

VareseNews

“Take the television licence fee off our computers”

Pubblicato: Mercoledì 22 Febbraio 2012

✘ “Another absurd and unjust tax is hitting Italian businesses.” This is how the note from the Italian Business Network (Rete Imprese Italia), the organisation that brings together the most important small business associations, begins.

This time, it is RAI who are increasing the tax bill of companies, with demands for “the **payment of a special licence fee for the ownership of equipment, such as computers and the like**, not normally intended for receiving television programmes. Over the last few days, in addition to the snow, millions of businessmen and self-employed workers have been showered also with demands from RAI to pay the special licence fee, by virtue of a Royal Decree from 1938.”

What set off the protest by the **Italian Business Network** (which unites the associations Casartigiani, Confartigianato, CNA, Confcommercio and Confesercenti) was the application of the tax for the ownership not only of televisions, but also of any device intended, or that can be adapted, to receive the TV signal, including computer monitors, videophones, video-recorders, Ipads, and even video-surveillance systems.

“So, you only have to have a computer in order to be obliged to pay a sum that, depending on the type of business, varies from a minimum of €200 to €6000 a year. The Italian Business Network has calculated that almost 5 million Italian companies will have to pay out €980 million. Anyone that does not pay will be subject to heavy fines and to checks by the supervisory authorities,” the note continues.

According to the Italian Business Network, “The special licence fee for RAI is an absurd demand, because it is instruments like computers, which businessmen use to work and certainly not to watch RAI programmes, that are being ‘taxed’. And it is all the more so if we consider that the government is encouraging greater computerisation in order to simplify dealings between businesses and the Public Administration. At this time of serious difficulties for our businessmen, the last thing we need is another, large and unjust tax.”

The Italian Business Network is asking for the government and parliament to intervene to exempt companies from the TV licence fee. In a letter sent to the Prime Minister, **Mario Monti**, and to the Minister for Economic Development, **Corrado Passera**, the Italian Business Network calls for the exclusion from any obligation to pay the fee because of ownership of devices that companies use as work instruments, such as computers, cellular telephones and the like.

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