

The food delivery industry's efforts against COVID-19

Honorable Executive Vice President,
Dear Mr. Dombrovskis,

The ongoing spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in Europe and around the world has emerged as the greatest crisis in generations. It affects the health of hundreds of thousands and causes incalculable socio-economic damage. This requires a responsible and coordinated response from both the public and private sectors.

Digital food delivery companies are contributing by facilitating stable food supply, supporting physical distancing, keeping restaurants in business, and helping to take the pressure off of supermarkets across Europe during this difficult time.

Governments across the globe have recognized this, and many have treated food delivery as an essential service that needs to remain open throughout COVID-19 physical distancing measures in order to make it easier for people to stay at home.

We are taking the situation and our responsibility to contribute to physical distancing while providing livelihoods for our restaurant and courier partners very seriously.

We have adopted a range of measures across European countries to ensure this, including:

- Collaborating with local health authorities
- Ensuring that all are duly informed and follow the latest recommendations by the WHO and local health authorities
- Providing 24/7 information services
- Providing contact-free delivery
- Providing financial support to couriers who have contracted coronavirus or been put into enforced quarantine
- Working with Governments to assist the national response to the crisis, for example by delivering food to healthcare workers and vulnerable people
- Providing a lifeline to restaurants by facilitating their onboarding and launching initiatives to support businesses during this difficult time.
- Where possible, extending the delivery of goods to other essentials, like groceries

Food delivery also helps to minimize the economic impact on the restaurant sector, which is severely impacted by the crisis. As people stay home, restaurants remain empty. Food delivery is currently the sole source of income for tens of thousands of restaurants and courier partners. A Deloitte report from November 2019¹ has shown that third-party platforms are helping restaurants in London, Madrid, Paris, and Warsaw sell an extra 1.6 million meals a week, increasing revenue by €500 million.

However, lockdowns have deprived restaurants and couriers of the possibility to reliably earn their living. We actively work on finding solutions to create additional income opportunities for them, but this cannot fully compensate for their missed earnings. That is why it is vital that restaurants and self-employed are included in Government economic support measures, which is not the case in many places.

¹ Deloitte, Delivering growth, The impact of third-party platform ordering on restaurants, November 2019.

We applaud the European Commission for mobilizing the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to support workers, including self-employed and we trust in its continued leadership in encouraging also the Member States to extend economic relief protections to all types of work, including independent workers and small businesses, as [Germany](#) and [France](#) have already done.

From our side, we want to ensure that we are doing our part for society through the delivery of anything that serves the societal needs. And this is why, on behalf of the food delivery industry, we would welcome the European Commission's guidance for Member States to:

1. Ensure the ongoing provision of food delivery services
2. Extend the economic support measures to all workers, both employed and self-employed
3. Support SME/Restaurant relief initiatives
4. Consider the temporary suspension on any rules that would prevent platforms from providing the delivery of goods that the population may need or that foresee unnecessary regulatory barriers (like specific licence requirements for the transport of goods).
5. Prioritize access to protective and sanitary equipment for delivery services - once the needs of healthcare workers are met.

In light of continuing and fast-moving discussions on tackling the crisis, we would urge you to consider the above points to ensure the continued availability and safe access to food, protection for self-employed individuals and business during the pandemic.

