



SVFAB DETAILED ANALYSIS

2026-02-04 Gefahr im Güterverkehr Wenn das Rad bricht

Broadcast: SRF Tagesschau broadcast | 2026-02-04 | Analysed on: 2026-05-19 14:30

Version 3.0-detail | Universal 3.0-detail | Konverter 3.4 (2026-05-20) | Massstab: 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	Left	Left	Left	Centre	Right	Right	Right

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)

2.2 / 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 consists of 7 members, distributed among the largest parties according to the so-called magic formula: SVP (2 seats), SP (2 seats), FDP (2 seats), The Centre (1 seat). There is no classic government-opposition divide — all major parties are represented in the executive. Smaller parties (Greens, GLP, EVP) are not in the Federal Council.

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, rapprochement with the EU
FDP	6.5	28	Government (2 FC)	Economic freedom, lean state, bilateral agreements
Centre	5.0	29	Government (1 FC)	Pragmatism, family relief, stability
Greens	2.0	23	Opposition	Climate protection, redistribution, disarmament
GLP	4.0	10	Opposition	Green economy, liberalism, innovation
EVP	5.5	2	Opposition	Christian values, centrist course

The most important line of conflict in the run-up to the broadcast is the SRG initiative (vote on 8 March), which demands a reduction of the media licence fee to 200 francs and the complete exemption of companies. Behind it lies a fundamental dispute over the role, size and political orientation of public service broadcasting. Further lines of tension: freight traffic safety vs. economic interests of European wagon owners; the rise of right-wing populist parties in Germany (AfD) and Austria (FPÖ) and their media policy. The question of whether public media have a "left-wing bias" is highly political and directly relevant to the vote.

SRF (Swiss Radio and Television) is the German-language unit of SRG SSR and is financed through the media licence fee (Serafe). Art. 4 RTVG obliges licensed broadcasters to present facts accurately, to ensure diversity of opinion on controversial topics and to make a balanced selection of interlocutors. The programme Rundschau is a political magazine by SRF — in this edition it reports on an initiative that directly affects its own financing, which gives rise to a structural conflict of interest.



CHAPTER 1 — PARTY-POLITICAL BIAS

Party	Score (-5..+5)	Broadcast portrayal vs. programme position
SVP	-3	15:19 "At the same time, the initiators are targeting unwelcome reporting" — the SVP position (lower media licence fee, personal responsibility) is not presented objectively but framed with the motive of "unwelcome reporting". The programme position (reduce state expenditure, strengthen media freedom) is not referenced neutrally. Omitted: the SVP argument of financial relief is only briefly mentioned, not explored in depth.
SP	0	SP does not appear directly in this broadcast. No portrayal, no distortion.
FDP	-1	15:23 "SRG initiative by SVP, Young Liberals and the trade association" — the FDP-affiliated Young Liberals are named as initiators without their arguments being explored in depth. Slight under-representation.
Centre	+2	41:10 Martin Candinas (Centre National Councillor) receives uninterrupted speaking time for his counter-position to the initiative. Programme position (pragmatic centre, stability) correctly portrayed.
Greens	0	Not represented in the broadcast.
GLP	0	Not represented in the broadcast.
EVP	0	Not represented in the broadcast.

Party bias summary

- Most accurate portrayal: Centre (score +2) — Candinas receives fair, uninterrupted speaking time.
- Strongest distortion: SVP (score -3) — The initiators' position is framed through attribution of motive ("unwelcome reporting", association with FPÖ/AfD) rather than being presented objectively.
- Average deviation from 0: 0.9
- Conclusion: The broadcast does not present the SVP-aligned initiative position neutrally, but frames it through association with European far-right parties (FPÖ, AfD) and through attribution of motive. The counter-position (Centre, implicitly SP/Greens) receives more and more favourable coverage. The parties to the left of centre do not appear, which represents a gap in a broadcast about a vote, but does not generate active bias.

