

EasyJet withdraws from potential Alitalia consortium rescue

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Any rescue of Italy's flagship carrier will now have to happen without easyjet

British no-frills airline easyJet said Monday it had withdrawn from a possible partnership with Italy's Ferrovie dello Stato (FS) and Delta Air Lines to rescue troubled national carrier Alitalia.

"Following discussions with (FS) and Delta Air Lines about forming a consortium to explore options for the future operations of Alitalia, easyJet has taken the decision to withdraw from the process," it said in a statement to the London Stock Exchange.

Britain's biggest low-cost airline added it "remains committed" to Italy, where it currently carries 18.5 million passengers every year and employs 1,400 pilots and crew.

FS announced last month that it was in discussions with easyJet and American carrier Delta about a potential rescue deal.

Alitalia, which employs more than 11,000 people, has struggled to compete with its no-frills European rivals and has been placed in administration.

EasyJet was said to be mulling with Atlanta-based Delta whether to jointly buy up to 40 percent of the Italian carrier.

German airline Lufthansa had also previously expressed an interest in Alitalia, but in October ruled out any deal that involved the Italian state.

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