

Big win for consumers: Euroconsumers' member, Testachats/Testaankoop forces Ryanair to end misleading sales tactics and restore price transparency in Belgian court ruling

In a decisive win for market transparency, the Belgian court has ruled in favor of Testachats/Testaankoop, the Belgian member of the Euroconsumers group, condemning Irish airline Ryanair for a series of unfair and misleading commercial practices. The judgment, handed down on 28th January, marks the culmination of a multi-year legal battle led by Testachats/Testaankoop to protect travelers from predatory digital tactics.

The ruling follows years of interventions by Euroconsumers and Testachats/Testaankoop, including formal complaints, repeated warning letters and public advocacy calling on Ryanair to respect consumer law and ensure transparent pricing.

The court has now confirmed that several of the airline's sales practices misled consumers, distorted competition and breached consumer protection rules throughout the booking process. As a result, the airline must change its practices within three months or face substantial financial penalties.

Ryanair ordered to stop unfair practices

The court found the following practices to be unlawful and ordered Ryanair to cease them:

- **False scarcity and urgency:** misleading messages suggesting flights or seats were “nearly full” in order to pressure consumers into making immediate purchases
- **Fake discounts:** advertising price reductions based on so-called reference prices that were never actually applied
- **Opaque bundled pricing:** pushing bundled offers without first clearly displaying the individual prices of optional services
- **Hidden baggage fees:** failing to transparently show check-in luggage fees for outbound and return flights at the start of the booking process

If Ryanair does not comply with the ruling, it will face penalties of €5,000 per infringement per day, with a maximum total fine of €1 million.

“This ruling is a clear victory for consumers,” said Marco Scialdone, Head of Litigation at Euroconsumers. “It confirms that airlines cannot rely on misleading price tactics, fake discounts or hidden costs to drive sales. Transparency is a legal obligation and a cornerstone of a fair and competitive market.”

The court also ordered Ryanair to pay the legal costs of the proceedings.

Improving the market for all consumers

This judgment sends a strong signal to the airline industry and beyond: competition must be based on clear, honest and comparable prices. Consumers have the right to understand what they are paying for, without being pressured or misled by artificial scarcity or opaque pricing structures.

“This is exactly how we improve the market,” Els Bruggeman, Head of Policy and Enforcement at Euroconsumers added. “By enforcing consumer law, stopping unfair practices and ensuring that companies compete fairly, on price and quality, not on deception.”

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About Euroconsumers

Gathering five national consumer organizations and giving voice to a total of more than 6 million people in Italy, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, and Brazil, Euroconsumers is the world’s leading consumer group in innovative information, personalized services, and defense of consumer rights.