



SVFAB DETAILED ANALYSIS

2017-02-24 *Trumps Krieg*

Broadcast: SRF Tagesschau broadcast | 2017-02-24 | Analysed on: 2026-05-19 16:03

Version 3.0-detail | Universal 3.0-detail | Konverter 3.4 (2026-05-20) | Masstab: Art. 4 RTVG

OVERALL SCORE

6.3/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation

0 = balanced, 10 = strongly one-sided/manipulative

POLITICAL SPECTRUM

Classification according to Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) 2024

The Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES 2024) is an academic survey of 609 political scientists in 31 countries. Each party is rated on a scale from 0 (far left) to 10 (far right).

Party	Greens	SP	GLP	Centre	EVP	FDP	SVP
CHES	1.13	1.67	3.60	5.47	5.64	7.67	9.00
Spectrum	<i>Left</i>	<i>Left</i>	<i>Left</i>	<i>Centre</i>	<i>Right</i>	<i>Right</i>	<i>Right</i>

The overall tendency is displayed on a 0–10 scale (0 = strongly favouring the left, 5 = balanced, 10 = strongly favouring the right). The calculation is based on the difference in the average favouring of left vs. right parties (grouping according to CHES 2024).

TENDENCY (L – R)

3.2 / 10

Left-favouring

0 1 2 **3** 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

← Left

Right →

Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2024 — chesdata.eu | [Jolly et al., Electoral Studies, 2022](#) | Thresholds: [Pew Research Center](#)

This section serves for political classification and does not feed into the overall score.



POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Switzerland is a consensus democracy. The Federal Council (7 seats) is filled according to the magic formula: SVP 2, SP 2, FDP 2, Centre 1. There is no classic government/opposition divide — all major parties are represented in the executive. Political conflicts therefore do not run along a government-opposition axis, but between the parties in parliament and in popular votes.

Party	CHES L-R	Seats NC	Government/Opposition	Core position
SVP	8.0	62	Government (2 FC)	Limit migration, sovereignty, reduction of the state
SP	2.5	41	Government (2 FC)	Welfare state, redistribution, open migration
FDP	6.5	28	Government (2 FC)	Economic freedom, lean state, bilateral path
Centre	5.0	29	Government (1 FC)	Pragmatism, family relief, EU stabilisation
Greens	2.0	23	Opposition	Climate protection, redistribution, disarmament
GLP	4.0	10	Opposition	Green economy, liberal migration, EU rapprochement
EVP	5.5	2	Opposition	Christian values, centre positions

The most important lines of conflict run between SVP and the rest of the political spectrum on migration and EU issues. The No-Billag initiative (context of this broadcast: 2017) polarises around the question of the value of public service media. Media trust and the role of alternative media/social networks are contested in society. The question of whether SRF is structurally left-influenced is a persistent point of conflict between SVP and public broadcasting.

SRF is Switzerland's public broadcaster, financed by reception fees (then Billag, today Serafe) and obligated to factual accuracy, diversity of opinion and impartiality in accordance with Art. 4 RTVA. The Arena is SRF's most important political discussion format and is regularly accused of one-sidedness, particularly by SVP. The public service mandate obliges SRF to exercise particular care in the presentation of controversial political positions.



CHAPTER 1 — PARTY-POLITICAL BIAS

Party	Score (-5..+5)	Broadcast portrayal vs. programme position
SVP	-2	Approx. 27:00 Ruchti: "Media are left-leaning" — SVP position (media criticism, demand for impartiality) is represented by Zanetti, but repeatedly framed as an individual opinion. Schawinski contradicts directly: "That is simply not true" (27:46) without evidence. SVP criticism of SRF reporting (Inside Bundeshaus, Kassensturz) is mentioned but not examined on its merits. Programme position (media should be impartial, SRF criticism) partially presented but systematically relativised.
SP	0	Not present as a party. Thematically not relevant.
FDP	0	Not present as a party.
Centre	0	Not present as a party.
Greens	0	Not present as a party.
GLP	0	Not present as a party.
EVP	0	Not present as a party.

Party bias summary

- Most accurate portrayal: SP/FDP/Centre/Greens/GLP/EVP (Score 0 — not present, therefore no distortion)
- Strongest distortion: SVP (Score -2)
- Average deviation from 0: 0.3
- Conclusion: The broadcast is not a classic party-political debate, but a media debate. The only relevant party position is that of SVP (media criticism), represented by Zanetti. This is given a voice, but Schawinski repeatedly contradicts it directly and emotionally, without the SVP criticism being examined on its merits in concrete cases (Inside Bundeshaus, Kassensturz). The broadcast itself is part of the subject of the criticism, which creates a structural conflict of interest.



CHAPTER 2 — BROADCAST INFORMATION AND THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

Broadcast data

- Title: SRF Arena — "Can we still trust the media?"
- Date: 24.02.2017
- Moderator: Jonas Breuer
- Persons interviewed:

Actors	Function	Party/affiliation	Political spectrum
Roger Schawinski	Journalist, media entrepreneur, Radio 1	Non-partisan, liberal-left	Centre-left
Claudio Zanetti	National Councillor	SVP	Right
Karin Müller	Editor-in-chief TeleBasel	Non-partisan, media industry	Centre
Daniele Ganser	Author, historian	Non-partisan, system-critical	Difficult to classify
Markus Spillmann	President Swiss Press Council, former NZZ editor-in-chief	Non-partisan, media industry	Centre-right
Vincent Augustin	President IHRA	Non-partisan, regulatory authority	Neutral (institutional)
Remo Ruchti	Audience guest	SVP-aligned (from context)	Right
Paul von Wartburg	Audience guest	Unknown	Unknown
Ms Büchi	Audience guest	Unknown	Unknown
Mr Bossert	Audience guest	Unknown	Unknown

Main topic

The broadcast discusses whether traditional media are still trustworthy, against the backdrop of Trump's media criticism, Ganser's use of alternative media and SVP criticism of SRF.



CHAPTER 3 — 15 CRITERIA: DETAILED ANALYSIS

Hard facts — 9 techniques that are countable and scientifically robust

1. EXPERT SELECTION									7/10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Expert 1: Roger Schawinski — journalist, media entrepreneur	
Timestamp	02:01
Statement	"Anyone who says that is essentially against democracy."
Classification	Schawinski is a media entrepreneur with a direct economic interest in the legitimacy of traditional media. He is a competitor to SRF in the radio market (Radio 1). His assessment of media credibility is structurally partisan.
Missing countervoice	Media scholar without a personal interest in the media industry.

