

Programming of Swiss regional television broadcasters with performance mandate and fee-splitting rights – 2022

Summary

The analysis of programming provided by Swiss regional television broadcasters in 2022 covered a total of 15 stations, including 14 services with a Charter, mandate and fee-splitting rights and one regional TV station subject to the obligation to register (i.e. without a performance mandate). Licence-holders are required to broadcast at least **150 minutes of relevant regional information** per week during the specified prime-time slots (18.00 to 23.00). In 2022, **13 stations fulfilled** the statutory requirement, including all those in the French- and Italian-speaking areas of Switzerland. One broadcaster from German-speaking Switzerland broadcast less than 150 minutes of relevant regional information per week. The second minimum content requirement set down in the programme service mandate, obliging broadcasters to provide 10 minutes of relevant regional information during news programmes on weekdays, was also achieved by 13 of the 14 license-holding TV stations.

Key methodological data

The following stations' programming was analysed in 2022:

Licensed broadcasters with performance mandate and fee-splitting rights: Kanal 9, TeleBärn, Telebasel, Tele 1, Tele M1, Tele Top, TVO, TV Südostschweiz, TeleBilingue, Canal 9, Canal Alpha, La Télé, Léman Bleu, TeleTicino

Non-licensed broadcaster (i.e. subject to the obligation to register): TeleZüri

Sample period:

Two artificial one-week periods (2x Mon-Sun) of days selected between 1 January and 31 December 2022

Dates sampled: Mon 3 October, Mon 24 October, Tues 7 June, Tues 2 August, Wed 11 May, Wed 25 May, Thurs 7 July, Thurs 17 November, Fri 11 March, Fri 26 August, Sat 12 February, Sat 23 July, Sun 27 February, Sun 9 October 2022

Broadcasting times analysed: 18.00 – 23.00 daily

Total hours of programming analysed: 1,050

The analysis of programming provided by Swiss regional television broadcasters considered content broadcast during prime time over two artificially created one-week periods (Mon-Sun) made up of 14 randomly selected sampling days between January and December 2022. The study reviewed the degree to which stations with a Charter delivered the services required, particularly the statutory minimum content requirement of **150 minutes** of relevant regional information and **10 minutes** of such content during news programmes. For comparative purposes, the 2022 annual report also considered programming provided by TeleZüri, a non-licensed broadcaster.

Programming patterns: Increasing harmonisation trends

The operations of licensed Swiss regional television stations are subject to a variety of economic and structural requirements. The focus of a particular regional station's output is influenced by its context, the broadcaster's programming philosophy, its competitive situation and the regulatory requirements involved. **Differences** can also be substantive when stations and, in part, language regions are compared. However, there are also many notable **commonalities** as well as partial trends towards **convergence** of programming. Overall, the regional television scene in Switzerland remained varied in 2022, reflecting the cultural and political diversity of the country.

One thing that the 14 licensed regional television stations have in common is that at least 59% of the programming broadcast during prime time (on weekdays) consisted of **informational content**. The average share of information-related content was 72%, with little variance between the different stations: the largest proportion of information-related programming was broadcast by **Tele Ticino** (89%), followed by **Léman Bleu** (85%). Of the 14 stations, La Télé had the lowest share of informational content (59%). On average, the proportion of informational content was nearly equally high in French- and German-speaking Switzerland. In the previous study in 2020, the broadcasters in French-speaking Switzerland showed 10% more than those in German-speaking Switzerland.

Léman Bleu, the broadcaster with the largest **output of informational content**, devoted nearly four times as much of its prime-time slots to information (more than **16 hours**) than the broadcaster with the lowest level of informational content (Tele Top with 4.5 hours or so). The average output of informational content for a license-holding TV broadcaster was about 7 hours and 57 minutes per week – **20 minutes more** than in the previous study in 2020. The largest proportion (92%) of this informational programming deals with **relevant topics** as defined in the Charter, ranging from 86% (Kanal 9) to 99% (Léman Bleu).

An average of barely 10% of programming time was reserved for **advertising**. The proportion of advertising content was lower at the stations within French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland than in German-speaking Switzerland. However, the differences are no longer as marked as in 2020. The remaining sixth of the programming time consisted of continuity announcements, entertainment and public service information.

Within the **informational content**, **"typical" structures** exist between the various broadcasters: news programmes were the most frequent form of informational content broadcast for eight stations (42% on average) and talk formats were the most frequent element for five stations (27% on average). In many cases, a main news programme was followed by another fairly long programme. In five cases, there was a combination of news and talk and the weighting was reversed in a further five cases. For news programmes, two stations combined a magazine format as the second most frequent format, one station a reporting programme and one more a live format. Here also the differences between the language regions have tended to decrease.

