

## **Executive Summary/Abstract**

### *Structure and content of the SRG television programmes in 2017*

- **Research context**

In the course of the television programme analysis in Switzerland in 2017 by order of the Federal Office of Communication (OFCOM), the seven television programmes of the SRG SSR were analysed. For this purpose, a quantitative multi-step content analysis was conducted. The study was administered by the company GöfaK Medienforschung GmbH, Potsdam/Germany, under the direction of Prof. Joachim Trebbe and in cooperation with the Department for Communication and Media Research, Fribourg/Switzerland.

- **Sample and method**

The seven channels SRF 1, SRF zwei, SRF info, RTS Un, RTS Deux, RSI LA 1, and RSI LA 2 were recorded in full over the course of one natural calendar week in spring and autumn, respectively. Using a standardized multi-step content analysis, the channels were coded on the programme as well as the article level with regard to programme and topic structure, regional focus, and further quality characteristics. In total, 2,353 hours of broadcasting material were analysed.

- **Programme structure**

The linear television programme of the analysed channels on an average 24-hour broadcasting day is mainly based on two components: informational and journalistically edited pieces are the most important part of the programme structure for five out of the seven analysed channels. For example, up to twelve hours of an average day on SRF 1 are used for this kind of content, called television journalism. SRF info, which is dedicated to news and informational content, dedicates almost four fifths of its total broadcasting time to television journalism, which equals approximately 19 hours per day. However, this content primarily consists of repetitions and adoptions from other channels. Entertainment programmes are the second basic component of the analysed programme structures. Fictional entertainment content, such as films and series as well as game shows, also takes up much of the average broadcasting day. For two channels, namely SRF zwei and RTS Un, it even constitutes the most important form of content, filling twelve and ten hours of airtime, respectively. Nevertheless, entertainment programmes are also an important component for other channels, constituting up to one third of their broadcasting time. Additionally, the newest data of the conducted programme analysis shows the growing importance of sports on television. Especially channels like SRF zwei, RTS Deux, and RSI LA 2, whose profiles are traditionally based on sportscasts and sports coverage, dedicate even more airtime to sports in the latest sample – up to one fourth (approx. six hours) of the average broadcasting day.

- **Topic structures**

Programme structures determine topic structures. The channels that contain a large share of (not always up-to-date) journalistic reporting outside of the news coverage, have a lot of room to cover various socially-relevant topics. For example, SRF 1 with its pronounced emphasis on documentaries and documentary reports dedicates almost one fourth of its airtime to the journalistic thematization of economic, scientific, media, and cultural topics. RTS Un and Deux broadcast many television magazines and subsequently also depict a large share of the mentioned topics. RSI LA 1 and SRF info possess the highest proportion of news coverage and thus display the highest amount of airtime for political topics in the broadest sense, including social controversies. Due to its cumulative format, SRF info uses almost 40 percent of its airtime for this kind of content.

A comparison of the 2015 and 2017 analyses shows stable and diverse topic structures, especially with human touch, service, and topics concerning private lives of individuals, which are less frequently present in a quantitative sense, but are nevertheless constantly part of the programmes. This result speaks in favour of a conscious and strategic evaluation and selection of programme and topic structures by the editors rather than a selection solely based on current events.

- **Regional reporting and regional dimensions**

The already familiar focus of channels on specific language regions grounded in the Swiss television system, that can be analysed by looking at regional references in broadcasts, remain largely unchanged in the present sample. Each of the regionally anchored channels covers its own language region by far the most. Due to its size, population share, and seat of the government, German-speaking Switzerland is of particular importance also for the news coverage of the French- and Italian-speaking channels. Rhaeto-Romanic-speaking parts of Switzerland are represented on all channels, with Italian-speaking channels referencing Rhaeto-Romanic regions especially frequently. An increasingly intensive coverage of another than the respective own language region cannot be confirmed based on the latest sample of the programme analysis.

An in-depth analysis of regional references in the coverage of the analysed channels shows that regional news coverage across Switzerland's language boundaries is probable whenever spectacular events or especially important (political and/or famous) actors become subject of the coverage. Therefore, the previously mentioned conscious and strategic evaluation and selection of topic structures does not hold true for regional reporting and the coverage of Switzerland's language regions: While the same structures, formats, and genres apply, the evaluation of an importance of current topics and events is made from the perspective of the own regional relevance and involvement. Other news factors only become relevant when they are particularly prevalent.