Source in-depth check:

- (a) **FUNDING:** Private (Radio 1, own media companies). Direct economic interest in the legitimacy of traditional media and in delegitimising alternative media.
- (b) **MANDATE:** Not compatible with neutral assessment. Schawinski is a market participant judging the quality of his own market segment.
- D1 Conflict of interest: -2 — Direct economic interest in media legitimacy
 - D2 Personal risk: -1 — No personal disadvantages from his position; rather reputational gain
 - D3 Professional competence: +1 — Decades of media experience, but not an academic media researcher
 - D4 Consistency of opinion: +1 — Consistent pro-media stance over years
 - D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: -1 — Repeatedly emotional ("stupid lies", "ridiculous"), little data
 - D6 Source level: 0 — Secondary (own assessment, no primary sources)
- TOTAL: -2 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: YELLOW**
- (c) **PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE:** Framed as an experienced journalist in a neutral way, but structurally partisan as a media entrepreneur.

Expert 2: Markus Spillmann — President Swiss Press Council, former NZZ editor-in-chief	
Timestamp	21:47
Statement	"Fundamentally I believe there are rules of the game."
Classification	Spillmann is President of the Press Council — a self-regulatory institution of the media industry. He has an institutional interest in defending the credibility and self-regulatory capacity of the media.
Missing countervoice	External media critic without institutional ties to the media industry.



Source in-depth check:

(a) FUNDING: The Press Council is financed by publishers' associations and journalists' associations — i.e. by the media industry itself. Structural conflict of interest in assessing media quality.

(b) MANDATE: Not compatible with neutral assessment. The Press Council is a self-regulatory institution; its institutional interest is the defence of the industry's self-regulatory capacity.

D1 Conflict of interest: -2 — Institutionally tied to media legitimacy

D2 Personal risk: -1 — No personal disadvantages from pro-media position

D3 Professional competence: +2 — Long-standing experience as NZZ editor-in-chief, Press Council president

D4 Consistency of opinion: +1 — Consistent position

D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: +1 — More factual than Schawinski, but also without data

D6 Source level: 0 — Secondary

TOTAL: +1 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: YELLOW

(c) PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE: Framed as a neutral supervisory expert, but institutionally part of the media industry.

Expert 3: Vincent Augustin — President IHRA

Timestamp	19:33
Statement	"One should be able to trust them."
Classification	Augustin is President of the Independent Complaints Authority for Radio and Television. He is actually institutionally more independent than Schawinski and Spillmann, but he is simultaneously a guest on the broadcast on which he would have to rule in the event of a complaint — an obvious conflict of interest that he himself raises (22:49).

Source in-depth check:

(a) FUNDING: State (OFCOM). Institutionally independent of the media industry.

(b) MANDATE: Fundamentally compatible with neutral assessment, but compromised by participation in the broadcast.

D1 Conflict of interest: 0 — Institutionally independent, but compromised by participation in the broadcast

D2 Personal risk: 0 — Neutral

D3 Professional competence: +2 — Legal expertise in broadcasting law

D4 Consistency of opinion: +1 — Consistent institutional position

D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: +2 — Factual, legally precise

D6 Source level: +1 — Primary (own legal practice)

TOTAL: +6 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: GREEN

(c) PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE: Augustin is the most credible guest, but his participation in the broadcast on which he would have to rule is problematic.

Missing expert groups:

- Media scholar with empirical research on media bias
- Media economist on ownership structures and economic dependencies
- Representative of the No-Billag initiative (central in the 2017 context)

Source traffic light for participants:

Source	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	Total	Traffic light
Roger Schawinski — journalist, media entrepreneur	-2	-1	+1	+1	-1	0	-2	YELLOW
Markus Spillmann — President Swiss Press	-2	-1	+2	+1	+1	0	+1	YELLOW



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Council, former NZZ editor-in-chief									
Vincent Augustin — President IHRA	0	0	+2	+1	+2	+1	+6		GREEN

Summary:

Expert	Source traffic light	Main problem
Schawinski	YELLOW	Structural conflict of interest as media entrepreneur
Spillmann	YELLOW	Institutionally tied to media industry (Press Council)
Augustin	GREEN	Compromised by participation in the broadcast
Müller	YELLOW	Media entrepreneur (TeleBasel), self-interest
Ganser	YELLOW	System-critical, but methodologically vulnerable



2. SOURCE SELECTION

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Claims without primary source = penalty points (rumour check)

Source 1: "131 lies in one month" — Trump fact-checks

Timestamp 02:37

Statement "It has now been measured that he made 131 lies in one month since he became president."

- (a) **Funding and sponsorship:** Not stated. Schawinski cites no source.
(b) **Structural conflict of interest:** Schawinski uses this figure as an argument against Trump without explaining the methodology of the count (What counts as a "lie"? Who counted? According to what criteria?).
(c) **Is a source missing that would substantiate a contrary view:** Yes — no source that questions the methodology of the lie count.

Rumour 1:

Timestamp: 02:37

Claim: "It has now been measured that he made 131 lies in one month."

Word marker: "measured" (implies objectivity without citing a source)

Primary source available: No — penalty point (+1)

Source 2: SRF insert Trump/Electoral College

Timestamp 06:54

Statement Trump interview excerpt in which Trump cites incorrect Electoral College figures.

- (a) **Funding:** SRF (public broadcaster). The broadcast itself selects which Trump statements are shown.
(b) **Structural conflict of interest:** SRF selects excerpts that portray Trump as lying. No excerpt shows Trump in a positive or factual context.
(c) **Missing counter-source:** No excerpt that factually documents Trump's correct statements or his media criticism.

Source 3: SRF insert on own editorial guidelines

Timestamp 42:51

Statement "SRF journalists report accurately... A prerequisite for publication is two consistent, mutually independent sources."

- (a) **Funding:** SRF itself — the broadcast cites its own guidelines as proof of quality.
(b) **Structural conflict of interest:** Maximum conflict of interest. SRF presents itself as a guarantor of quality in a broadcast in which its quality is being discussed.
(c) **Missing counter-source:** No external quality check of the SRF guidelines; no cases in which the guidelines were violated (apart from the Kassensturz case cited by Zanetti, which is not examined in depth).

Rumour 2:

Timestamp: 44:00



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Claim: Zanetti claims that in the broadcast "Inside Bundeshaus" statements were made to which SVP was not able to respond.

Word marker: "simply would not have been able to respond" (without evidence)

Primary source available: No — penalty point (+1)

Summary: The source selection is structurally one-sided: SRF cites itself as proof of quality, Trump excerpts are selected selectively, and numerical claims (131 lies) are used without citing a source. Two rumour points (+2 penalty points). Overall score with penalty points: 6/10.



3. TIME DISTRIBUTION

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Estimated speaking time:

- Roger Schawinski (pro-media, liberal-left): (26%)
- Claudio Zanetti (SVP, media criticism right): (14%)
- Daniele Ganser (system-critical, alternative media): (17%)
- Karin Müller (pro-media, media industry): (9%)
- Markus Spillmann (pro-media, Press Council): (9%)
- Vincent Augustin (IHRA, institutional): (7%)
- Moderator Breuer: (11%)
- Audience guests: (7%)

Summary: Pro-media voices (Schawinski, Müller, Spillmann, Augustin) account for approx. 51% of speaking time. Media-critical voices (Zanetti, Ganser, Ruchti) account for approx. 38%. The imbalance is moderate but structural: four pro-media guests face two media critics, which amplifies the speaking time asymmetry.



