[IT] Agreement on a Digital Platform

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On 4 November 1997 an important understanding was signed by Italy's national broadcasters Canal Plus, mediaset, Cecchi Gori Group and RAI, of the one part and the now privatized main telecom operator Telecom Italia, of the other part.

Object of the Memorandum is the creation of a single digital platform for the distribution of TV programmes via cable and satellite.

The text of the Memorandum requires the platform to be opened to all the potential content providers, which in turn will provide programmes in their final version. The service provider, a new company created by all of the above mentioned operators, will take care of the networks and of the relations with the public. The objective of the operation is the establishment of a common standard for the decoder in order to permit the development of an open market. The digital TV broadcasting activity will be carried out by a new company with Telecom 40%, Canal Plus 30%, RAI, Mediaset, Cecchi Gori Group, 10% each. Tele Plus the following shares: will continue to be the only operator of pay-TV via terrestrial analogic broadcasting. The content of the agreement, which, according to the parties, is in conformity with the rules governing the antitrust policy, will have to be analysed by the competent authority (Garante della concorrenza e del mercato). A previous Memorandum signed in August was considered by the Garante not in conformity with antitrust rules since it gave the above mentioned operators also the role of content providers in the single digital platform.

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