

Culture and leisure

Italian radio and television licence fee

Data relating to radio and television licence fee are recorded on an annual basis by the RAI Italian broadcasting company for administrative and management purposes, as part of the activities and functions as a public service provider. Figures for radio licence fee are available from 1936 up until 1990, the year in which figures on licence fee only for radio services were no longer published by ISTAT, given their now minimal levels.

The time series of data referring to television, however, starts in 1954, the year when the first television programme was produced. Data collected refer both to “ordinary licence fees”, i.e. those relating to the possession in the family home (in a private household) of one or more devices capable of receiving radio-television transmissions (art. 1 and 2 of Royal Legislative Decree no. 246 dated 21st February 1938 and subsequent modifications thereto), and “special licence fees” for the possession of one or more devices capable of receiving radio-television transmissions outside the family home, in a commercial activity or for direct or indirect profit, for example in hotels, coffee shops, restaurants, offices, etc..

Regarding television licence fees, the reference to households – as specified in Ministry of Finance circular no. 15 in 1991 – is intended in the personal sense of household. According to art. 4 of Presidential Decree no. 223/1989, “household” means a group of people bound by marriage or relation, that live together and with habitual domicile within the same municipality. The possession of one or more TV devices within “cohabitation” on the other hand results in the obligation to pay for a special fee. The radio-television licence fee allows the holder of the licence and his/her family members to possess one or more television and radio devices in any residence. RAI is responsible for collecting and publishing the figures on the number of licence holders registered following payment of the licence fee both in absolute values and in relation to the number of inhabitants and the number of resident families. The figures used to calculate the values shown in the table are those for the number of families resident as per ISTAT records.

Warnings for time series comparisons

- From 1990 the figures on radio licence fee, due to their small number, were no longer published and are no longer available.
- From 1991 the television licence fee for black and white service and that for colour service were combined.
- From 1967 licence fee to radio services no longer included licences for car radios (Law no. 1235 dated 15th December 1967).
- From 1997 the licence fee for car radios was abolished and the radio licence fee for radio devices within private family homes was no longer obligatory (Law no. 449 dated 27th December 1997).
- From 2003 the rates of television licence holders per 1,000 inhabitants and the number of licence fees per 100 resident families refer exclusively to licences for private use.