Despite the substantial differences in informational programming between different stations as regards the **variety of topics**, broadcasters generally focused on the two main areas of **social matters** (29%) and **politics** (21%). There was rather less of a focus on the reporting of issues related to business, culture and sport. In particular, the share of programming devoted to culture varied significantly from one station to the next. After a tangible decrease in the two-year comparison, human interest or bad news were clearly less often the focus than other topics.

Regional events in French-speaking Switzerland remained a stronger area of focus

Programming differences result from the **geographical focus areas** of the various broadcasters. On average, 69% of the informational content broadcast deals with events in the **coverage area**, as required by the Charter. The corresponding proportions vary greatly between stations. Top place in this regard was occupied by the bilingual station **TeleBilingue**, with an enormous 94% of coverage given to events occurring within its coverage area, followed by Canal Alpha with 87%. In German-speaking Switzerland, Telebasel had the highest proportion at 82%. Of all license-holding broadcasters, the German-language Swiss media stations TVO, Tele M1 and TeleBärn clearly reported the least about events in their own region, with shares between 41% and 46%. Overall, stations from **French-speaking Switzerland** devoted significantly more time to events in their own region (80%) than broadcasters in German-speaking Switzerland (66%) and in Ticino (50%). However, differences between the language regions had decreased somewhat since 2020.

The 14 licensed television broadcasters, meanwhile, devoted an average 13% of their informational programming to **national events** and another 10% to events in the **rest of Switzerland**. **Foreign affairs** also featured less prominently in the output of Swiss regional television stations, on average constituting only around 8% of the time allocated to informational content.

Increase in relevant regional information: 13 of 14 stations with more than 150 minutes

Since the broadcasting licences were extended on 1 January 2020, licence-holders have been required to provide at least **150 minutes of relevant regional information** (excluding repeats) in prime-time slots by either reporting on events within their coverage area, outlining the effects of a supra-regional event on their coverage area or establishing a connection to the region. In this regard, some **striking differences** are apparent in the various stations' outputs.

Differences were large regarding the output of informational content for **events in the coverage area**. **Léman Bleu** was the regional television station that broadcast the most informational content from its coverage area per week: at 10 hours and 28 minutes, this is more than five times as much information from its own region as broadcast by TVO (1 hour and 56 minutes). The weekly average of the 14 stations was about 4 hours and 45 minutes. **Compared to 2020**, the average duration of informational content regarding events in the coverage area was thus nearly 20 minutes per week greater; the proportion of overall information concerning regional events also rose from 4% to 59%. The **impact of**

wider events on the coverage area – an additional 25 minutes or so – and content with a **connection to the region** – constituting on average barely 6 minutes of all of the relevant regional information – generally played only a minor role in meeting the weekly minimum requirement of 150 minutes.

In 2022, **13 regional television broadcasters** with a broadcasting licence **fulfilled** the statutory requirement in terms of offering the mandatory minimum of 150 minutes of relevant regional information per week during the specified 5-hour prime-time slots. The stations in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland broadcast the most regional information, especially **Léman Bleu** with 11 hours and 43 minutes. Of all the regional TV stations with a license, only **TVO** broadcast **less than 150 minutes** per week of relevant regional information in prime time (132 minutes).

Compared to the **previous study in 2020** the 14 stations thus provided their public with an average of **30 minutes more** regional information per week, as per the licensing requirements.

Clear differences were also evident regarding the second minimum content requirement, which obliges broadcasters to provide **10 minutes of** relevant regional information during news programmes on weekdays.

Tele Ticino, the station with by far the largest daily output of informational content in news programmes (**1 hour** or so) broadcast more than four times as much as the station with the lowest output of news production (TVO, barely 14 minutes). The average daily duration of the information-related content within news programmes was around 23 minutes for licensed TV stations. In the news as well, the proportion of **relevant topics** as per the Charter was a high **90%**, ranging from 77% (Tele M1) to 98% (La Télé and Telebasel). Tele Ticino broadcast 34 minutes of regional information in the news concerning **events in the coverage area**, nearly four times as much as Tele 1, with only 9 minutes. On average, 72% of all informational content within news programmes related to events within the station's region, equating to a daily average of about 17 minutes. Thus an average station showed about 4 minutes per day more **compared to 2020**, while the proportion has increased by a respectable 12%.

In 2022, **13 regional television stations** holding a licence **fulfilled** the statutory requirement in terms of offering the mandatory minimum of 10 minutes of relevant regional information per day in their news programmes during the defined prime-time slots. Along with Tele Ticino (with a notable 38 minutes) this included all stations in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland. One regional station holding a license, **Tele 1**, broadcast slightly **less than 10 minutes** of relevant regional information per day in news programmes. In the **2-year comparison**, the 14 stations with a broadcasting licence **increased** this output by an average 3 minutes and 23 seconds. The greatest increase was achieved by **La Télé** (an increase of 17 minutes), ahead of Léman Bleu and Telebasel (increases of 8 and 7 minutes, respectively).