

Digital Terrestrial Television Agreement between Agcom and Operators

The technical board convened by the Communications Regulatory Authority in collaboration with the Ministry of Communications has reached the agreement relating configuration and numbering of digital terrestrial networks to be carried out by national and local televisions in the region of Sardinia in view of the analogical television switch-off. The common agreement between Rai and all other television operators, national and local, in the region of Sardinia. “We’re talking about a great goal for the whole country”- comments Agcom’s President Corrado Calabrò - “also because this is the first time that Italy reaches an agreement, shared by all operators, on television frequency planning”.

The Authority has strongly committed itself to achieve this result, after decades of confusions in the use of frequencies, which aligns Italy to the International planning decided in Geneva in 2006 and makes radio electric spectrum use a pluralistic and efficient perspective, as requested by the European Commission. In the round table - according to the principles established by the Authority- all expected requirements have been taken into account: the universal coverage and radio television public service development, the safeguard of broadcasting continuity which is at present irradiated and the investments already made, the guarantee of local televisions’ role in digital television, the entrance in the sector of new network operators, development of mobile television and of new technologies.

Now the transformation path from analogical to digital television, envisaged by law, should be completed within 2012, and has a traced road which will allow to program the necessary investments in order to achieve the goal in certainty conditions and in respect of international agreements.

According to measures taken by Agcom’s decision no. 603/07/CONS and frequency resources available in Sardinia, after Geneva’s Conference of 2006, the agreement establishes that of 21 frequencies in UHF with more than 80% coverage for the whole territory, 14 should be assigned to national broadcastings and 7 to local broadcasting televisions by region, in equal terms, in a transparent and non discriminatory criteria; 2 frequencies in VHF with a territory coverage of over 80% in national broadcasting; 6 frequencies with 50% and 70% territory coverage in national broadcasting; 10 frequencies with sub-regional coverage to local broadcastings, sub-regional and in different provinces.

Within the frequencies that exceed 80% coverage, 2 are destined for the entrance of new coming operators, according to decisions that will be determined by Agcom and by the Ministry; 5 sub-regional frequency coverage will constitute a reserve that could be used in the negotiation phase in national and bilateral agreements with neighbouring countries.

Such assigning takes into consideration the following needs: Assure that Rai has all necessary frequencies for the even territory coverage for the transmission of analogical and digital television, taking also into account the peculiarities of the regionalized network (RaiTre) and the need to develop innovative applications (such as mobile services) as envisaged by the law and by the service contract with Rai; ensure the continuity of current television operators broadcastings both in analogical and digital, safeguarding consumer service and investments carried out and giving the territory coverage guarantees also to national broadcastings that are currently in “deficit” of coverage; ensure local broadcastings the necessary resources to maintain and improve their coverage; give the disposal of resources to new entrants.