

Airbnb hits back at Paris ban threat

September 12 2018, by Gregory Walton



Airbnb has responded to a Paris official's proposal to ban the rent-a-room giant in the French capital

Rent-a-room giant Airbnb on Wednesday accused the Paris official seeking to ban the service in the city of electioneering and insisted it enjoys widespread support in the French capital.

The city's housing chief Ian Brossat said last week he would seek to outlaw home rentals in central Paris because services like Airbnb were forcing out residents.

"I know from surveys and polling that we are exceptionally popular in France at large and in Paris. Maybe not as popular as Mbappe, but we're really popular," Chris Lehane, Airbnb's head of policy, told AFP, referring to French striker and PSG star Kylian Mbappe.

"I've never been asked to be a political consultant to him (Brossat). But taking on an issue where 20 percent of the people support you and 80 percent of the people oppose you is not a winning political hand."

Brossat, who is expected to head up the French Communist party list for European Parliament elections next year, said he wanted to stop the City of Lights becoming an "open-air museum".

Paris is Airbnb's single biggest market with 60,000 apartments on offer but the service has, along with its competitors, faced accusations of pushing up rents and diluting communities.

Brossat has a history of criticising Airbnb and recently published a book called "Airbnb, the Uberised City".



Chris Lehane, Airbnb's head of policy, speaking at an African tourism conference organised by Airbnb in Cape Town

The councillor will seek to have his measure included in a new property law due to be debated in the autumn.

Paris already requires homeowners to register with authorities and limits rentals to 120 nights a year.

"If you look over the last two years we've done over 500 government partnerships around the world. We have a regulatory framework that exists in Paris," said Lehane, who spoke at an African tourism conference organised by Airbnb in Cape Town.

The theme of the two-day conference, which drew delegates from across Africa, was tourism and economic empowerment.

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Citation: Airbnb hits back at Paris ban threat (2018, September 12) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-09-airbnb-paris-threat.html>

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