

# Taxis paralyse Brussels to protest against Uber

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Hundreds of taxis brought traffic to a standstill in Brussels on Tuesday to protest proposed government reforms said to favour ride-hailing competitors like Uber.

Police said as many as 650 taxis taking part in the protest let off fireworks and blocked traffic on major roads in and around the Belgian capital, including outside the EU's headquarters.

Belgian authorities urged residents to swap private cars for public transport while Brussels airport suggested air travellers take the train to the terminals.

The Belgian taxi federation (FeBeT) is opposed to a draft reform that would grant taxi licenses directly to drivers rather than to cab firms, as has been the case until now.

Sam Bouchal, the FeBeT's secretary general, said the reform is "a disguise to do away with wage earners," who his union says account for 70 percent of Brussels [taxi](#) drivers.

Taxi licenses are held mainly by "800 small firms which have invested large sums," Bouchal told RTBF radio.

On the other hand, Uber Belgium has defended giving licenses to drivers as a way to "improve mobility in Brussels," plagued by some of Europe's worst traffic jams.

The FeBeT faults Pascal Smet, the socialist mobility minister, for siding with Uber's "ideological" stance and for wanting to reform the business "whatever the cost" and without consultation.

Ride-hailing services have met with similar protests—including recently in Athens and Madrid—and varying levels of resistance from authorities in cities around the world.

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