

SRG SSR Radio Programmes – 2016 (Italian- and Romansh-speaking Switzerland)

Summary

The 2016 programme analysis of SRG SSR radios covers the three full programmes of Italian-speaking Switzerland as well as Radio Rumantsch.

As a member of the RSI programmes, Rete Due is uniquely positioned as a cultural programme. The profiles of Rete Uno and Rete Tre are less distinct, especially in terms of the music played. All programmes, but particularly Rete Uno and Rete Due, display high levels of informational competency. Radio Rumantsch is based on a programme concept unique for Switzerland, covering a broad spectrum of content and musical styles.

Key methodical data

The following programmes for Italian- and Romansh-speaking Switzerland were studied in 2016:

Rete Uno, Rete Due, Rete Tre, Radio Rumantsch

Sample dates: An artificial week (Mon – Sun) from 25 January through 4 December 2016

Sample days: Mon, 28. November; Tues, 23. August, Wed, 11 May, Thur, 17 March; Fri, 14 October; Sat, 30 January; Sun, 3 July

Analysed airtime: daily 5.00 am – 12.00 am

Music analysis – daytime programme: Wed, 11 May, 5.00 am – 8.00 pm

Music analysis – evening programme: Mon – Sun, 8.00 pm – 12.00 am

Total hours of programme analysed: 532h

Radio Rumantsch: unique programme concept

With a music-dominated **full-service format**, **Radio Rumantsch** offers a wide range of content to satisfy as many different interests as possible. This is unparalleled in the Swiss radio landscape, as several SRG broadcasters each focus on various audience segments in the other language regions. The programme features a relatively big share of music, but broadcasts more **information** than most SRG radio stations. Its **music format** reflects the broadcaster's full-service profile, offering something for virtually every musical taste. The blend of genres is more diverse than almost every other Swiss radio station, ranging from hip hop to waltzes and folk music. The many musical pieces of **Romansh** origin aired are also unique in the radio landscape but have greatly **shrunk** in number since the last survey (2012).

In Italian-speaking Switzerland the three **RSI programmes** cover a wide range of programme services - some complement each other, while others overlap. As a cultural programme, **Rete Due** has a broadcasting concept similar to the second SRF and RTS programmes. A thematic focus on **culture** and **music format** that differs fundamentally from other programmes are its main characteristics. It shares a clear **international** focus with the German-speaking station SRF 2. In terms of

information updates, Rete Due exhibits a number of **overlaps** with Rete Uno which can be traced back to both the centralised information production as well as the adoption of individual programmes.

Rete Uno is designed to be a background medium and addressing an older audience. Informative contributions account for over a third of its entire programme content. Rete Uno has the same **international and topical focus** as its RSI sister programmes: **culture** is the main subject here, but it is closely followed by **social issues** which occupy roughly the same amount of air time. The coverage of politics is even behind sports on Rete Uno if the comprehensive live sports coverage is also accounted for. Economics receive even less attention. Popular across the board, the musical roster displays a high proportion of contemporary pop music, differing only slightly from Rete Tre.

Rete Tre plays the most music comparing the SRG programmes in Italian-speaking Switzerland. Accordingly, the proportion of information is less. This station therefore airs a much **lighter** programme than its sister programmes in many respects. With much less emphasis on a conversational style, Rete Tre prefers more relaxed contributions, such as horoscopes, comedy and spoof shows as well as gossip. But Rete Tre also has special formats to offer – a children's show, for example. Its in-depth **preparation** and professional expertise regarding informational content don't match the standard of its sister programmes. The thematic focus is also placed on **culture**. As with the other RSI programmes, **international issues** are treated with top priority. Rete Tre's **musical profile** is designed to appeal across the board. It is not much different from Rete Uno. The style mix is a little less heavy on pop, and the music played is on average a little more recent than on Rete Uno.

RSI radio stations only partly take advantage of the available opportunities to increase their profile: their programmes focus on topics of **culture** and **society**. Politics have a lower importance, and the **economy** is a secondary topic at best. All stations display a strong preference for **international issues**, devoting the remainder of their attention mainly to their own language region. Issues with a national appeal seem to be of peripheral importance across all three stations.

Rete Uno and Rete Due: high level of informational competency

Rete Uno and Rete Due not only provide an above-average amount of information – they also demonstrate an **informational competency** through the sheer effort that is put into informational contributions. They clearly take pains to set out the facts and explain the background, drawing on a plethora of **journalistic representations** – including slick dialogue formats, challenging features, expert interviews and on-the-spot reporting. Information may be less important on Radio Rumantsch and Rete Tre, but the variety of journalistic representations is equally impressive for all these stations. Special programmes such as live broadcasts of sports events on Rete Uno, reli-

gious broadcasts on Radio Rumantsch, Rete Uno and Rete Due, and a children's show on Rete Tre also add to the formal (and thematic) variety.

