

*Odesláno el. poštou dne 1. června 2016*

Dear Mr. Khazzam,

Please allow me, as the Mayor of Prague, to address several questions to you regarding the taxi service run by your company, along with a specific request that I hope will reconcile relations between your company and the City of Prague. The situation around taxi services in Prague has long been dismal, however the current municipal leadership is the first in a long time to attempt to deal with it promptly and effectively to the satisfaction of all concerned.

For this reason we have increased the number and quality of checks on taxi drivers and toughened the punishments for those that are dishonest; negotiations are also currently underway on fair prices for taxis. Prague's leadership naturally also supports the "shared economy", which is certainly a contemporary phenomenon that often has a positive impact in terms of employing people. The current leadership is certainly not one to prevent people from engaging in enterprise. Quite the contrary.

Yet we cannot fail to observe certain negative phenomena brought about by Uber entering the taxi service market. Perhaps the most conspicuous is the fact that your drivers often include those who also drive for standard taxi services, whom you in some cases even rent vehicles – this is no longer a case of "shared economy", but rather standard contractual employment. Such a relationship is, however, subject to the relevant legal regulations. Do your drivers know that by working with your company they become de facto taxi drivers and that your company transfers liability for any potential violation of the law onto them?

Your company also presents itself as innovative – but what exactly is its greatest innovation? The fact that your de facto contractual employees are not subject to the same legal standards as other working citizens of this country? Or is your touted innovation the fact that you refuse to cooperate with the local government and merely want to extort different rules for your business than those that apply to everyone else? Such behaviour is understandably completely unacceptable for us, including your refusal of routine checks.

Your company also likes to present itself in terms of its enormous revenue, despite the fact that it does not want to follow the valid legislation that other companies comply with, including those that are much smaller. Prague is currently attempting to rid itself of fraudulent cab drivers who inflate their fares astronomically, yet your company behaves in a similar manner: in your advertisements you claim that your rides cost CZK 11 per kilometre, but in reality the fare is generally many times higher. When taxi drivers in the city centre do the same, it's a punishable offence, even if the unsuspecting tourist accepts such an illegal price. Can you explain the difference? Do you think your company should be subject to different rules?

The City of Prague strives to foster entrepreneurship and also to monitor compliance with the rules of fair competition, but it unfortunately cannot escape the impression that your company is primarily interested in creating its own rules at the expense of others. Indeed, how do you explain the fact that UBER has been banned in much of Western Europe? Could it be because you don't observe the valid legal standards in these jurisdictions?

I would be very glad if you could address these questions. At the same time I would like to invite you to a discussion leading to UBER taking the same step it did in neighbouring Germany and replacing the UBER POP service with the legal service UBER TAXI. I continue to hope that we have the same interests at heart: fair taxi competition that will not damage the city's reputation and with which all customers will be fully satisfied. This is why Prague's leadership is also currently negotiating with other legal taxi operators who are willing to uphold the legal standards and regulations. We would naturally be happy to include you among them, assuming you act fairly.

Yours sincerely,

Adriana Krnáčová