxis."

Uber uses mobile phone apps to put customers in touch with private drivers who then take them where they want to go, at prices lower than those of traditional taxis.

But despite its growing popularity, Uber is facing increasing limits on its activities in EU countries and a barrage of legal challenges spurred on by a furious taxi lobby, who say Uber drivers should be regulated the same way as normal cabs.

The firm has filed complaints with the European Union against France, Germany and Spain, where it is facing legal and other challenges.

In March, a German court issued a nationwide ban on the firm's low cost service uberPOP, while in France an appeals court has delayed a decision to reverse or confirm a similar ban.

In Brussels, a gang of taxi drivers assaulted Uber rivals, angered by a possible compromise between Belgian authorities and the company.

Uber also operates in the Swiss cities of Zurich and Lausanne.

Source: AFP, via I-NET Bridge

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