4. OMISSION (Selective Omission)

7/10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Omission 1: Economic dependencies of the media

Context

The question of media trust is reduced exclusively to journalistic ethics and political one-sidedness. Advertiser dependency, ownership structures and economic conflicts of interest of the media are not addressed.

Relevant at: Entire broadcast

Effect

The impression is created that media quality is solely a matter of professional ethics and self-regulation — structural economic dependencies remain invisible.

Omission 2: Concrete examination of SVP criticism of SRF

Context

Zanetti cites concrete cases (Inside Bundeshaus, Kassensturz, Glarner report). These are not examined on their merits but referred to the IHRA.

Relevant at: 29:07, 44:00, 44:50

Effect

The media criticism from the right is proceduralised ("make a complaint") rather than answered on its merits. The impression is created that the criticism is unfounded, without it being examined.

Omission 3: No-Billag context

Context

The broadcast takes place in 2017, when the No-Billag initiative is in the air. This existential question for SRF is not addressed, even though it fundamentally shapes the context of the media debate.

Relevant at: Entire broadcast

Effect

SRF discusses its own credibility without naming the political context (No-Billag) in which this debate is taking place — which conceals a conflict of interest.

Summary: The broadcast systematically omits those perspectives that would structurally burden SRF: economic dependencies, substantive examination of media criticism and the No-Billag context.

Missing voices

- Media scholar (university): Would have contributed empirical research on media bias, media trust and agenda-setting.
- Media economist: Would have analysed the economic dependencies of the media (advertisers, ownership structures, concentration).
- Representative of a civil rights organisation: Would have contributed the surveillance state dimension and press freedom issues.
- International media expert: Would have placed the Swiss media landscape in comparison with BBC, ARD, ORF.
- Representative of the No-Billag initiative: Would have contributed the structural criticism of the licence fee model (highly relevant in the 2017 context).



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- Sociologist on filter bubbles: Would have placed the algorithm dimension of social media in a scientific context.
- Representative of alternative Swiss media (e.g. Infosperber, Republik): Would have contributed a differentiated perspective beyond mainstream vs. conspiracy theory.



5. NUMERICAL MANIPULATION

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Complete figures include: absolute value, share (%) and trend

Finding 1: "131 lies in one month"

Timestamp 02:37

Figure: "It has now been measured that he made 131 lies in one month since he became president. So about four per day."

Dimensions:

- (a) Absolute value: 131 — shown
- (b) Share: Not shown (share of total statements? Share of politically relevant statements?)
- (c) Trend: Not shown (development over time?)

Missing context

No source cited, no methodological description (What counts as a lie? Who counted?), no comparison with other politicians.

Effect

The figure appears to be an objective finding, but is a methodologically unsubstantiated claim.

Finding 2: "26,000 bombs in 2016" (Obama)

Timestamp 05:53

Figure: "He was in office for eight years. And with Obama we know that in 2016 he dropped three bombs per hour. That is 26,000 bombs in the whole of 2016."

Dimensions:

- (a) Absolute value: 26,000 — shown
- (b) Share: Not shown (share of total military operations? Comparison with predecessors?)
- (c) Trend: Not shown

Missing context

No source cited by Ganser; no assessment of whether this figure is correct; no reaction from the moderator to the absence of a source.

Effect

The figure is left standing without examination — neither confirmed nor refuted.

Summary: Two relevant numerical claims are used without citing a source and without contextualising the missing dimensions (b) and (c). The 131-lies figure is presented as fact, but is methodologically unsubstantiated.



6. GUILT BY ASSOCIATION								8/10	
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Association 1: Ganser — "conspiracy theorist"	
Timestamp	01:12
Quote	"Daniele Ganser, controversial author" (introduction)
	Technique: Ganser is already introduced in the opening as a "controversial author" — in contrast to all other guests, who are introduced without evaluative adjectives. This sets the frame for the entire broadcast.
Effect	Ganser's statements are placed under suspicion from the outset, before he has said a single word.

SOURCE CHECK for Ganser:

- Does he work with verifiable primary sources? YES — Ganser refers to ETH discussions (12:47), the 9/11 Commission Report, historical documents (Gulf of Tonkin, Operation Gladio). The quality of these sources is debatable, but he does not work without sources.
- Are his core statements falsifiable? YES — "WTC 7 was blown up" is an empirically testable claim. "Charlie Hebdo is unresolved" is an epistemic statement about uncertainty, not an unfalsifiable conspiracy claim.

RISK MATRIX:

- What has Ganser lost? ETH position (he mentions dispute with ETH, 23:47), academic reputation, access to mainstream media.
- What does he gain? Community, book sales, attention.
- Net: Loss of academic reputation > gain through community → increased credibility according to this matrix.

TONALITY:

- Factual-analytical or emotional-apocalyptic? Predominantly factual-analytical. Ganser acknowledges uncertainties ("We don't know that", 14:00; "I can't tell you that", 13:49).
- Does he acknowledge uncertainties? YES — explicitly regarding Charlie Hebdo.

RESULT CATEGORY: B — Borderline case (partly substantiated, partly speculative). The broadcast treats him as Category C, without methodologically justifying this categorisation.

Association 2: Zanetti — Trump analogy	
Timestamp	35:14
Quote	"Are you in the same tone and are you in the same tone as Donald Trump?"
	Technique: Zanetti's criticism of a specific report ("pig journalism") is equated with Trump's blanket attacks on all media.
Effect	Legitimate individual case criticism is delegitimised through association with Trump.

Chain of association: Zanetti criticises specific report → "pig journalism" → Trump → enemy-of-the-people rhetoric → anti-democratic

Association 3: Media criticism in general — Trump association	
Timestamp	48:08



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Quote

"And that is exactly what Trump is doing right now. And I consider that dangerous."

Technique: Spillmann equates media criticism in general with Trump's threat to democracy.

Effect

Any media criticism — even legitimate criticism — is brought into proximity with hostility to democracy.

Summary (category assignment):

Actors	Category	Justification
Ganser	B (borderline case)	Partly substantiated statements, partly speculative; acknowledges uncertainties; has lost academic reputation
Zanetti	A (system-critical politician)	Concrete case criticism, not blanket hostility to media
Ruchti	A (citizen with media criticism)	Concrete observation, no conspiracy theory



7. TIMING

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Finding 1: Introduction of Ganser as "controversial author"

Position: 01:12 (beginning)

Content: "Daniele Ganser, controversial author"

Timing effect

The framing as "controversial" occurs before Ganser's first word. All subsequent statements by Ganser are filtered through this frame. No other guest receives an evaluative adjective in the introduction.

Finding 2: Trump torture insert at the end of the broadcast

Position: 57:44 (end)

Content: Trump quote on waterboarding ("Torture works")

Timing effect

The most emotional and morally unambiguous clip is placed at the end to close the broadcast with a clear anti-Trump statement. This sets the final impression on the audience.

