[IT] Further developments concerning broadcasting rights of football games

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Roberto Mastroianni
RTS Radio Télévision Suisse, Geneva

Another change in the assignment broadcasting rights of football games in Italy. As the readers of IRIS will remember (see IRIS 1996-4:13; IRIS 1996-5:14), the rights had been assigned in February 1996 for the first time to the Cecchi Gori Group, which controls two national channels (Telemontecarlo and Telemontecarlo 2) but reaches a very limited audience (about 5%). In the following April the Italian Football League revoked the three years assignment because the winner of the bid did not comply with the conditions set out in the contract, since it did not deposit the guarantee sum required before the deadline.

The Cecchi Gori Group then sued the League before a tribunal in Florence, which decided in favour of the broadcaster, at the same time according the latter a new deadline (20 March, 1997) in order to comply with the conditions of the contract. The day before the deadline the Cecchi Gori Group and the public broadcaster RAI signed an agreement according to which the broadcasting rights are distributed as follows: RAI will keep inter alia the rights for live radio coverage of the matches and for satellite broadcasting in countries other than Italy on RAI's International channel, whereas the private broadcaster will acquire the rights for the broadcasting of the matches on Sunday evenings as well as the "foreign" rights to be sold to foreign broadcasters. The other private broadcaster (Mediaset) announced a complaint before the antitrust authorities.

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