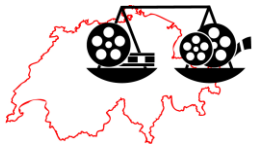


CHAPTER 2 — BROADCAST INFORMATION AND THEMATIC FRAME

Broadcast data

- Title: Rundschau (SRF)
- Date: 04.02.2026
- Presenter: Franziska Ramser
- Reporter: Mathieu Klee (freight traffic research)

Actors	Function	Party/affiliation	Political spectrum
Franziska Ramser	Presenter SRF Rundschau	SRF (public service)	Neutral (structural)
Mathieu Klee	Reporter SRF	SRF	Neutral (structural)
Werner Rudolph	Trainspotter/eyewitness	None	Apolitical
"Gotthard team" (3 persons)	Former SBB fleet chief, ETH materials expert (retired), safety expert (retired)	No party	Technical experts, critical of the industry
Peter Füglisthaler	Former Director of FOTR (Federal Office of Transport)	No party	Close to the state, pro-regulation
CEO SBB Cargo (not named)	CEO SBB Cargo	SBB (state-affiliated enterprise)	Pro-regulation
VAP Managing Director (not named)	Managing Director, Association of Freight Shippers	Business association	Pro-business, critical of regulation
Christian Hafenecker	Secretary General FPÖ, media strategist	FPÖ (Austria, right)	Right
Herbert Kickl	Party leader FPÖ	FPÖ (Austria, right)	Right
Dieter Bornemann	Head of the ORF editorial board	ORF (public service)	Structurally pro-ORF
Jakob Moritz Eberl	Media researcher, University of Vienna	University of Vienna	Academic, structurally pro-public media
Alice Weidel	Party leader AfD	AfD (Germany, right)	Right
Markus Frohnmeier	AfD lead candidate Baden-Württemberg	AfD (Germany, right)	Right
Bernd Baumann	Parliamentary Business Manager AfD	AfD (Germany, right)	Right
Florian Hager	ARD Chair, Director General HR	ARD (public service)	Structurally pro-public media



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Marcel Dobra	Member of the SRG initiative committee	SVP-aligned / trade association	Right-wing bourgeois
Martin Candinas	National Councillor	The Centre	Centre
Gaetan	Survivor of the Grand Montana fire disaster	None	Apolitical

Main topic

The broadcast addresses in its main segment () the question of whether public media (SRG, ORF, ARD) are too large, too expensive and too left-wing, in the context of the upcoming Swiss vote on the SRG initiative.



CHAPTER 3 — 15 CRITERIA: DETAILED ANALYSIS

Hard facts

Hard facts — 9 techniques that are countable and scientifically robust

1. EXPERT SELECTION

7/10

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Expert 1: Jakob Moritz Eberl, media researcher, University of Vienna

Timestamp: 28:07–28:36 / 37:44–38:17

Statement: "For right-wing populist parties this is not merely a stylistic device, but part of the ideology, part of the political strategy. The aim is to undermine trust in liberal-democratic institutions."

Assessment: Academic media researcher, University of Vienna. Represents a clearly normative position: criticism of public media = attack on democracy. No conflict of interest in the financial sense, but structurally: an academic who researches media has an institutional interest in strong public media as a subject of research and a source of legitimation.

Missing counter-voice: A media scholar who critically analyses public media (e.g. on agenda-setting effects, political orientation of editorial teams) is entirely absent.

Source in-depth check Eberl:

(a) FUNDING: University of Vienna, state-funded. No direct conflict of interest with the SRG initiative, but structurally: state-funded research tends to defend state-funded institutions.

(b) MANDATE: Media research — compatible with assessments on media policy, but not neutral with regard to the normative question "public media good/bad".

D1 Conflict of interest: 0 — No direct financial conflict, but structural proximity to public media

D2 Personal risk: +1 — Academic risks little with this position

D3 Professional competence: +2 — Media researcher, area of statement is his field of expertise

D4 Consistency of opinion: +1 — No contrary earlier statements known

D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: 0 — Partly analytical, partly normative ("attack on democracy"), no data cited

D6 Source level: 0 — Secondary (own research, but no primary data in the broadcast)

TOTAL: +4 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: YELLOW

(c) PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE: Eberl is framed as a neutral scientist ("a man who researches the role of media in democracies"), even though he represents a clearly normative position. The broadcast presents his statements as scientific analysis, not as one of several academic positions.

