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Italy's communications authority (AGCOM) is taking a further step in defining the boundaries of responsible gambling communication. The new guidance document introduces an addendum to existing guidelines, with the stated aim of ensuring consistency between prevention messages and the regulatory framework, which in recent years has severely restricted all forms of gambling advertising.

The starting point is clear: responsible gambling communications must serve as tools for protection and must not, in any way, become indirect promotional vehicles. The framework is based on two key references. On one hand, Article 15 of Legislative Decree no. 41/2024 allows for informational campaigns; on the other, the general advertising ban established by the "Dignity Decree" remains the strict boundary within which all messages must be developed.

AGCOM emphasizes a public health approach, marking a shift away from more ambiguous communication seen in the past. Messages should promote awareness, self-control, and access to protection tools such as spending limits, breaks, and self-exclusion, while avoiding any form of encouragement to gamble. They must also direct users toward support and assistance channels, strengthening the social and health dimension of communication.

A key aspect concerns language and content design. The authority clearly excludes the use of elements typically associated with gambling offers—odds, jackpots, bonuses, or reward mechanics—as well as any imagery that could evoke the gambling experience. Even the visual style is tightly regulated: no interfaces, app screens, or buttons resembling gambling environments. The goal is to prevent any "contamination" between prevention and promotion, even at a visual or symbolic level.

Particular attention is given to vulnerable groups. Messages must not target, directly or indirectly, minors, young people under 25, or the elderly, nor use communication styles that could appeal to them. This expands the concept of vulnerability beyond minors and introduces a broader standard of responsibility in campaign design.

Strict rules also apply to the use of operators' branding. Logos are allowed only as a signature, in a marginal position and without emphasis. They must not function as a

strong identifying element or a tool for brand recognition. AGCOM makes clear that even seemingly neutral details can amount to indirect advertising if not handled carefully.

Consistent with this approach, any links to operators' websites or platforms are prohibited, even for informational or sports-related content. References should instead point exclusively to institutional channels, such as helplines or public support websites.

From an operational perspective, the guidance also addresses formats. Campaigns must ensure that messages are properly understood, discouraging overly short formats such as billboards or brief videos, which are considered unsuitable for conveying complex issues like gambling-related harm. This could have a tangible impact on media strategies, limiting the use of high-visibility but low-depth formats.

Finally, the document highlights the need to monitor campaign effectiveness. Communication alone is not enough: understanding, recall, and behavioral impact must be measured. AGCOM also signals that it may take further action based on emerging practices and supervisory activity, suggesting that the regulatory framework will continue to evolve.

Overall, the new guidance strengthens the already restrictive approach while attempting to define a narrow space for genuinely preventive communication—one that requires operators to shift from marketing logic to social responsibility, leaving no room for ambiguity

Fonte: <https://www.jamma.it/?p=349680>