

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1155/06

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to the Commission

Subject: Television audience surveys

Television audience surveys are a vital element in determining advertising revenue and its competitive structure.

In Italy there is only one company, Auditel, which compiles television viewing figures, on a daily basis (minute by minute) and is officially recognised by the market (media centres, agencies, clients, and so on) and it therefore carries out this activity under a monopoly regime. Auditel is controlled mainly by the two large operators, Rai and Mediaset, who hold around 60% of its capital (Rai 33%, Mediaset 26.67%). The same two companies, Rai and Mediaset, have a dominant market position, taking up more than 94% of TV advertising revenue; this revenue is collected on the basis of data compiled and supplied to the market by Auditel itself.

This situation of structural imbalance prevents all operators from coexisting within a system of shared values, founded on the principles of fairness and transparency, and also creates a barrier to market access itself, thus undermining the competitive structure.

Can the Commission say whether it intends to adopt common measures for all EU Member States on television audience surveys, to safeguard the principles of freedom of enterprise, pluralism and competition?