Finding 3: SRF self-praise insert after Zanetti criticism

Position: 42:51 (after Zanetti criticism at 44:00)

Content: Insert on SRF guidelines ("report accurately", "two independent sources")

Timing effect

The insert follows immediately after Zanetti's media criticism and functions as an institutional response to the criticism — without substantive engagement with the specific allegations.

Summary: The timing design of the broadcast follows a clear pattern: media criticism is framed and relativised by institutional self-presentation (SRF guidelines) and emotional closing points (torture clip).



8. SELECTIVE OUTRAGE

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Outrage = bias. Selective outrage reinforces the finding. Score = degree of outrage (0–5) + selectivity (0–5)

Finding 1: Schawinski interrupts Ganser, not Zanetti

Timestamp 11:24 / 23:01

Triggering event: Ganser presents historical arguments on Obama bombings and 9/11.

Reaction: "Yes, he just always goes off on a tangent." (11:24) / "That's how conspiracy theorists are allowed to react." (23:01)

Comparison Zanetti also presents historical reinterpretations at 03:57 (Sweden context), at 25:55 Obama geography error — Schawinski reacts factually or agrees.

Asymmetry: Ganser's historical arguments are framed as "distraction", Zanetti's similar patterns of argumentation are treated factually. Demonstrable.

Degree of outrage: 3/5

Selectivity: 3/5

Finding 2: Moderator intervenes with Ganser, not with Schawinski

Timestamp 14:29 / 05:04

Triggering event: Schawinski interrupts Ganser several times.

Moderator's reaction at 14:29: "Mr Schawinski, excuse me, gentlemen, there is a moderator."

Comparison Schawinski also interrupts at 05:04 ("That is nonsense"), without the moderator intervening.

Asymmetry: The moderator only intervenes when Ganser defends himself against Schawinski's interruptions — not during Schawinski's interruptions themselves. Partially demonstrable.

Degree of outrage: 2/5

Selectivity: 2/5

Summary: Selective outrage is demonstrable, but not extreme. Schawinski shows significantly more emotional reaction to Ganser's statements than to comparable statements by Zanetti. The moderator intervenes asymmetrically.



9. COMPLETENESS (Selective Omission — overall picture)

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Finding 1: SRF as judge in its own case

Timestamp

Entire broadcast

Missing perspective/fact: The broadcast discusses media trust without addressing the fact that SRF itself is the subject of criticism and simultaneously controls the platform.

Relevance: Fundamental conflict of interest that structures the entire broadcast.

Impact: The audience sees a debate in which the accused (SRF) is simultaneously judge, moderator and chief witness.

Finding 2: Kassensturz IHRA ruling not examined in depth

Timestamp

28:54

Missing perspective/fact: Zanetti mentions that the IHRA ruled a Kassensturz report to be one-sided against SVP. This finding — a legally binding ruling by a supervisory authority — is not examined in depth.

Relevance: An IHRA ruling is the strongest possible evidence of structural one-sidedness at SRF. It is mentioned in a subordinate clause and not pursued further.

Impact: The strongest evidence for the SVP criticism is not examined.

Finding 3: Ganser's academic work not examined on its merits

Timestamp

12:33 ff.

Missing perspective/fact: Ganser's reference to ETH discussions on WTC 7 and his doctoral thesis on Operation Gladio are not examined on their merits. Instead, he is framed as a "conspiracy theorist".

Relevance: Operation Gladio is historically documented (parliamentary investigations in Italy, EU Parliament resolution 1990). Ganser's academic work on this is not per se conspiracy theory.

Impact: A legitimate historical research perspective is delegitimised through labelling, without substantive engagement.

Summary: The broadcast systematically omits those pieces of information that would burden the image of SRF as a credible institution: the IHRA ruling on Kassensturz, the conflict of interest of SRF as judge in its own case, and the substantive examination of Ganser's academic arguments.

The debate about media trust is charged in 2017 globally by Trump's "fake news" rhetoric. In Switzerland, the No-Billag initiative is in the background, raising the existential question of public broadcasting. Two fundamentally different camps face each other: defenders of traditional media as a democratic watchdog function on the one hand, critics who denounce structural one-sidedness and war propaganda failure on the other. The invitation of Ganser turns the broadcast into a meta-debate: SRF discusses its own credibility with one of its sharpest critics.

Share of perspectives covered

Inverted: Original value measures coverage (higher = better). Displayed as deviation (higher = greater gaps).

[A] Defence of traditional media as a democratic watchdog function

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- [B] **Structural media criticism from the right (SVP position:** left-leaning bias of SRF)
- [C] **Structural media criticism from the left/system-critical (Ganser:** war propaganda, imperialism)
- [D] Economic dependencies of the media (advertisers, ownership structures)
- [E] Scientific research on media trust and media bias
- [F] International comparisons (BBC, ARD, Fox News)
- [G] **Social media as an alternative:** opportunities and risks
- [H] Legal framework (Art. 4 RTVA, licence obligations)
- [I] **Audience perspective:** How do Swiss people actually inform themselves?
- [J] Concrete examples of media failure (Iraq War, WMD lie)

[A] ADDRESSED

Timestamp: 38:41 — Quote: "No, they are needed now more than ever." — Assessment: Extensively and repeatedly represented by Schawinski, Müller, Spillmann; dominant position of the broadcast.

[B] INDICATED

Timestamp: 27:01 — Quote: "I have the feeling above all that the media are very left-leaning." — Assessment: Raised by Ruchti and Zanetti, but not examined on its merits; Schawinski contradicts directly without evidence.

[C] ADDRESSED

Timestamp: 06:07 — Quote: "I simply ask myself, how many bombs per hour does it take to receive the Nobel Peace Prize." — Assessment: Ganser raises this perspective but is repeatedly interrupted and framed as a conspiracy theorist.

[D] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: Economic dependencies of the media (advertisers, ownership structures, concentration) are not addressed; a structurally important perspective is entirely absent.

[E] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: No scientific research on media bias or media trust is cited; the debate remains at the level of opinion.

[F] INDICATED

Timestamp: 40:56 — Quote: "New York Times and Washington Post clearly better than Fox News." — Assessment: Only briefly and evaluatively mentioned, no systematic comparison.

[G] ADDRESSED

Timestamp: 38:05 — Quote: "I am glad that I can communicate with my community without distortion." — Assessment: Ganser's position on social media is raised, but not analysed neutrally.

[H] ADDRESSED

Timestamp: 19:33 — Quote: "One should be able to trust them." — Assessment: IHRA and Press Council are explained in detail; legal framework is present.

[I] INDICATED

Timestamp: 52:48 — Quote: "I think so." — Assessment: Audience voices are gathered, but not representatively; four persons, no systematic approach.

[J] ADDRESSED



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Timestamp: 41:05 — Quote: "Where President Bush told the lying stories about the ABC weapon... also spread by the Washington Post and the New York Times." — Assessment: Iraq War failure is mentioned, but immediately relativised by Schawinski.

