

Italy opens probe over Ryanair market dominance

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Ryanair is the leading airline in Italy.

Italy's antitrust watchdog said Wednesday it has opened an investigation into Ryanair over allegations the Irish low-cost airline is abusing its dominant market position.

The Italian Competition Authority accused Ryanair, which is the leading airline in Italy in terms of routes and [flights](#) offered, of trying to "extend its [market](#) power" by offering other tourist services such as hotel and car rental reservations.

Ryanair, which offers national flights along with services to and from Italy, "appears to impede travel agencies from directly acquiring airline tickets" from its website, the regulator said.

Instead, travel agencies have to buy tickets via a reservation platform that subjects them to "considerably less favorable conditions" in terms of prices and services, it said.

"The carrier's conduct would harm [travel agencies](#) and consumers by attempting to extend its market power into the provision of other tourist services," the authority said.

Ryanair issued a typically defiant statement in response. It welcomed the probe, which it said "will make it clear to passengers that they should book directly" on its website, for the best fares and up to date information.

It expressed surprise that there was no investigation into why Ryanair flights and services offered by online travel agents were often far higher than those on its own site.

The watchdog's investigation comes the day after Italy's hard-right government indicated it would withdraw its controversial plan to cap prices of flights to and from its islands.

The cap was approved by Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's right-wing government last month but must still go through parliament.

Ryanair had declared the move illegal and complained to the European Commission, before announcing that in response, it would reduce the number of flights to Sardinia and Sicily.

According to Italy's civil aviation industry, Ryanair carried 45.7 million passengers in 2022, the market leader with some 37 percent of the national and international market.

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