# [CH] SSR’s new licence put into circulation

**IRIS 2018-2:1/11**

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On 19 December 2017 the Federal Department for the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communication (DETEC) circulated the draft of the new licence for the Swiss public broadcasting company (Société Suisse de Radiodiffusion et Télévision - SSR). The draft implements the recommendations made on 17 June 2016 by the Federal Council in its report on public service broadcasting (see IRIS 2016-8:1/6). The new licence increases the demands made of the SSR in the fields of information, culture, training, entertainment and sport. In particular, the draft stipulates that expenditure devoted to news should represent at least 50% of the revenue collected from the licence fee. It also lays down specific demands regarding the quality of the content broadcast by the SSR, mainly by requiring entertainment programmes to be clearly distinguishable from programmes broadcast by the commercial channels.

The SSR will be required to strengthen its exchange schemes with the various language regions of Switzerland. It will also have to step up its efforts to integrate of people with a migrant background and people with sensory disabilities. The new licence also requires the SSR to target young people more closely, by offering them - particularly on social networks - programming offers that correspond to their specific requirements. To bring down the average age of its audiences, the SSR is invited to take more risks with regard to creation and innovation, making use of the potential offered by the new technologies.

The draft licence requires the SSR to collaborate more closely with private Swiss broadcasters in the fields of sport and entertainment. The SSR should also strengthen its collaboration with press editors by developing content-sharing. The SSR will also be required to step up its dialogue with the public: the new licence requires that it communicate regularly on its programming policy, assess the application of its policy, and discuss the results in public.

The political parties, the Swiss cantons, and other interested parties have until 12 April 2018 to send in their comments on the draft of the licence. It will be a transitional licence, entering into force on 1 January 2019 and remaining valid until the end of 2022, when it will be replaced by a new licence once the legislation on the electronic media that is currently being drawn up replaces the current Radio and Television Act (loi sur la radio et la télévision - LRTV). The draft of the new licence will be abandoned, however, if the Swiss population accepts

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the “No Billag” initiative on 4 March 2018. The initiative calls for the abolition of the licence fee and any other form of public funding for radio and television. Apart from the SSR, thirty-four regional radio stations and television companies currently receive part of proceeds from the licence fee.

It should also be noted that in October 2017 the Federal Council decided to lower the annual amount of the licence fee from the current CHF 451 to CHF 365, starting in 2019, when the new system for collecting the fee comes into force. The Federal Council has also capped at CHF 1.2 billion per year the proportion of the licence fee to be made over to the SSR; this is CHF 50 million less than under the present arrangement.

### *Projet de concession SSR et rapport explicatif du DETEC du 19 décembre 2017*

https://www.bakom.admin.ch/bakom/fr/page-daccueil/l-ofcom/organisation/bases-legales/consultations/consultation-sur-la-concession-ssr-srg.html

*Draft concession for the SSR and explanatory report by the DETEC of 19 December 2017*

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