Completeness score: 5/10

Justification: The broadcast addresses the core perspectives A, C, G, H and J, but entirely omits the economic dimension (D), scientific evidence (E) and a systematic international comparative perspective (F). The audience perspective (I) is methodologically inadequate. The dominance of media professionals among the guests (Schawinski, Müller, Spillmann, Augustin) compared to a single media critic (Zanetti) and a system-critical outsider (Ganser) creates a structural imbalance.



Soft facts — 6 qualitative techniques

10. FRAMING (setting the frame)

7/10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Finding 1: Media criticism = Trump analogy

Timestamp	00:00
Quote	<i>"The media are dishonest and lying. The media are the enemies of the people. That is what Donald Trump says. And it sounds similar in Switzerland too. System media. Left-wing mainstream. Lying press."</i>
Manipulation	The broadcast begins with an explicit equation of Swiss media criticism with Trump's rhetoric. Before a single guest has spoken, the frame is set: media criticism = populist = anti-democratic.
Why problematic	Legitimate media criticism (e.g. the IHRA ruling on Kassensturz) is delegitimised by this frame from the outset. The audience is conditioned to read media criticism as Trumpism.

Finding 2: Ganser frame "controversial author"

Timestamp	01:12
Quote	<i>"Daniele Ganser, controversial author"</i>
Manipulation	All other guests are introduced without evaluative adjectives. Only Ganser receives the adjective "controversial" — a social attribution presented as a factual qualification.
Why problematic	"Controversial" is not a substantive judgement, but a reputational judgement. It places Ganser's statements under general suspicion before he has spoken.

Finding 3: Media as "fourth estate" — unexamined axiom

Timestamp	37:12
Quote	<i>"The media have a watchdog function. They are the fourth estate."</i>
Manipulation	This self-description of the media is presented as an uncontested axiom, without questioning whether SRF actually fulfils this function or whether the watchdog function also applies to SRF itself.
Why problematic	The "fourth estate" metaphor is instrumentalised to frame media criticism as an attack on democracy.

Summary: The framing of the broadcast is consistent and set from the outset: media criticism = populism = threat to democracy. This frame is maintained through the opening sequence, the introduction and recurring Trump analogies.



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11. CHOICE OF WORDS AND TERMS

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Finding 1: "Conspiracy theorist" as a label for Ganser

Timestamp

08:16 / 23:00 / 23:08

Quote

"He is a kind of conspiracy theorist" (Schawinski, 08:16) / "That's how conspiracy theorists are allowed to react." (Schawinski, 23:00)

Manipulation

"Conspiracy theorist" is a discrediting label that is used in the broadcast as a fact, not as an assessment.

Why problematic

A neutral alternative would be: "Mr Ganser holds a minority opinion among historians on 9/11." The label "conspiracy theorist" precludes substantive engagement.

Finding 2: "Stupid lies" for Trump

Timestamp

02:46

Quote

"That is why I say stupid lies."

Manipulation

"Stupid" is a personal value judgement presented as a factual assessment.

Why problematic

A neutral alternative would be: "Trump demonstrably makes false statements." The choice of the word "stupid" emotionalises and personalises.

Finding 3: "No-Drama-Obama had no scandal"

Timestamp

32:30

Quote

"No-Drama-Obama had no scandal."

Manipulation

"No-Drama-Obama" is a political marketing term used as a factual characterisation. The statement ignores documented controversies (NSA surveillance, drone warfare, Guantanamo).

Why problematic

A neutral alternative would be: "Obama had fewer public communication scandals than Trump." The formulation sets Obama as the benchmark for upright governance.

Summary: The choice of words in the broadcast is systematically asymmetric: Trump and Ganser are labelled with discrediting terms ("stupid lies", "conspiracy theorist"), while Obama and traditional media are framed with positive terms ("No-Drama", "fourth estate", "watchdog function").



12. MODERATION BEHAVIOUR

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Finding 1: Moderator intervenes with Ganser, not with Schawinski

Timestamp 14:29

Triggering event: Ganser defends himself against Schawinski's interruptions and doctoral thesis question.

Quote (moderator) *"Mr Schawinski, excuse me, gentlemen, there is a moderator who is moderating this evening."*

Comparison Schawinski interrupts Ganser at 05:04 ("That is nonsense"), at 11:24 ("Yes, he just always goes off on a tangent") — no intervention by the moderator.

Asymmetry: The moderator only intervenes when Ganser defends himself against interruptions, not during the interruptions themselves. Demonstrable.

Finding 2: Moderator asks Zanetti harder questions than Schawinski

Timestamp 35:14 / 02:01

Triggering event: Zanetti wrote "pig journalism"; Schawinski called Trump a "conspiracy theorist".

Quote (moderator to Zanetti) *"Are you in the same tone and are you in the same tone as Donald Trump?"*

Comparison Schawinski is asked at 02:01: "Are you for example dishonest and lying?" — a question that Schawinski can easily deny.

Asymmetry: Zanetti is compared to Trump (delegitimising), Schawinski is asked a simple denial question. Demonstrable.

Finding 3: Moderator allows Schawinski to call Ganser a "conspiracy theorist" without intervening

Timestamp 23:00

Triggering event: Schawinski calls Ganser a "conspiracy theorist" and says "That is why I am not even discussing with you."

Quote (moderator) *No intervention.*

Comparison When Ganser asks Schawinski at 14:19 "What is your doctoral thesis?", the moderator immediately intervenes: "There are questions that I do not even answer."

Asymmetry: Schawinski's refusal to discuss and his label "conspiracy theorist" are not moderated; Ganser's counter-question is immediately stopped. Demonstrable.

Summary: The moderation behaviour shows a demonstrable asymmetry: Ganser's statements and reactions are moderated more strongly than Schawinski's interruptions and labels. Zanetti is compared to Trump, Schawinski is not.



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13. QUESTION ASYMMETRY

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Asymmetry 1:

To Schawinski, 01	57: "Are you for example dishonest and lying? Are you an enemy of the people?" — soft (easy to deny, rhetorical)
To Zanetti, 35	14: "Are you in the same tone and are you in the same tone as Donald Trump?" — hard (implies Trump analogy)
Comparison	Schawinski receives a question he can easily deny. Zanetti receives a question that places him in proximity to Trump. Asymmetry clearly demonstrable.

Asymmetry 2:

To Ganser, 13	19: "You say that for example also about Charlie Hebdo... There you say on Twitter, we prepared it." — hard, with incorrect quote (Ganser corrects: "No, that is the wrong one.")
To Schawinski, 05	04: No comparable confrontation with incorrect quotes or errors.
Comparison	Ganser is confronted with an incorrect quote (which he corrects), Schawinski is not. Asymmetry demonstrable.

Summary: The questions to media critics (Zanetti, Ganser) are harder and more delegitimising than the questions to media defenders (Schawinski, Müller). Ganser is confronted with an incorrect quote without the moderator picking up on the correction.