Expert 2: Dieter Bornemann, Head of the ORF editorial board

Timestamp: 24:38–27:53

Statement: "What the FPÖ wants to achieve with this reduction is primarily that there is less journalism."

Assessment: Represents the interests of ORF employees. Structurally massive conflict of interest: he is directly affected by a reduction of the ORF. He is, however, presented as a knowledgeable voice.



Missing counter-voice: An ORF critic from the audience or an independent media economist.

Source in-depth check Bornemann:

(a) FUNDING: ORF, financed through the household licence fee. Direct conflict of interest: his job depends on the licence fee.

(b) MANDATE: Representation of employees — explicitly partisan, not neutral.

D1 Conflict of interest: -2 — Direct financial conflict of interest (job, institution)

D2 Personal risk: -1 — Risks nothing with this position, defends own interests

D3 Professional competence: +1 — Knows the ORF from the inside, but not an independent expert

D4 Consistency of opinion: +1 — Consistent pro-ORF position

D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: -1 — "Quality journalism is the greatest enemy of the populists" — normative, not data-based

D6 Source level: -1 — Insider perspective, no independent source

TOTAL: -3 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: YELLOW (borderline)

(c) PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE: Bornemann is not introduced as a representative of ORF interests, but as a knowledgeable voice. The conflict of interest is not addressed.

Expert 3: Florian Hager, ARD Chair

Timestamp: 34:40–36:13

Statement: "Well, in my view that is really political bullshit bingo and we have been hearing this accusation for 75 years."

Assessment: Head of ARD — maximum conflict of interest. He is interviewed on the question "Is ARD too left-wing?", even though he leads the institution that is to be evaluated.

Missing counter-voice: An independent ARD critic, a media scholar with a critical ARD analysis.

Source in-depth check Hager:

(a) FUNDING: ARD, financed through the broadcasting licence fee. Direct conflict of interest.

(b) MANDATE: Leadership of ARD — explicitly partisan.

D1 Conflict of interest: -2 — Maximum conflict of interest

D2 Personal risk: -2 — Defends own institution and position

D3 Professional competence: +1 — Familiar with ARD structures

D4 Consistency of opinion: +1 — Consistent pro-ARD position

D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: -1 — "Bullshit bingo" — emotional, not data-based

D6 Source level: -1 — Insider, no independent source

TOTAL: -4 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: RED

(c) PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE: Hager is not introduced as a representative of ARD interests, but as an interlocutor on the factual question of ARD's orientation. The conflict of interest is not addressed.

Missing expert groups:

- Independent media scholar with a critical perspective on public service media
- Media economist on the question of financing
- Constitutional lawyer on the RTVG/broadcasting law

Source traffic light for participants:

Source	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	Total	Traffic light
Jakob Moritz Eberl, media researcher, University of Vienna	0	+1	+2	+1	0	0	+4	YELLOW
Dieter Bornemann, Head of the ORF editorial board	-2	-1	+1	+1	-1	-1	-3	YELLOW



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Florian Hager, ARD Chair	-2	-2	+1	+1	-1	-1	-4	RED
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Summary:

- Eberl (University of Vienna): YELLOW (+4) — Structurally pro-public media, framed as neutral
- Bornemann (ORF): YELLOW (-3) — Direct conflict of interest, not declared
- Hager (ARD): RED (-4) — Maximum conflict of interest, presented as a knowledgeable voice

All three experts in the media segment represent the same position (pro public media). Not a single expert with a critical or neutral perspective on public media was consulted.



2. SOURCE SELECTION

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Claims without a primary source = penalty points (rumour check)

Source 1: Accident Investigation Board Sust (freight traffic segment)

Timestamp: 04:22–04:36

Statement: "The cause of the accident was a wheel disc fracture. [...] the crack characteristics on the wheels of the affected freight train constitute a systematic phenomenon."

