[IT] AGCOM grants first authorisations for FAST channels

IRIS 2025-4:1/13

Francesco Di Giorgi
Autorità per le garanzie nelle comunicazioni (AGCOM)

On 19 March 2025, AGCOM (Italy's Communications Authority) issued the first two Italian authorisations for the provision of audiovisual media services via alternative communication networks (excluding digital terrestrial and satellite broadcasting) to Fast Channel Network S.r.l. for the channels "Soap Latino" and "Soap Turco".

These are free, linear television channels classified as FAST (Free Ad-Supported Streaming Television) channels, which operate over the Internet protocol (IP) and are, therefore, exclusively accessible via Internet-connected TVs.

The authorisation process was conducted in accordance with Article 4 of the regulation adopted under Resolution No. 295/23/CONS. This regulation governs the issuance of authorisation titles for the provision of audiovisual and radio media services via satellite, alternative electronic communication networks, and on-demand services. Specifically, it stipulates that FAST channels must obtain authorisation based on each individual programming schedule they offer.

The newly introduced regulation underwent a consultation process and aims to establish a uniform framework for all media service providers, regardless of the transmission medium. However, it still recognises the intrinsic differences between audiovisual content providers and radio broadcasters, thereby incorporating this new category of media services within its regulatory scope.

In particular, under Article 4 of the regulation, FAST channels must be authorised based on their specific programming schedules. Consequently, all audiovisual media service providers operating FAST channels, including those already available on Italian smart TVs, will be required to obtain specific authorisation from AGCOM for each programming schedule they offer.

This regulatory development marks a significant step forward in the free streaming market, aligning FAST channels with other regulated television services and laying the foundation for their structured growth in Italy.

Moreover, this decision underscores the innovative role of FAST channels in audiovisual content consumption and the necessity of integrating them within the broader regulatory framework governing audiovisual media services.

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Delibera 80/25/CONS "Autorizzazione per la fornitura di servizi di media audiovisivi lineari su piattaforma internet alla società Fast Channels Network-FCN S.r.l. (Servizio di media audiovisivo SOAP LATINO)"

https://www.agcom.it/provvedimenti/delibera-80-25-cons

Resolution 80/25/CONS 'Authorisation for the provision of linear audiovisual media services on an Internet platform to the company Fast Channels Network-FCN S.r.l. (SOAP LATINO audiovisual media service)'

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