14. FALSE BALANCE

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Finding 1: Four pro-media guests vs. two media critics

Timestamp

Entire broadcast

Construct: The broadcast presents itself as a balanced debate on media trust, but has four guests from the media industry (Schawinski, Müller, Spillmann, Augustin) and only two media critics (Zanetti, Ganser) — plus one SVP-aligned audience guest (Ruchti).

Analysis

The numerical superiority of the pro-media voices is concealed by the format (discussion round). The impression is created that it is a balanced debate, even though the ratio is 4:2.

Finding 2: IHRA president as "neutral" guest

Timestamp

19:33

Construct: Augustin is presented as an independent regulatory authority that rules neutrally on media quality.

Analysis

Augustin is simultaneously a guest on the broadcast on which he would have to rule in the event of a complaint. He himself addresses this (22:49: "I thought that would not be a reason for recusal"). The presentation as "neutral" is misleading.

Summary: The broadcast creates the impression of a balanced debate, but structurally has a 4:2 superiority of pro-media voices. The IHRA president is presented as a neutral authority, even though he is sitting in the broadcast itself.



15. AGENDA-SETTING

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Finding 1: Media criticism = populism — set as an axiom

Agenda element set: Media criticism is per se suspect and must defend itself against the accusation of populism.

Timestamp

00:00 — Evidence: "The media are dishonest and lying. That is what Donald Trump says. And it sounds similar in Switzerland too."

Alternative agenda: Media criticism as a legitimate democratic practice; question of whether SRF fulfils its statutory mandate.

Finding 2: Traditional media as indispensable — set as an axiom

Agenda element set: Traditional media are necessary for democracy; their absence would be dangerous.

Timestamp

38:41 — Evidence: "No, they are needed now more than ever."

Alternative agenda: Question of whether the existing media model (licence fee funding, concentration) is the best form of democratic public sphere.

Finding 3: 9/11 research = conspiracy theory — set as an axiom

Agenda element set: Anyone who questions the official 9/11 account is a conspiracy theorist.

Timestamp

13:03 — Evidence: "That is a conspiracy theory, Mr Ganser."

Alternative agenda: Differentiation between documented historical questions (WTC 7, Operation Gladio) and unsubstantiated speculation; substantive engagement instead of labelling.

Summary: The broadcast sets three central axioms that are not questioned: media criticism is populist, traditional media are indispensable, and 9/11 research beyond the official account is conspiracy theory. These axioms structure the entire debate.



CHAPTER 4 — OVERALL EVALUATION

Results

- HARD FACTS SCORE (average criteria 1-9): 6.3 / 10
- SOFT FACTS SCORE (average criteria 10-15): 6.3 / 10

Dominant techniques

- 1. Guilt by Association (Score 8):** Ganser is framed as a "conspiracy theorist" without methodological justification, and Swiss media criticism is explicitly equated with Trump's anti-democratic rhetoric. This technique runs through the entire broadcast and delegitimises legitimate criticism through association.
- 2. Framing (Score 7):** The opening frame "media criticism = Trump = enemy of the people" is set in the introduction and maintained through recurring Trump analogies. This frame makes it structurally impossible to present media criticism as a legitimate democratic practice.
- 3. Omission / Completeness (Score 7):** The legally binding IHRA ruling on Kassensturz — the strongest available evidence of structural one-sidedness at SRF — is mentioned in a subordinate clause and not examined in depth. The fundamental conflict of interest (SRF as judge in its own case) is not addressed.

Core messages of the broadcast

MESSAGE 1 (SUBSTANTIVE): "Traditional media are indispensable for democracy, and anyone who doubts this stands in the tradition of Trump."

Technique: Framing through opening sequence, Trump analogies, Jefferson quote at the end. — Evidence: 00:00, 37:12, 37:41

MESSAGE 2 (PERSONAL): "Daniele Ganser is a conspiracy theorist whose statements need not be taken seriously."

Technique: Labelling in introduction, repeated use of the term by Schawinski without objection from the moderator. — Evidence: 01:12, 08:16, 23:00

MESSAGE 3 (SOCIETAL): "SRF fulfils its mandate; criticism of it is populist and dangerous."

Technique: SRF self-praise insert, Spillmann's Trump analogy for media criticism, Augustin's institutional legitimation. — Evidence: 42:51, 48:08, 19:33

Justification: With an overall score of 6.3/10, the broadcast is at the boundary between "clear one-sidedness" and "systematic imbalance". The broadcast violates Art. 4 RTVA in several dimensions: the selection of discussion partners is structurally unbalanced (4:2 in favour of media defenders), the portrayal of media criticism is systematically delegitimised by the Trump frame, and SRF discusses its own credibility without naming the fundamental conflict of interest. Particularly serious is the use of the label "conspiracy theorist" for Ganser without methodological justification, which violates Art. 4 para. 2 RTVA (accurate portrayal).

CONCLUSION

The Arena broadcast of February/March 2017 on the topic of media trust exhibits a clear structural one-sidedness that touches Art. 4 RTVA in several dimensions. SRF discusses its own credibility in a format that it controls itself, with a guest selection weighted 4:2 in favour of media defenders — without naming this fundamental conflict of interest. The opening frame, which explicitly equates Swiss media criticism with Trump's anti-democratic rhetoric, violates the requirement of accurate portrayal pursuant to Art. 4 para. 2 RTVA, as it delegitimises legitimate criticism (including a legally binding IHRA ruling on Kassensturz) through association. The repeated use of the label "conspiracy theorist" for Ganser without methodological justification — by a guest (Schawinski), without objection from the moderator — violates the requirement of diversity of opinion. The broadcast is not an isolated case of gross manipulation, but an example of subtle, structural one-sidedness produced through framing, guest selection and moderation asymmetries, which does not fully meet the requirements of Art. 4 RTVA regarding impartiality and accurate portrayal.



OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE 15 CRITERIA

Individual scores — all 15 criteria

No.	Criterion	Score	Classification
1	EXPERT SELECTION	7	●●●●
2	SOURCE SELECTION	6	●●●
3	TIME DISTRIBUTION	6	●●●
4	OMISSION (Selective Omission)	7	●●●●
5	NUMERICAL MANIPULATION	4	●●
6	GUILT BY ASSOCIATION	8	●●●●
7	TIMING	6	●●●
8	SELECTIVE OUTRAGE	6	●●●
9	COMPLETENESS (Selective Omission — overall picture)	7	●●●●
10	FRAMING (setting the frame)	7	●●●●
11	CHOICE OF WORDS AND TERMS	7	●●●●
12	MODERATION BEHAVIOUR	6	●●●
13	QUESTION ASYMMETRY	6	●●●
14	FALSE BALANCE	5	●●●
15	AGENDA-SETTING	7	●●●●

HARD FACTS SCORE (1-8)

6.3/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation

SOFT FACTS SCORE (9-14)

6.3/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation

OVERALL SCORE

6.3/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation

Averaged from hard facts and soft facts



KEY — Meaning of scores

Individual scores per criterion (0–10)

0	No finding	No relevant anomaly identified.
1–2	Weak finding	Minor anomaly without material impairment of impartiality.
3–4	Slight to moderate finding	Discernible tendency; relevance of impact low to moderate.
5	Moderate finding with relevance of impact	Relevant imbalance that influences the opinion-forming potential of the audience.
6	Substantial finding (threshold)	Scores from 6 are reported as "substantial findings".
7	Substantial finding	Clear, well-documented imbalance with marked relevance of impact.
8–9	Serious finding	Pronounced imbalance; several documented individual findings in this criterion.
10	Maximum severity	Systematic, pervasive imbalance in this criterion.

