

## *Empowering Consumers and Promoting Fair Competition: Italian Competition Authority Initiates Investigation into Ryanair*

This week, the Italian Competition Authority (AGCM) has taken a significant step towards ensuring fair competition and protecting consumers' interest by launching an investigation into Ryanair's alleged abuse of dominant position. This investigation sheds light on practices that are, regrettably, negatively impacting consumers and both online and offline travel agencies.

Over the years, Ryanair has taken steps to restrict travel agencies from purchasing flight tickets through its website, citing their lack of formal commercial agreements. However, AGCM recognizes that such agreements may not be necessary, as travel agents often act as direct representatives of consumers.

"Consumers should have the freedom to choose their preferred method of booking flights without unnecessary barriers and we hope this investigation will empower travellers in exercising this important right," said Emmanuel Mounier, Secretary General of eu travel tech.

In the same vein, Ryanair recently introduced a facial verification system for travellers booking through third parties, a privacy-invasive practice that has already triggered formal complaints for its potential breach of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). AGCM's investigation underscores the absence of objective security reasons justifying differential treatment between passengers who use travel agencies and those who book directly on Ryanair's website.

"We eagerly anticipate the findings of AGCM's investigation and remain hopeful that these practices by Ryanair will be addressed not only in Italy but also across Europe," continued Emmanuel Mounier.

The systemic nature of restrictions and distortions in the distribution of transport tickets in Europe merits a comprehensive response. The upcoming EU Regulation on Multimodal Digital Mobility Services (MDMS), if properly designed, shall address these challenges. It is our firm belief that consumers who choose to book their air or rail tickets through travel agencies should not face any undue penalties imposed by transport operators, including Ryanair.

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### **About eu travel tech**

eu travel tech represents the interests of travel technology companies. eu travel tech uses its position at the centre of the travel and tourism sector to promote a consumer-driven, innovative and competitive industry that is transparent and sustainable. Our membership spans Global Distribution Systems (GDSs), Online Travel Agencies (OTA), Travel

Management Companies in business travel (TMCs) and metasearch sites. For more information on eu travel tech and our policy priorities, please visit [www.eutaveltech.eu](http://www.eutaveltech.eu)

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