

Spanish court rules Deliveroo riders are employees

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Platforms that rely on self-employed contractors are facing a number of cases that may force them to recognise the workers as employees entitled to benefits

A Spanish court ruled Thursday that online food delivery group Deliveroo wrongly hired 97 riders as self-employed contractors instead of as regular workers, which costs less for the firm.

Brought by Spain's social security system, the case involves riders in Valencia on Spain's eastern Mediterranean coast and it is one of several being fought by Deliveroo and other gig economy groups like Uber in Spain and various other countries over whether workers should be classified as employees.

Online food platforms have blossomed worldwide, allowing people to order from local restaurants via mobile phones, with dishes delivered to their homes or offices shortly afterwards, often by young bicycle couriers.

Spain's social security system had claimed unpaid social contributions from Deliveroo after work inspectors ruled that the riders in Valencia were in fact employees of the British online food delivery

firm.

A Valencia social affairs court agreed that the riders were in fact [employees](#), arguing that they communicated with Deliveroo via a [mobile app](#) and had to "follow the company's orders".

The court also pointed out that Deliveroo staged training sessions for the riders in June 2016 and later announced new working conditions for them, called them to order, and summoned them for meetings and even fired some of them "using the power of management in the traditional sense," the court added.

In addition, the court said Deliveroo riders in Valencia are part of an organisation headed by Deliveroo and must meet the criteria for food deliveries set by the firm.

Deliveroo argues that it "collaborates with self-employed riders" who can "choose when and where they work, and for how long".

The Valencia court ruling is not final as the company could appeal the ruling. The result of [court](#) cases against Deliveroo over the same issue are still pending in Madrid and the eastern city of Zaragoza.

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