Aggregated deviation index — interpretation ranges

0.0 – 2.5	Unremarkable	No material patterns discernible; broadcast meets the accuracy requirement.
2.6 – 4.0	Slight imbalance	Isolated anomalies; statistically visible, but still within the tolerance range.
4.1 – 6.0	Substantial imbalance	Several substantial findings; relevant impairment of diversity of perspectives.
6.1 – 8.0	Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation	Pronounced, broadcast-wide patterns; high relevance of impact.
8.1 – 10	Fundamental systemic one-sidedness. Very high degree of bias	Maximum severity across almost all criteria; systematically one-sided reporting.

Party-political bias (-5 to +5)

-5 to -3	Strongly disadvantaged	Party is clearly disadvantaged in portrayal, speaking time or framing.
-2 to -1	Slightly disadvantaged	Discernible but weak disadvantage.
0	Neutral	No discernible preference or disadvantage.
+1 to +2	Slightly favoured	Discernible but weak preference.
+3 to +5	Strongly favoured	Party is clearly favoured in portrayal, speaking time or framing.



CHAPTER 5 — LEGAL CLASSIFICATION (Art. 4 RTVA)

Assessment under Art. 4 RTVA

Violation 1:

Norm: Art. 4 para. 2 RTVA (accurate portrayal of facts and events)

Facts: Equation of Swiss media criticism with Trump's anti-democratic rhetoric in the opening sequence, without factual justification for this equation.

Evidence: Timestamp 00:00 — Quote: "The media are dishonest and lying. That is what Donald Trump says. And it sounds similar in Switzerland too. System media. Left-wing mainstream. Lying press."

Assessment: The equation of Swiss media criticism (including a legally binding IHRA ruling) with Trump's enemy-of-the-people rhetoric is not an accurate portrayal, but an evaluative frame that structures the entire broadcast. Art. 4 para. 2 RTVA requires that facts and events be portrayed accurately — the equation of different phenomena without factual justification violates this requirement.

Violation 2:

Norm: Art. 4 para. 4 RTVA (balanced selection of discussion partners on contested topics)

Facts: Four guests from the media industry with a structural interest in the legitimacy of traditional media face two media critics. No independent media scholar, no representative of the No-Billag initiative, no media economist.

Evidence: Timestamp 01:36 ff. — Guest list: Schawinski (media entrepreneur), Müller (editor-in-chief), Spillmann (Press Council), Augustin (IHRA) vs. Zanetti (SVP), Ganser (system critic).

Assessment: Art. 4 para. 4 RTVA requires a balanced selection of discussion partners on contested topics. The 4:2 ratio in favour of media defenders in a broadcast on media trust violates this requirement, particularly since SRF itself is the subject of the criticism.

Violation 3:

Norm: Art. 4 para. 2 RTVA (accurate portrayal) in conjunction with Art. 4 para. 4 RTVA (diversity of opinion)

Facts: Repeated use of the label "conspiracy theorist" for Ganser by guest Schawinski, without objection from the moderator and without methodological justification. Ganser's academic work (Operation Gladio, historically documented) is not examined on its merits.

Evidence: Timestamp 08:16 — Quote: "He is a kind of conspiracy theorist." / 23:00 — Quote: "That's how conspiracy theorists are allowed to react."

Assessment: The broadcast allows a guest to repeatedly label another guest with a discrediting term, without the moderator demanding substantive engagement. This violates the requirement of accurate portrayal and diversity of opinion.

Violation 4:

Norm: Art. 4 para. 2 RTVA (accurate portrayal)

Facts: SRF presents its own editorial guidelines as proof of quality in a broadcast in which its quality is being discussed, without naming the fundamental conflict of interest.

Evidence: Timestamp 42:51 — Quote: "SRF journalists report accurately... A prerequisite for publication is two consistent, mutually independent sources."

Assessment: SRF's self-presentation as a guarantor of quality in a broadcast in which its quality is the subject of debate, without naming the conflict of interest, violates the requirement of accurate portrayal.

Overall assessment Art. 4 RTVA



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The broadcast exhibits four demonstrable points of contact with Art. 4 RTVA, ranging from minor violations (guest selection) to clear violations (framing of the opening sequence, uncontrolled labelling). Particularly serious is the structural conflict of interest: SRF discusses its own credibility in a format that it controls itself, with a guest selection that is structurally weighted in favour of media defenders. The legally binding IHRA ruling on Kassensturz — the strongest available evidence of structural one-sidedness at SRF — is not examined in depth, which violates the requirement of accurate portrayal. A complaint to the IHRA would be justifiable on the basis of these findings, particularly with regard to the guest selection (Art. 4 para. 4 RTVA) and the framing of the opening sequence (Art. 4 para. 2 RTVA).



CHAPTER 6 — SOURCE IN-DEPTH CHECK

1. Swiss Press Council (represented by Markus Spillmann)

1. FUNDING: Financed by publishers' associations (Swiss Media) and journalists' associations (Impressum). The media industry finances its own oversight.

2. MANDATE: Self-regulation of the media industry. Not compatible with neutral assessment of media quality — institutional interest in defending self-regulatory capacity.

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Structural: The Press Council has an institutional interest in media quality being deemed sufficient to avoid external regulation.

D1 Conflict of interest: -2

D2 Personal risk: -1

D3 Professional competence: +2

D4 Consistency of opinion: +1

D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: +1

D6 Source level: 0

TOTAL: +1 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: YELLOW

5. COUNTERVOICE: Not cited. An external media critic without institutional ties to the industry is absent.

2. IHRA (represented by Vincent Augustin)

1. FUNDING: State (OFCOM). Institutionally independent of the media industry.

2. MANDATE: Legal oversight of licensed broadcasters. Fundamentally compatible with neutral assessment.

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Augustin is a guest on the broadcast on which he would have to rule in the event of a complaint. He himself addresses this (22:49), but considers it not to be a reason for recusal — which is debatable.

D1 Conflict of interest: 0

D2 Personal risk: 0

D3 Professional competence: +2

D4 Consistency of opinion: +1

D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: +2

D6 Source level: +1

TOTAL: +6 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: GREEN

5. COUNTERVOICE: Not necessary — Augustin is the institutionally most independent voice in the broadcast.

3. SRF self-presentation (insert editorial guidelines)

1. FUNDING: SRF (public broadcaster, licence fee funded). Maximum conflict of interest: SRF presents itself as a guarantor of quality.

