

Italy threatens to ban Ryanair for virus rule-breaking

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Italy is threatening to ground Ryanair

Italy's national civil aviation authority ENAC threatened on Wednesday to suspend Ryanair's permit to fly in the country over alleged non-compliance with coronavirus safety rules, but the low-cost carrier denied

flouting them.

The authority accused the Irish airline of "repeated violations of the COVID-19 health regulations currently in force and imposed by the Italian government to protect the health of passengers".

"Not only is the obligation to distance passengers not respected, but the conditions for making an exception to that rule are also being ignored", it said in a statement.

If Ryanair continued to break the rules ENAC would "suspend all air transport activities at national airports, requiring the carrier to re-route all passengers already in possession of tickets," it said.

"The claims made in ENAC's press release today are factually incorrect," Ryanair responded.

"Ryanair complies fully with the measures set out by the Italian government and our customers can rest assured that we are doing everything to reduce interaction on both our aircraft and at airports to protect the health of our passengers."

Italy was the first European Union country to be seriously affected by the pandemic, which has officially killed over 35,000, but its contagion rate is currently far below levels seen in other parts of the bloc.

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