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Italy

# In Italy, the prospects opened up by the national riders' strike

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**On 26 March, thousands of delivery workers took part in a historic one-day strike that marked an important step in the struggle for the recognition of riders' rights.**

The "No Delivery Day" was supported by many platform customers, consumers and collectives who decided to boycott the services in solidarity with the delivery workers. The drivers' protest was also massively supported by the rank-and-file unions (Clap, riders Cobas, Sial Cobas, Si Cobas) and the sectoral unions (Uiltucs, Nidil Cgil). Occupations of the public space, flash mobs and demonstrations were organized in some thirty Italian cities in order to go beyond the "pirate" contract signed last September by the association of platforms Assodelivery and the minority union UGL and to envisage obtaining a national collective contract.

## **Fighting always pays off**

This day immediately resulted in an important first victory that led to the establishment of a contract for Just Eat workers following negotiations that pave the way for the inclusion of the delivery rider in the framework of the national collective labour contract in the logistics, transport and goods delivery sector. The riders of the multinational Just Eat are now recognized as having hourly pay, guaranteed hours, holidays, health insurance, bonuses, grants, reimbursements and trade union rights.

The day after the strike, the Deliverance Milano union celebrated this victory as "an important recognition of the inalienable rights of workers" and a demonstration of the effectiveness of the struggle for social justice waged in recent years. However, it recalls that other negotiations are underway, in particular with Glovo, Deliveroo, Uber Eats and Social Food, on issues related to contractualization and workers' health and safety.

## **New solidarities**

The assessment of the Riders Union Bologna was also very positive, defining 26 March as "a great day of struggle". In the red city, the riders' strike was an opportunity to build new solidarities. Some categories particularly affected by the crisis, such as students, workers in schools, logistics, culture and entertainment, but also self-managed social spaces and mutualisation networks that had supported the drivers' struggle since the beginning, joined the mobilization. For the activists, this success is the demonstration of the power of aggregation and union of the figure of the "rider" but also of the progressive deconstruction of the ideology of the "gig economy" which hides the exploitation of labour behind the false promises of autonomy and self-entrepreneurship.

The Bolognese are announcing new assemblies to organize the mobilization in the long term and to demand the right to a dignified wage and conditions for all workers. In a context marked by the reaffirmation of the bourgeois bloc behind the figure of former ECB chief Mario Draghi, the riders' slogan "Not for us, but for all" could take on an organizational and political form capable of convincing workers' organizations.

## **Towards an international struggle against the uberization of work?**

## In Italy, the prospects opened up by the national riders' strike

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The growing struggles of delivery workers in several countries around the world are leading to rulings and measures that break with the mystification of self-employment and reveal a system of slavery and professional and existential precarisation everywhere. [1] The mobilizations could also discourage investors, as demonstrated by the collapse of the stock market of the British company Deliveroo, from +31% to -26% (the worst IPO in history according to the statement of an analyst to the *Financial Times*). In February, the British Supreme Court declared the right to a subordinate contract for Uber drivers, but so far not for Uber Eats delivery drivers. Other similar cases have occurred in countries such as the Spanish state, the Netherlands, Argentina and the United States, where gig economy companies are facing numerous court convictions. Nothing is won yet, but the prospects that are opening up around the forms of international organization of platform workers could constitute a new lever in the struggle against capitalism.

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[1] TechXplore, 17 March 2021 "[Gig economy: Free ride is over as workers strike back](#)".