ENAA
European Network Airlines' Association

ENAA statement on Ryanair's compliance with Ownership & Control rules for EU airlines

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The internal market for aviation stands out as one of the European Union's greatest achievements. It promotes the freedom of movement, strengthens connectivity, and safeguards a sovereign EU aviation sector – one that connects people, economies, and cultures. With a single rulebook, it also creates clear rules for European air transport.

A core element of this framework is the Ownership and Control requirements. They state that EU airlines must be majority-owned and effectively controlled by EU nationals. The Air Services Regulation is clear: EU air carriers must meet both conditions to obtain and maintain an operating licence. Every airline licensed by a Member State of the European Union must comply with this rule.

Since Ryanair publicly announced changes to its share ownership rules on 7 March 2025, there are doubts about the airline's compliance with the EU's Ownership and Control requirements. To ensure a level playing field, respect for EU legislation, and to uphold fair competition, the European Network Airlines Association (ENAA) has requested the European Commission and the competent national licensing authorities to verify whether Ryanair is compliant with EU law and, if required, take the appropriate steps to ensure compliance.

According to the Annual Report 2026 of the Ryanair Group, on 31 March 2026, only 30% of Ryanair's issued share capital was held by EU nationals. ENAA has taken note that the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) is reluctant to engage on the matter. The Association has therefore decided to initiate legal proceedings in Ireland against the IAA and to request a judicial review. A single market only works with equal rules followed by all.