



Ryanair: The “at others’ cost” airline

Ryanair wants to more than double its market share in Germany from currently 9 to 20 percent. As such, the Irish airline is pulling no punches: politics are mocked, municipalities and local politics are played off against each other, and staff is employed at a pittance – increasingly often on German soil.

“Ryanair is certainly not the kind of employer I would wish for.”

Tarek Al-Wazir, Hessen Economic Minister

“Ryanair is a company that makes huge profits at the cost of the municipalities, the taxpayers and its own employees.”

Michael Müller, Governing Mayor of Berlin, SPD

“It is unfair if crews with Irish contracts, with Irish working and payment conditions, fly out of Belgium.”

Frank Bsirske, Chairman of ver.di

“We are angry that Ryanair is failing to comply with the law and is not granting its passengers what they are entitled to.”

Andrew Haines, Head of the British Civil Aviation Authority, CAA

“Ryanair pilots want stable work contracts with direct employment.”

Jon Horne,
Vice President of the European pilot union ECA

“We were blackmailed repeatedly and had become a mere plaything of Ryanair.”

Michael Wolf, Lord Mayor of the City of Altenburg

“I maintain that we do not agree with the conditions under which Ryanair employs its staff.”

Heiko Kasseckert, Member of the Hessen state parliament

Billions in profits and social dumping – two sides of the same coin

Ryanair boasts being an extremely successful airline. And indeed: The company has made profits of approx. EUR five billion since 2011. On the backs of its employees: because Ryanair has always shirked its responsibilities as an employer and operates at the edge of legality. Thus, not only trade unions have criticized that some Ryanair full-time employees in Germany do not even receive the legally binding minimum wage. The establishment of works councils is systematically prevented. CEO Michael O’Leary: “We do not recognize the pilot union, so they are making life difficult for us. They can go to hell.”

The employment conditions of pilots are a particularly sensitive issue. According to media reports, they often work for Ryanair as bogus self-employed, which goes against valid law. Advantages for Ryanair: the contract workers are not entitled to paid leave; the company is not required to continue payment of pilots in the event of sickness, and it can terminate their contracts at will. Not only trade unionists, also flight physicians are highlighting the problems caused by the extreme pressure

Ryanair and the pilots – an ARD report

At the end of March, the German public TV channel ARD broadcast a noteworthy report on the employment situation of pilots at Ryanair.



[Watch video](#)



put on pilots. Because where traditionally employees can call in sick, Ryanair pilots, who are already paid below average, can face existential risk, if the numerous press reports are true. These employment circumstances are uniquely disadvantageous for the pilots.

Not a reliable partner for airports

But Ryanair is not only bad to its employees, it also takes money out of taxpayers' pockets. Thus, the airline regularly plays local authorities who have small loss-making airports against each other. At the launch of Ryanair in 2011 in Cochstedt, near Magdeburg, Michael O'Leary stated: "The formula is simple. When the costs go up, Ryanair will leave the airport."

In other words: When the subsidies stop flowing, Ryanair is gone. As such, the airline pocketed several hundred thousand Euros' worth of marketing grants per connection in Altenburg in Thuringia. The airport even invested in a second terminal for Ryanair. But this became obsolete only nine months after opening. Because when the state and the city no longer wanted to make any further advertising payments, Ryanair left. After that, Ryanair set up only 170 kilometers away in Cochstedt – and then also left this airport. Lübeck, Friedrichshafen, and Klagenfurt in Austria have also had similar experiences.

Ryanair makes the headlines

There are increasing signs that the ruthless business practices of Ryanair have met their limits. In late September, Andrew Haines, Head of the British Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), accused the airline of "permanent deceit" of passengers in the light of the cancellation of many thousands of Ryanair flights. Ryanair had not informed the passengers that they had the right to be rebooked onto other airlines. Shortly before, the European Court has ruled that Ryanair staff are entitled to bring employment-related legal disputes to the courts in which they have their home base. It will thus be far easier in future for employees to demand their rights. It is an open secret that there is growing unrest among the staff. According to press reports, for example, the pilots are in opposition: they are organizing and demanding better working conditions for all Ryanair employees. Public prosecutors in Germany and other EU countries are assuming tax and social security fraud behind the employment of bogus self-employed pilots for many years. Numerous Ryanair bases have already been searched.

Ryanair cultivates the reputation of low-cost airline. In view of their business practices, the name "at others' cost" airline would be more fitting.

State-sponsored expansionism

Ireland's debts total over EUR 200 billion. The debt per capital even clearly exceeds that of Greece. Nevertheless, the government grants Ryanair the lowest possible taxes and even completely waived the previously existing aviation tax despite the 2014 financial crisis. The airline is thereby granted even more leeway to increase profits, expand capacities and to displace further competitors in Europe.

Ryanair: 50 percent on everything – and more!

- 50%** discount on Fraport-in-Frankfurt airport charges
- 50%** lower **corporation tax** in Ireland
- 0%** **aviation tax** in Ireland
- 0%** contributions to the German **pension fund for bogus self-employed pilots**
- 0%** contributions to the German **statutory health insurance fund for bogus self-employed pilots**
- 0%** **continuation of payment** in the event of sickness for bogus self-employed pilots
- 0%** **holiday entitlement** for bogus self-employed pilots
- 0%** **protection from dismissal** for bogus self-employed pilots
- 0%** **payments under collective agreements** for Ryanair employees worldwide
- 0%** **trade union representation** for Ryanair employees worldwide

