
News and current affairs

SRG SSR's news and current affairs programmes provide an objective and unmistakably Swiss view of events at home and abroad. This is crucial to Switzerland's political culture.

With its radio, television and online offerings, SRG SSR is a public service media provider. Its independence allows it to provide up-to-date, balanced and fair information in a form that is unique in Switzerland.

Programming Charter

The Programming Charter sets out the principles that govern SRG SSR's radio and television programmes. It states that the programmes must be of outstanding quality in terms of both content and form. The Programming Charter requires that programme-makers abide by ethical and professional standards and take the needs of the audience into account. It emphasizes the independence of SRG SSR and its responsibility to society as a whole. The Charter demands that all of those involved in programme-making strive to get as close as possible to the truth and that in doing so they remain incorruptible. It also underlines SRG SSR's role as an opinion former and sets out the conditions which must be met for this function to be performed effectively.

Journalistic Guidelines

At enterprise unit level, journalistic and editorial guidelines stipulate how conflicts of interest, complacent journalism and the influence of public relations are to be avoided. They are intended to ensure credible, objective and pluralistic reporting. These criteria also constitute a professional and ethical code of conduct to which SRG SSR staff must adhere. The Journalistic Guidelines largely correspond to the Swiss Press Council's Declaration of the Duties and Rights of Journalists.

General duty to inform (radio)

In radio, the duty to inform is met with hourly headline news and regional news as well as sport and weather. Other programmes such as "Echo der Zeit" (Echo of the Times), "Doppelpunkt" (Colon), "Input" and "Info 3" provide more in-depth analysis of current affairs.

A study commissioned by OFCOM and carried out by the University of Geneva in 2008 attested to the high value of SRG SSR radio programmes as a source of information: "The first stations in the three language regions have a spoken word content between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. ranging from 57% (Radio SRF 1) to 82% (La Première). News and current affairs play a major role, accounting for around two thirds of airtime for La Première and around one third for Rete Uno and Radio SRF 1, with much of this coming outside regular news broadcasts." (The full text ("Publicom – Findings of SRG Radio Programme Analysis") is available at www.bakom.admin.ch in German, French and Italian.)

General duty to inform (television)

SRG SSR also meets its duty to inform with television programmes such as "Tagesschau" (Daily News) and "10vor10" (10to10), which focus on both national and international news, as well as programmes such as "Schweiz aktuell" (Switzerland Latest) that report on regional events. Formats offering more in-depth analysis and discussion include "Rundschau" (Roundup), "Club", the consumer show "Kassensturz" and "Arena".

A Univox study in 2007 confirmed the importance of SRG SSR television programmes as information media: "In terms of news-oriented media use, 57% use SRG television and 52% the daily newspapers ... as their primary or secondary information source. ... The private Swiss television channels only play a minor role as regards both news and entertainment." (The full text ("UNIVOX Media and Communication") is available at www.gfs-zh.ch in German only.)

Increased news and current affairs offering

- ▶ **Channels' websites:** The digital revolution that has swept through the media industry has changed consumers' needs. In response to this change, SRG SSR's radio and television companies offer websites that complement their programming with more in-depth content.
- ▶ **Podcasts and streams:** Platforms for audio on demand and video on demand enable the audience to access entire radio and television programmes or individual segments via the Internet, sometimes as live streams, or else as delayed streams or podcasts.
- ▶ **Teletext:** Short reports on Teletext remain a very popular feature. The number of users has stabilised at a high level of one million a day.
- ▶ **Swissinfo:** The website www.swissinfo.ch provides news about Switzerland in the form of text, picture, audio and video articles in ten languages. It prioritises news from the fields of politics, business, culture, science, education and sport. Swissinfo presents topics specifically for an international audience. It also supplies Swiss people living abroad with information on referenda and elections.

Duty to provide information on politics

Parliamentary reporting is a firm fixture of SRG SSR's radio and television programming, providing information on federal and cantonal votes and thus promoting the formation of political opinions. In addition, all joint votes by both chambers of parliament and Federal Council elections are broadcast live with comment from expert pundits.

To ensure continuous, direct reporting on the Federal Council and parliament, SRG SSR has set up the Federal Parliament Production Centre – comprising a television studio and several radio studios – inside the federal government's media hub.

Information in crisis situations

In serious crises, SRG SSR is the Federal Council's official information medium. Service agreements with the Swiss News Agency and SRG SSR ensure that the Federal Council can address the population at any time.

The authorities can issue an alarm using the Icaro (Information Catastrophe Alarm Radio Organisation) system when the population at large needs to be given specific instructions. In such cases, radio plays a key role as the fastest medium in that SRG SSR interrupts its radio programmes for important announcements whenever a general alarm is issued.