Programme **topics** mostly focus on **two fields**: politics and society on Radio Rumantsch, and culture and society on the Ticino radio stations. Rete Uno offers a slightly more balanced and varied mix of topics, also devoting a certain amount of air time to sports. There is only little complementarity between programmes in Italian-speaking Switzerland. Centralised information production and repeated airing of entire information broadcasts both account for a certain homogenisation of topics – even intensified by the stations' concentration on cultural topics. A **weak emphasis on economy-related topics** in the information offering on the RSI radio stations is particularly noticeable .

RSI programmes: broad range of opinions with some caveats

There is reporting on different social groups all of which are able to make themselves heard, providing an encompassing range of opinions and perspectives on various topics. In terms of the demand for **pluralism of opinions**, an important question is how complete the spectrum of portrayed political forces actually is. There is a clear **preference for the Executive** across all radio stations analysed: authorities and their representatives more often shape reporting than political parties and parliamentarians. This is particularly the case with Rete Due and Radio Rumantsch, a little less so with Rete Tre and even less pronounced with Rete Uno. Results are not as consistent when evaluating which **parties** and party officials are the subject of reporting and how they are let to express themselves. **Radio Rumantsch** offers the widest range of opinions of all the four programmes. **Rete Due** comes in last in this category. Undeniably, the **Lega dei Ticinesi** – the second most powerful political party on the Ticino Cantonal Council and delegating two State Councillors in the Cantonal Government – is essentially **ignored entirely** by all the RSI radio stations.

A significant contribution is that these radio stations provide sound orientational knowledge along with a wide range of **opinions and perspectives** on reported issues. **Rete Uno** and **Rete Due** are almost as successful in this respect as their counterparts in German-speaking Switzerland. They do not, however, achieve the top results of the SRG radio stations in French-speaking Switzerland. This orientational strength is not quite so evident regarding Rete Tre and Radio Rumantsch. The general observation is that orientational services recede as the amount of information decreases: The more compact the informational format, the less time there is to go into controversial stances.

SRG's uniquely dominant position in the Swiss media landscape and privileged access to licence fees is commonly legitimised referring to its **integration mandate**. Very high standards therefore need to be set for any such integrative efforts. A major contribution to national integration would demand SRG programmes facilitate mutual knowledge and understanding **across language re-**

gions. The four stations analysed mostly devote attention to their own language region along with **international** news. RSI broadcasters treat **Italy** specially in this regard. The cultural broadcaster **Rete Due** has a particularly pronounced interest for Italy: this neighbouring country receives more attention than the other Swiss language regions and is even more important than national events in Switzerland. Compared to Radio Rumantsch, only **little** attention is devoted to them in RSI programmes. Yet, RSI radio stations and Radio Rumantsch produce more reports on **other language regions** than both the SRF and RTS radio stations. German-speaking Switzerland totals more attention than French-speaking Switzerland, but the latter also receives a reasonable amount of coverage in RSI programmes. French-speaking Switzerland is hardly paid attention to on Radio Rumantsch, however.

As for fulfilling the other **integration goals**, i.e. cultural, religious regional and linguistic exchange, the integration of foreigners, and interaction with Swiss citizens abroad, a content analysis can only delineate whether related topics are featured in the programmes – even if they are only touched upon. This is most often the case for **Rete Uno**, rarely for Rete Due and Radio Rumantsch, and hardly ever for Rete Tre. **Resident foreigners** feature equally rarely in RSI and RTR radio broadcasts as in programmes on Swiss German-speaking radio stations – but are still less rare than in the RTS programmes. Where radio stations analysed in the artificial week did report on foreigners in Switzerland, this happened mostly regarding refugees, suspected terrorists and crime. When foreigners are given a voice, it most often comes from experts or other personalities from arts or sports. The required integration of foreigners expressed in the license will thus be hard to achieve.

Swiss music: exemplary Radio Rumantsch but weak RSI radio stations

Swiss culture is the only topic relevant to the licence substantially addressed in the information content with all four stations. **Rete Due** and **Rete Uno** cover Swiss culture most. This is less the case with Rete Tre and slightly more often with Radio Rumantsch. Radio Rumantsch makes an impressive contribution to the promotion of culture by featuring a lot of **local music**: almost half of the music items played are Swiss made, and Radio Rumantsch even exceeds the music output of SRF's "Musikwelle". The RSI radio stations are far less generous in their promotion of Swiss music. Although they have upped the percentage in daytime programmes since the last survey in 2012, it remains the **lowest** of all SRG radio broadcasters and is barely any higher than what is heard on Ticino private radio stations.