[IT] Roadmap for the release of the 700 Mhz Band frequencies

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On 8 August 2018, the Italian Ministry of Economic Development (MISE) issued a decree with a view to defining a timeline for the release of the 700 Mhz Band frequencies. Such a roadmap constitutes a necessary step in the context of the 700 Mhz Band repurposing in accordance with EU law.

In fact, as required by Decision (EU) 2017/899, between September and December 2017, Italy executed frequency coordination agreements with several countries, with the purpose of: (a) allowing the relevant countries to make available the 700 MHz Band for telecom mobile services and (b) establishing the frequencies that can be used by the relevant countries for digital terrestrial television (DTT) broadcasting services within the sub-700 MHz Band. Then, in December 2017, the Italian Parliament passed the 2018 Budget Law, which laid down the legislative framework for actions to be taken to implement Decision (EU) 2017/899 and delegated the Italian Communication Authority (AGCOM) and MISE to adopt the resolutions defining the criteria and the modalities for the implementation of this process.

According to the 2018 Budget Law, the cornerstones of the spectrum reallocation process are the following:

(a) national and local DTT network operators must free the 700 MHz Band frequencies within the period between 1 January 2020 and 30 June 2022 (transition period), according to the roadmap defined by MISE;

(b) for DTT nationwide network operators: the conversion of their current use rights to frequencies in the 700 MHz Band to use rights to bandwidth capacity in new nationwide multiplexes operated in DVB-T2 technology; the criteria used to convert use rights to the frequencies in broadcasting capacity will be defined by an AGCOM’s resolution to be issued by 30 September 2018; the relevant procedure for the definition of the said criteria was launched by Resolution No. 182/18/CONS, adopted on 11 April 2018; the reallocation of the sub-700 MHz Band, according to the Frequency Plan issued by AGCOM through Resolution No. 290/18/CONS of 27 June 2018; the right to get compensation for the costs borne to adapt their repeaters.

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(c) the provision of a transition period, between 1 January 2020 and 30 June 2022, to switch to the new frequencies and, at the same time, for the DVB-T switch off and transition to DVB-T2.

On 4 April 2018, MISE launched a public consultation on the draft roadmap. According to the consultation document, the national territory had to be divided into four geographical areas, also for the purpose of avoiding interferences with the neighbouring countries that could start using 700 MHz Band for mobile services before Italy. The MISE decree adopted on 7 August 2018 confirmed this categorisation.

The MISE decree also distinguishes, respectively, four phases in the timeframe between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2021 and three phases within the period from 1 September 2021 and 30 June 2022. These different phases will govern the process of releasing the relevant frequencies and bringing into operation the new frequencies in each of the geographic areas, in accordance with the plan adopted by AGCOM in Resolution No. 290/18/CONS.

Decreto del Ministero dello Sviluppo Economico, 8 agosto 2018 - Suddivisione del territorio nazionale in quattro aree geografiche, coerente con il Piano nazionale assegnazione frequenze televisive - anno 2018. (18A05860) (GU Serie Generale n.212 del 12-09-2018)

http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2018/09/12/18A05860/sg

Decreto del Ministero dello Sviluppo Economico, 8 Agosto 2018

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