

Russian Cabbies Protest Uber and GetTaxi

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Russian taxi drivers are demanding that drivers who pick up passengers through ridesharing apps like Uber, Yandex.Taxi and GetTaxi be required to register with the state and receive an official status for transporting passengers, or face criminal liability for organizing illegal transportation services, pro-Kremlin daily Izvestia reported Friday.

“Now the supply from the side of drivers is higher than the demand. This way, the market is flooded with unprofessional taxi drivers who cooperate with online services for extra money,” Roman Kruglov, the chairman of the Interregional Transport Professional Union who made the request told Izvestia.

The union's demand, which was sent to Russia's presidential administration, government and State Duma, is aimed at preventing online services from working with anyone except professional cab drivers. Using other drivers helps the services keep their prices lower than those of official cab companies.

“Illegal taxi drivers are ready to work for very low prices, while legitimate drivers, for whom it is the main source of income, suffer losses,” Kruglov said, adding that the apps position themselves as “information services” and are therefore not responsible for price dumping in the market, Izvestia reported.

This is not the first time that Russian cab drivers have protested against the online services, which have about 5 million registered drivers in Moscow. In February, approximately 4,000 Moscow cab drivers took part in a “silent strike” and didn't accept customers through Uber, Yandex.Taxi and GetTaxi for three days, to raise awareness that the services are keeping prices down.

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