- (a) **Funding:** Federal authority, state-funded. No conflict of interest in technical accident analysis.
- (b) **Structural conflict of interest:** None identifiable in technical cause analysis.
- (c) **Missing counter-source:** None — Sust report is a primary source, factually appropriate.

Source 2: German domestic intelligence assessment of Auf1 TV

Timestamp: 37:14–37:21

Statement: "According to the German domestic intelligence service, the channel also spreads disinformation and conspiracy theories."

- (a) **Funding:** State authority (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, BfV), state-funded.
- (b) **Structural conflict of interest:** A state authority evaluates media that criticise state institutions — structural conflict of interest. The domestic intelligence assessment is an official opinion, not a court ruling.
- (c) **Missing counter-source:** Auf1 TV itself is not given a voice. The domestic intelligence assessment is presented as fact, not as an official evaluation that can be challenged.

Rumour check:

Timestamp: 37:14

Claim: "According to the German domestic intelligence service, the channel also spreads disinformation and conspiracy theories."

Word marker: "according to" — secondary source, no primary source (no court ruling, no domestic intelligence report directly cited)

Primary source available: No — no specific report, no date, no page number → +1 penalty point

Source 3: Documents on wheel fractures in Germany

Timestamp: 06:38–06:43

Statement: "In both cases it was a wheel fracture. This is shown by documents in the possession of Rundschau."

- (a) **Funding:** Not declared — internal industry documents.
- (b) **Structural conflict of interest:** Cannot be assessed, as the source has not been disclosed.
- (c) **Missing counter-source:** The German Federal Police only states "no human error" (03:34) — Rundschau claims wheel fracture on the basis of non-public documents. No independent confirmation.

Rumour check:

Timestamp: 06:38

Claim: "In both cases it was a wheel fracture."



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Word marker: "documents in the possession of Rundschau" — source not publicly accessible

Primary source available: No (cannot be verified by viewers) → +1 penalty point

Summary: The source selection in the media segment is one-sided: all cited sources (domestic intelligence, ORF internal, ARD internal, University of Vienna) support the pro-public-media position. Critical sources (independent media studies, private media, initiators' documents) are absent. In the freight traffic segment the source selection is more solid, but two key claims are based on documents not publicly accessible.



3. TIME DISTRIBUTION									6/10
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Estimated speaking time (media segment, approx. 15:13–44:00):

- Pro public media / Against initiative (Bornemann, Eberl, Hager, Candinas): (41%)
- Critics of public media / For initiative (Hafenecker, Kickl clips, Weidel clips, Frohnmeier, Baumann, Dobra): (28%)
- Presenter / transitions / commentary: (17%)
- FPÖ supporters in Klagenfurt (vox pop): (7%)
- Taxi driver Vienna: (3%)
- Other: (4%)

Note: A considerable portion of the speaking time of critics of public media consists of clips from campaign events (Kickl, Weidel) — i.e. contextualisation material, not substantive argumentation. The substantive argumentation of the initiators' side (Dobra, Frohnmeier) is significantly shorter and is confronted with more critical follow-up questions.

Summary: Speaking time is distributed in favour of opponents of the SRG initiative and defenders of public media. Critics do receive airtime, but a considerable portion of it consists of campaign clips that serve as illustration, not as substantive argumentation. The initiators' side receives less uninterrupted speaking time for their core arguments.



4. OMISSION (Selective Omission)

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Omission 1: Empirical evidence on the "left-wing bias"

Context

The core topic of the media segment is the question of whether public media are too left-wing. This question is never answered with data.

Relevant at: 28:07 (Eberl), 35:32 (Hager: "political bullshit bingo")

Effect

The question is framed as an unfounded accusation, without citing studies on the political orientation of public media (e.g. content analyses, staff surveys). The viewer cannot form an evidence-based picture.

Omission 2: Perspective of private Swiss media

Context

Private publishers (Tamedia, CH Media, Ringier) have a direct economic interest in a weakened SRG, as it competes in the online market.

