

Employees of Russian E-Retail Giant Wildberries Denounce Pay Shake-Up

By [AFP](#)

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The Wildberries online marketplace is an industry leader in Russia. **Alexei Zotov / TASS**

Russian e-commerce giant Wildberries on Tuesday defended its decision to pay employees of pickup points based on their speed, a policy that triggered discontent among workers.

The company owned by Russia's richest woman Tatyana Bakalchuk is one of the largest online marketplaces in the country and has enjoyed success across the former U.S.S.R.

In a petition last week, Wildberries employees said the new payment system resulted in workers losing wages and announced the start of work-to-rule action, meaning they will do no more than the minimum required by their contract until their demands are met.

The petition, which has gathered around 33,000 signatures so far, said the introduction of a new payment system over the summer resulted in workers losing up to 40,000 rubles (\$550) of their monthly wage.

In a statement on Tuesday, Wildberries denied that its employees had gone on strike.

"All our pickup points were and are operating," a spokeswoman told AFP.

Wildberries confirmed that it had introduced a new pay policy that takes into account the number of items processed by employees of pickup points.

The company added that because the contribution of each employee is now taken into account "more carefully," about 90% of workers in August received a higher income.

The income of the remaining 10% decreased "because their speed of work was lower," Wildberries said.

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On Saturday, the petition was updated to say that management had ordered "additional payments" to employees.

However, it said there was still "discontent" over the new pay rules, which were described as "unachievable."

A Wildberries employee involved in the campaign said on Tuesday that the strike had been put on hold pending a response from management.

The employee, who insisted on anonymity, told AFP that the action had taken place in 30 cities and that 90% of employees were "dissatisfied" with the rules.

Wildberries said it is "in dialogue" with its employees to explain how the new policy can be used to increase their income.

The group added that "as part of the transition period" workers will be receiving extra payments.

In Russia, the online giant has tens of thousands of employees.

Wildberries was founded in 2004 by Bakalchuk, who was then on maternity leave, together with her IT technician husband Vladislav.

This year Forbes named Bakalchuk, 45, the richest woman in Russia with estimated wealth of over \$13 billion.

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