

24012 Paris ban of 'nuisance' electric scooters comes into effect

France24.com August 28th, 2023

Paris became the first European capital to ban floating electric scooters from its streets, leaving fans desolate but relieving those who loathed their "nuisance" factor. Residents voted by almost 90 percent in an April referendum to ban the scooters -- celebrated as a win for direct democracy by mayor Anne Hidalgo even though turnout was just 7.5 percent.

The ban applies to rental scooters which have been offered by several operators since 2018, although people will still be able to whizz through Paris on privately-owned contraptions.

With complaints of users jostling through pedestrians on pavements or dumping their rides awkwardly at intersections, the city's 15,000 two-wheeled machines from providers Tier, Lime and Dott had turned into "nuisances" for many Parisians, Hidalgo said at the time.

But "so many people were sad" at the decision, said Paris-based American influencer Amanda Rollins, 33, who often gets around by scooter -- one of 400,000 people to do so in 2022, according to figures from the operators.

Paris "is a unique case" said Clement Pette, head of Tier's operations in France. "It's a major turn of the page".

By Friday, the Berlin-based firm had collected 3,000 of its 5,000 scooters, with growing red areas on its application's map showing parking forbidden in more and more of Paris each night as it loaded them into vans. Only a small zone in central Paris will have scooters available until the wheels finally come off.

Like other operators, Tier's freshly-serviced machines will be heading to other cities where it offers scooter service.

Removing floating scooters from Paris won't mean that they disappear from the capital's streets altogether, as many people have made the jump to owning their own -- or more exotic rides like electric monowheels.

"Shared electric scooters can be a gateway to acquiring a personal scooter," said Anne de Bortoli, a researcher at Montreal-based sustainability lab CIRAIG.

She highlighted that the scooters had begun to make an impact on emissions from Parisian transport in recent years, with second-generation models producing carbon emissions of around 60 grammes of CO2 per kilometre.

While the vehicles may have offered an environmental impact, they also took a toll on users, with 10 riders killed in France in July alone according to government data -- the country's heaviest-ever toll.

Announcing the figures earlier this month, road safety chief Florence Guillaume "strongly encouraged" scooter users to wear helmets, which have been made obligatory in some cities like Italy and Danish capital Copenhagen.

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