



RYANAIR SEEKS NORWEGIAN AIR, TAP LINKS AS AER LINGUS TALKS FAIL

News / Airlines



Ryanair Holdings Plc said plans to link its short-haul operations with long-haul routes are focused on Norwegian Air Shuttle ASA, Portugal's TAP and an unidentified U.S. carrier after talks with Aer Lingus Holdings Plc and Virgin Atlantic Airways failed to reach an agreement.

Negotiations on providing feeder traffic for trans-Atlantic services should produce a deal next summer, Chief Executive Officer Michael O'Leary said Tuesday in London, adding that discussions with IAG SA's Aer Lingus foundered over the issue of which carrier should be responsible for missed connections.

Ryanair has previously eschewed ties to other carriers, suggesting they'd be incompatible with the quick turnaround times central to the low-cost model. The number of daily flights the Dublin-based company now offers to a variety of European cities has made cooperation a more practical proposition.

The Irish carrier is separately pursuing legal action against Google and online travel retailer eDreams in Ireland over the alleged use of copycat websites and the advertising of false fares.

Web Confusion

"Customers don't write to eDreams to complain, they write to us," O'Leary said. People booking through the Spanish travel service may pay between 30 and 100 percent more, and key information including contact details isn't always passed on, he said.

Ryanair won a court case against eDreams in Hamburg, Germany, earlier this year, preventing use of the "Ryanair.edreams.de" website. A survey of 2,000 clients in the U.K., where the airline is also looking at taking action, found that 82 percent mistook the local eDreams site for Ryanair.com, it said.

"This action is clearly just another attempt from Ryanair to stop online travel agencies from offering consumers the best price and choice when it comes to booking flights," eDreams said of the Irish filing in an e-mail. "We disagree strongly with Ryanair's position."

This month's terrorist attacks in France, together with concerns about the possibility of similar incidents in Belgium, haven't significantly hurt Ryanair's bookings. "We've seen a small softening in the week or two post Paris and Brussels, but nothing material," O'Leary said.

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