[IT] Co-regulation to Ensure Pluralism in Local Broadcasting

IRIS 2004-7:1/25

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Since 8 April 2004, political communication on local radio and television has been regulated by a co-regulatory code. The Political Communication Act no. 28/2000 (see IRIS 2000-3: 9) was amended in November 2003 by Act no. 313/2003 in order to entitle local broadcasters' associations to adopt a code on political communication. The Code has been revised according to the opinion of the Communications Authority (AGCOM) and adopted by a ministerial decree.

The concept is the same as the main Act, but softer in its application. Any political body (" soggetto politico ") must be granted equal access to programmes on radio and television broadcasting containing political opinions, such as party political broadcasts, debates, round tables, public discussions, interviews and other programmes where the exposition of political views appears to be relevant. Political parties, coalitions and candidates are entitled to broadcast fee-paying political advertisements (" messaggi autogestiti a pagamento "), the price of which may not exceed 70% of what is normally charged by the broadcaster concerned for commercial advertising slots. There is no time limit for fee-paying messages, while free political advertisements are subject to the ordinary time limit of between one and three minutes established for national broadcasters. News programmes must present any information in an impartial way and it is forbidden to influence the public even indirectly.

AGCOM is charged with ensuring the correct application of the Code and the sanctions are identical to those that are applicable to national broadcasters under the Political Communication Act, ie. of compensatory nature, giving access to the injured party to future air-time of the same nature and duration.

Decree of the Minister of Communications of 8 April 2004, Official Journal of 15 April 2004 no. 88

Law of 6 November 2003, no. 313/2003, published in the Official Journal of 18 November 2003 no. 268

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