2. MANDATE: Not compatible with neutral assessment of its own quality.

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Maximum. SRF is simultaneously producer of the broadcast, subject of the criticism and self-presenter of its own quality.

D1 Conflict of interest: -2

D2 Personal risk: -2

D3 Professional competence: +1

D4 Consistency of opinion: 0

D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: 0

D6 Source level: -1

TOTAL: -4 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: YELLOW (marginal)

5. COUNTERVOICE: Not cited. An external quality check of the SRF guidelines is entirely absent.

IMPORTANT: "Recognised" is not a factual qualification. The fact that SRF as a public broadcaster is "recognised" does not exempt it from the obligation of accurate portrayal — on the contrary: the public service status establishes heightened requirements pursuant to Art. 4 RTVA.



Source traffic light for participants:

Source	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	Total	Traffic light
Swiss Press Council (represented by Markus Spillmann)	-2	-1	+2	+1	+1	0	+1	YELLOW
IHRA (represented by Vincent Augustin)	0	0	+2	+1	+2	+1	+6	GREEN
SRF self-presentation (insert editorial guidelines)	-2	-2	+1	0	0	-1	-4	YELLOW

Legal and methodological classification

No finding of fact	The results presented do not constitute findings of fact about individual persons, editorial teams or broadcasts. They are to be understood as the result of a standardised operationalisation, not as a determination of individual responsibility.
No legal ruling	The aggregated deviation index does not replace a legal assessment within the meaning of Art. 4 RTVA. The determination of whether a specific broadcast violates statutory requirements is the exclusive responsibility of the competent authorities (in particular IHRA).
No proof of causality	Statistical correlations are not to be interpreted as proof of causal relationships or editorial intentions. Deviation values may be influenced by topic selection, news situation, political controversy or format logic.
No judgement of intent	The analysis measures observable structural characteristics of broadcasts. A score of 7 means that a substantial imbalance has been identified — not that the editorial team intended this. The methodology makes no statements about motives or strategic objectives.
Heuristic comparison instrument	The index serves for comparative pattern recognition across thousands of broadcasts, not for precise metric measurement of individual items. Threshold values serve as heuristic orientation, not as sharp legal qualification.



APPENDIX 1: NATIONAL LEGISLATION

Legal basis Switzerland — SRG SSR

Law

Federal Act on Radio and Television (RTVA, SR 784.40)

Relevant articles

- Art. 4 para. 1 RTVA: All broadcasts of a radio or television programme must respect fundamental rights. Broadcasts must in particular respect human dignity, must not be discriminatory, must not contribute to racial hatred, must not endanger public morality, and must not glorify or trivialise violence.
- Art. 4 para. 2 RTVA: Editorial broadcasts with informational content must portray facts and events accurately, so that the audience can form its own opinion. Views and comments must be recognisable as such.
- Art. 4 para. 4 RTVA: In the totality of editorial broadcasts, the diversity of events and opinions must be adequately expressed (diversity requirement).

Core obligations

- 1. Accuracy:** Accurate portrayal of facts and events
- 2. Diversity of opinion:** Diversity of views on contested topics
- 3. Impartiality:** Balanced selection of discussion partners

Supervisory authority

- IHRA (Independent Complaints Authority for Radio and Television): Examines complaints against broadcast programmes for violation of Art. 4 RTVA
- OFCOM (Federal Office of Communications): Regulatory and supervisory authority
- Ombudsman offices of SRG: First point of contact for programme complaints

Complaints procedure

1. Ombudsman office of the respective business unit (SRF, RTS, RSI, RTR)
2. IHRA (if no agreement)
3. Federal Supreme Court (last instance)



APPENDIX 2: SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS

Literature

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- Schläpfer, D. (2026). Measuring Editorial Noise: A Retrospective Suppression Index for Public Broadcasting Content Analysis. [SSRN 6733280](#)
- Schläpfer, D. (2026). Source Traffic Light: A Six-Dimensional Credibility Framework for Systematic Source Assessment in Public Service Media. [SSRN 6733880](#)

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Unbalanced Reporting is the response to the halving initiative in Switzerland: here the manipulation techniques are explained in detail, starting with the selection of staff and source selection. After that, 15 principles are explained: omission, framing, temporal framing, guilt by association, emotionalisation, context removal and many more, illustrated with many examples. In addition, it becomes apparent where we ourselves apply these techniques — this promotes not only insight but also empathy.

Optionally the book comes with **playing cards**

Also available as an **audiobook**



The interview is not a conversation. It is a stage — and someone else has written the script.

Anyone who does not know this provides material. Good quotes that are cut incorrectly. Correct statements that end up in the wrong context. Honest answers that are framed as confessions.

This book is not a media criticism book. It is a toolkit — for everyone who has a microphone in front of their face and wants to know what they can do about it. 7 chapters. 7 tools: What an interview really is. The 7 most common traps. The three basic principles of sovereignty — anchoring, reframing, setting boundaries. Preparation in one hour. Body and voice. What to do when things go wrong. And what counts after the interview.

For politicians, activists, entrepreneurs, whistleblowers — for everyone who is exposed and wants to understand how the game works. So that they stop playing along — and start shaping it.

In A5. Direct. For preparation, for reference, for follow-up and in difficult situations



Schweizerischer Verein für ausgewogene Berichterstattung
Association suisse pour une information équilibrée
Associazione svizzera per un reporting equilibrato



You think you see the world. In reality you see the frame that someone has placed around it. Framing is the oldest and most elegant manipulation technique in the world. It does not change the facts — it changes what we make of the facts. How we feel. What we believe. How we decide. And it works — because we all participate. Daily. Unconsciously. You too. This book is not a dry textbook. It is a workbook — playful, direct, full of examples from real life. You learn not only how others frame you. You learn how you yourself frame — and how you can use it consciously and fairly.

Because those who understand framing see the world more clearly. Listen to the news differently. Conduct conversations with more confidence. And can no longer so easily have a frame imposed on them that someone else has chosen.

With many exercises and concrete examples from politics, media and everyday life — and the occasional smile.

Framing with style. Because the frame changes everything.



The SRG collects 1.56 billion francs per year — compulsorily, from every household. Anyone who feels unfairly treated can lodge a complaint. There is even an authority for this: the IHRA, the Independent Complaints Authority for Radio and Television.

Only: it is not independent. It has no sanctioning powers. And in 99.6% of all cases it decides: nothing.

This analysis lays bare the system — factually, precisely, without polemic. Procedures, personnel, powers, costs, statistics, legal recourse. And the constitutional law examination that shows: the IHRA system meets none of the three fundamental criteria — it is not appropriate, not based on separation of powers, not market-based. The authority that is supposed to protect citizens protects above all the system it was supposed to control.

Essential reading for everyone considering a complaint — and for everyone who wants to understand why genuine media oversight in Switzerland is still outstanding.