[CH] Billag AG to Continue Collecting Radio and TV Licence Fees

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The company Billag AG will be allowed to continue collecting radio and TV licence fees for another seven years. The Swiss Department for the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communication (UVEK) awarded the contract after an invitation to tender.

Until the end of 1997, radio and TV licence fees had been collected by the former telecommunications company PTT Swisscom. In order to ensure continuity during and after the partial privatisation of Swisscom, the Council of Ministers had introduced an interim arrangement by obliging the company to continue collecting the fees either in its own name or via a subsidiary company until the end of 2002 at the latest. The task has fallen to Swisscom's subsidiary Billag AG since 1 January 1998. In May 1999 the UVEK invited tenders for the collection of radio and TV licence fees. Five bids were received by the closing date of 31 August 1999. After examining the bids, the UVEK decided that the offer submitted by Billag AG was the most economical and met its requirements most closely. The restructuring measures that had already been introduced had begun to have an effect and, in the UVEK's view, guaranteed the necessary level of performance. This decision also had the advantage of continuity and would avoid the risks involved in transferring the task to another collecting company. Nevertheless, the UVEK will impose certain conditions in order to ensure that Billag AG carries out its duties in a reliable and sustainable manner. Furthermore, Billag AG may not be sold without the consent of the UVEK.

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