

# IN SOUTH TYROL



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Having spent two weeks of holidays in the wonderful mountain region South Tyrol in northwestern Italy, I got to know FM broadcasting activities there. I visited most of the about 30 stations in that area. It is worth featuring those interesting private radio stations and their problems.

But first, let me give some non-radio-related facts to make you better understand happenings there. The main part of the population in the province of South Tyrol (Alto Adige in Italian) is belonging to the German national group (62,9%), while 33,3% are Italian and 3,7% Ladin speakers, an old romanesque language, similar to Romansh spoken in southeastern Switzerland. Up to the end of World War I, South Tyrol was a part of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. Since it has become Italian territory, there have always been problems concerning the independence of this northernmost Italian province.

## Versatile programming

Naturally, all three national RAI programmes in Italian can be heard in the whole area, but besides those, there is a 4th programme, **RAI Bozen**, providing German speaking listeners with regional informations. Since it is in fact a government programme, it must follow the political line of Rome. The Statute of Autonomy, which has been released in

1972, cannot restrain the Italian authorities from trying to italianize the region.

One of the consequences of this Statute is **Rundfunkanstalt Südtirol (RAS)**, a corporation which is charged with providing reception of radio and TV programmes from the other German speaking countries. RAS has an institutional character and has its own budget as well as its own administration. Thus, the three Austrian programmes OE-1, OE-3 and OE-Regional Tirol are perfectly audible in the whole area, like ZDF television from West-Germany and the Swiss Television DRS.



Of course there is a large number of private stations, too, both with Italian and German programming and even in Ladin. Though most stations play an easy listening music format, a considerably large part of the music is of folklore type. Another difference to the well known stations in Lombardia is the power: While in Milan even little stations have an output of 2 kW and more, most transmitters of the broadcasters in Alto Adige

have some hundred Watts.

One of the broadcasting conceptions is to use Italy as base for broadcasting into Austria and Bavaria in southern Germany. There have indeed been a couple of stations which wanted to cover south Germany with commercial programming, where private radio broadcasting was not allowed during the past years. But since there have been serious problems with transmitters on 2800m high mountains, former stations like Radio Bavaria International or Radiotele Schwarzenstein had to give up or they became legal stations in Munich with the start of private broadcasting there, like Radio M1 did.

## In Bozen/Bolzano

The active stations nowadays are **Sudtirol Eins**, located in the northernmost city Sterzing (formerly called Radio Brenner) and **Radio C** in the capital Bozen. Radio C, which transmits mostly modern US popmusic in particular for young listeners, also has a shortwave transmitter for 9810 kHz. However, this transmitter is not important for the station, as the manager said. It is rather a matter of prestige. Though currently not active, it would be ready to go back on the air at any time, I was told. Both Radio C and its Italian language brother station **Radio Rosengarten**, named after a Dolomites mountain, belong to the West-German electronic company Conrad. Other stations in Bozen/Bolzano transmitting in Italian only are **Radio Bolzano 102**, **NBC Network** and **Baby Radio**. The collaborators of Radio Bolzano also operate a nearly full automatic and computerized station, **Radio Ritmo**, which consists of a few tape machines transmitting non-stop music, interrupted only by commercial spots. A clever possibility to make money without further investments!

While Radio Rimo or Baby Radio are audible in the city of Bolzano only, NBC covers also the rest of the province including parts of the southern neighbour province Trentino with its capital Trento.

A rather uncommon station is **Radio Sacra Famiglia** (i.e. holy family) offering religious programmes for ill and old people. Reverend Don Ercole, who operates the station, cooperates with other catholic broadcasters, like Radio A in Milano or Vatican Radio.

There is also a wide variety of German language stations in the capital. The political station **Radio Tandem** e.g. which spreads communist ideas and positions. Rather to the right wing belongs the director of **Sudtiroler Rundfunk**, Gabriel Torggler, who wants the province