

Apple loses bid to ban protests by French tax campaign group

23 February 2018, by Erwan Lucas



ATTAC has staged protests at Apple outlets in Paris and Aix-en-Provence. Banners held by activists read 'We will stop when Apple pays up' and 'Apple pay your taxes'

A French court on Friday threw out a complaint by Apple demanding a ban on protests at its stores by the tax campaign group Attac.

Attac had staged a sit-in at Apple's flagship Paris store on December 2, blocking access for several hours in protest at what they claimed was "massive tax evasion" by the US tech giant.

Apple said the demonstration put customers' and employees' safety at risk and sought a [court order](#) barring the activists from further protests inside its stores.

Attac had previously held protests at stores in Paris and Aix-en-Provence in November, demanding Apple pay billions of euros which the EU says it owes in back taxes.

But a Paris [court](#) dismissed Apple's claim that there was a risk of "imminent damage" from further protests, so long as these were peaceful and did not block access to the [store](#).

It noted Apple had not reported any damage from the peaceful Paris protest in December.

Attac, which branded the lawsuit an assault on the right to [protest](#), hailed the ruling in its favour.

"The court has recognised the legitimacy of our actions and went as far as to say we behaved in the general interest," said its spokesman Raphael Pradeau.

He added the group has no plans to stop protesting against the company.

Apple did not immediately respond to requests to comment.

In 2016, the EU said Apple owed \$14.5 billion in back taxes after it negotiated highly favourable tax arrangements with the Irish government.

The tech giant also came under fire late last year when leaked financial documents known as the Paradise Papers showed it shifted tens of billion of dollars between tax havens to minimise taxes.

Last month the company announced it would pay \$38 billion (31 billion euros) on profits repatriated from overseas as it boosts investments in the United States.

Apple, which claims to be the largest US taxpayer, is also one of the biggest beneficiaries of a tax-lowering bill passed by the US Congress in December.

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