[IT] Broadcasters Fined for Violation of Antitrust Law

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On 3 December 1998, the three main Italian broadcasters RAI, Mediaset and Cacchi Gori Communications were fined by the national Competition Authority (Autorità Garante della Concorrenza e del Mercato) for violation of Article 2 of the Italian Antitrust Law (Legge n.287 of 1990). The broadcasters were held responsible for the conclusion and application of two agreements aimed at sharing the rights for sport events. The Authority held that by these agreements, signed in May 1996 and in July 1997, the broadcasters intended to avoid competition in the television market by sharing the rights acquired from the Football League to transmit football matches on their respective channels. In the first agreement, RAI and Mediaset agreed to Giro d'Italia; the share the rights concerning certain football matches, Formula One races and the cycling race two broadcasters also agreed not to sell any of those rights to their competitor Cecchi Gori Communications.

In the second agreement the three broadcasters shared the rights for the transmission of matches for the 1997/98 and 1998/99 national football championship. The amount of the fines is relatively high: 1.450.000.000 Italian Lire for RAI, 997.000.000 Lire for Mediaset and 12.500.000 Lire for Cecchi Gori. The three broadcasters announced their intention to challenge the decision of the Antitrust Authority before the Administrative Tribunal in Rome.

Autorità Garante della Concorrenza e del Mercato, Provvedimento n. 6633 RAI-CECCHI GORI Communications e Provvedimento n. 6662, RAI-MEDIASET R.T.I.-MEDIATRADE, dal 3 Dicembre 1998.

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