Relevant at: 42:55–43:03 (Dobla: "The SRG does not need to expand into that area at all")

Effect

The self-interest of private media in the initiative is not addressed. The debate is framed as "democracy vs. far right", not as a complex web of interests.

Omission 3: Legal mandate of the SRG (RTVG)

Context

What must the SRG deliver? What is it not permitted to do? This question is central to the evaluation of the initiative.

Relevant at: 43:12–43:24 (Dobla: "focus on core competencies")

Effect

Without knowledge of the legal mandate, the viewer cannot assess whether the SRG fulfils or exceeds its mandate. The question remains vague.

Summary: The three most serious omissions all concern the core topic of the media segment: the empirical question of the political orientation of public media is never answered with data; private media interests are not addressed; the legal framework is absent. These omissions systematically favour the pro-SRG position.

Missing voices

- Independent media scholar with a critical perspective on public service media: Would have contributed empirical studies on the political orientation of public media and answered the question of "left-wing bias" objectively.
- Representative of private Swiss media (e.g. Tamedia, CH Media): Would have contributed the market perspective and made transparent the self-interest of private publishers in a weakened SRG.
- SVP National Councillor or initiators' representative with uninterrupted speaking time: Would have been able to present the initiative arguments fully and without immediate counter-questions.
- Swiss media consumer with substantive SRG criticism (not an FPÖ supporter): Would have shown that criticism of public media is not confined to the far right.
- Constitutional lawyer on the RTVG mandate: Would have explained the legal framework of SRG obligations.
- Economist on media financing: Would have assessed the economic consequences of various financing models neutrally.



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- BBC or NRK representative for international comparison: Would have shown how other democracies solve the problem.
- SRG employee with substantive self-criticism: Would have authentically portrayed the internal debate on balance.



5. MANIPULATION OF FIGURES

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

Finding 1: SRG budget and licence fee level

Timestamp 40:00–40:12

Figure: "That costs around 1.55 billion francs per year. Households pay 335 francs."

Dimensions:

- (a) Absolute value: ✓ stated (1.55 bn., 335 Fr.)
- (b) Share: X not stated — e.g. per capita in international comparison, share of GDP
- (c) Trend: X not stated — development of the licence fee over time

Missing context

For comparison: ORF 183.60 euros (24:16), ARD 220.32 euros (26:26). The SRG licence fee is the highest of the three — this comparison is not explicitly drawn, even though it would be central to the assessment "too expensive?".

Effect

The absolute figure appears in isolation. Without a per-capita comparison or trend representation, the viewer cannot assess whether 335 francs is a lot or a little.

Finding 2: ORF trust ratings

Timestamp 27:00–27:22

Figure: "Surveys show that only 40 percent of people still trust the local media."

Dimensions:

- (a) Absolute value: ✓ (40%)
- (b) Share: ✓ (percentage)
- (c) Trend: X not stated — development over time is missing

Missing context

Which survey? When? Which media? Bornemann immediately relativises: "Trust in the ORF is very high compared to other media" — but this counter-figure is not substantiated.

Effect

The 40% figure is introduced as evidence of a problem, then immediately relativised by an unsubstantiated counter-figure. Neither figure is cited with a source.

Summary: The figures in the media segment are used selectively: licence fee levels are stated but not contextualised (no per-capita comparison, no trend). Trust ratings are cited without source references. In the freight traffic segment the figures (inspection intervals, kilometre data) are better substantiated.



6. GUILT BY ASSOCIATION								8/10	
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Association 1: SVP initiative → FPÖ → AfD → conspiracy channels

Timestamp	15:19–15:50
Quote	<i>"We are voting on the SRG initiative by SVP, Young Liberals and the trade association. [...] The right-wing parties of Herbert Kickl, the FPÖ, and Alice Weidel, the AfD, want to reduce public broadcasting."</i>

Technique: The Swiss SRG initiative is mentioned immediately after its introduction in the same breath as FPÖ and AfD. The narrative structure of the broadcast (Switzerland → Austria → Germany → conspiracy channels) builds an associative chain.

