[IT] AGCOM launches public consultation on changing the regulation on digital terrestrial radio broadcasting

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On 16 October 2015, with Resolution no. 577/15/CONS, the Autorità per le garanzie nelle comunicazioni (Italian communication regulatory Authority - Agcom) launched a public consultation on changing the regulation concerning digital terrestrial radio broadcasting (DAB).

This is a further amendment of the regulation regarding the establishment of digital terrestrial broadcasting, adopted by Resolution no. 664/09/ CONS, the goal of which was to help stimulate operators, especially in the local industry, to move to DAB in light of subsequent developments, especially in terms of spectrum resources (see IRIS 2001-2/21 and 2001-4/21).

The new regulation provides that, in order to be beneficiaries of the rights of use for broadcasting frequencies, it is necessary to form consortia composed of analog concession assignees. Considering, however, the current stalemate of the sector, especially at local level, due to the high number of analogue local radio stations in operation, the Authority finds it appropriate to amend the current conditions and introduce more accessible minimum thresholds for local operators. As a result, from the previous criterion of 30% of the assignees, the criterion was introduced which provides for a minimum number of subjects (at least 12).

In parallel, the Authority proposes the introduction of the mechanism of competitive selection procedures for the assignment of rights of use to local operators (as it is currently required for national ones) where an imbalance arises between the available transmission capacity and the number of applicants.

The aforementioned comparative selection procedure will be managed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and will be activated only in the event that the number of consortia applying for the rights of use is higher than the number of frequency blocks planned.

Finally, the last proposal under consultation is to introduce for both national and local radio network operators using digital technology, more stringent coverage obligations in order to ensure that the assigned frequencies are used effectively and efficiently. Hence, in order to secure the actual implementation of the networks by the national and local operators, it seems appropriate to provide for an obligation to cover 70% of the population of each point of reference, to be

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reached within four years of the grant of the rights to use frequencies. This provision adds to the coverage obligation of 40% of the population, to be reached by the second year of the granting of the rights to use that provided by the original regulation.

The duration of the public consultation was set at 30 days starting from 27 October 2015.

Delibera n. 577/15/CONS "Consultazione pubblica relativa a modifiche e integrazioni al regolamento recante la nuova disciplina della fase di avvio delle trasmissioni radiofoniche terrestri in tecnica digitale, di cui alla delibera n. 664/09/CONS, come modificata dalla delibera n. 567/13/CONS

http://www.agcom.it/documentazione/documento?p_p_auth=fLw7zRht&p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_kidx9GUnIodu&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_col_id=column-1&p_p_col_count=1&_101_INSTANCE_kidx9GUnIodu_struts_action=%2Fasset_publisher%2Fview_content&_101_INS

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