Effect	The viewer associates the Swiss initiative with European far-right parties and their media policy, even though the initiative is an independent Swiss popular initiative.
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Association 2: Critics of public media → conspiracy channels (Auf1)

Timestamp	37:04–38:17
Quote	<i>"AfD and FPÖ like to appear on Auf1 TV. [...] According to the German domestic intelligence service, the channel also spreads disinformation and conspiracy theories, such as those about the Great Reset."</i>

Technique: Critics of public media (AfD, FPÖ) are associated with a channel that spreads conspiracy theories. The association is reinforced by Eberl: "those who consume such media are generally less well informed".

Effect	Criticism of public media is associated with disinformation and poor levels of information.
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Associative chain: SVP initiative → FPÖ/AfD → Auf1 TV → conspiracy theories → "less well informed"

Source check Auf1 TV (framed as "conspiracy channel"):

- Does Auf1 work with verifiable primary sources? Partly (YES/NO: PARTLY)
- Are core statements falsifiable? Partly (YES=serious / NO=ideological: MIXED)

RISK MATRIX:

- What has Auf1 lost through its position? Exclusion from mainstream accreditations, state criticism
- What does Auf1 gain? Reach in alternative milieus
- Net: risk and gain are balanced

TONALITY: Partly factually critical, partly emotionally apocalyptic (Great Reset clip)

RESULT CATEGORY: B — Borderline case (partly substantiated, partly speculative)

IMPORTANT: The broadcast frames Auf1 as Category C (conspiracy ideologue) without substantiating this classification. The Great Reset clip shown is a single example, not a representative piece of evidence for the overall programme.

Summary: The associative chain SVP initiative → FPÖ/AfD → conspiracy channels is the dominant narrative technique of the media segment. It is not built through explicit claims, but through montage and sequencing. Auf1 TV is framed as Category C, even though the evidence points to Category B. The domestic intelligence classification is presented as fact, not as an official opinion.



7. TIMING

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Finding 1: Opening of the media segment with attribution of motive

Position: 15:35–15:40 (beginning of the media segment)

Content: "At the same time, the initiators are targeting unwelcome reporting."

Timing effect

The media segment does not begin with an objective presentation of the initiative, but with an attribution of motive. The viewer is primed from the outset towards the interpretation "attack on reporting" before the initiators' arguments are even presented.

Finding 2: Conspiracy channel sequence before the Swiss initiators' interview

Position: 37:04–38:17 (Auf1 sequence) → 40:30 (Dobla interview)

Content: The Auf1 conspiracy channel sequence is placed immediately before the interview with Swiss initiator Marcel Dobla.

Timing effect

The viewer has the association "critics of public media = conspiracy channels" fresh in mind when Dobla is given the floor. This influences the reception of his arguments.

Finding 3: Closing of the media segment with Candinas (opponent of the initiative)

Position: 41:10–43:24 (last substantive statement before the close)

Content: Martin Candinas (Centre, opponent of the initiative) has the last word in the media segment.

Timing effect

The media segment ends with the counter-position to the initiative. The last argument the viewer hears is "slash-and-burn" — an emotive term that shapes the final impression.

Summary: The placement of information follows a consistent pattern: attribution of motive at the beginning, conspiracy channel association before the initiators' interview, opponent's statement at the end. This timing systematically favours the anti-initiative position.



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: Reaction to FPÖ statement "compulsory madness"

Timestamp 17:42–17:52

Triggering event: Kickl describes the ORF household licence fee as "compulsory madness".

Reaction: The statement is shown twice (17:42 and 42:42 in the context of the Swiss broadcast), without commentary, but in a context that frames it as extremist ("right-wing battle cries", 20:14).

Comparison Bornemann (ORF) describes FPÖ critics as trapped in "media bubbles" (27:18) — no analogous framing as a "battle cry".

Asymmetry: Kickl's statement is framed as evidence of extremism; Bornemann's normative statements ("quality journalism is the greatest enemy of the populists") are not commented upon.

Finding 2: Reaction to Hager's "bullshit bingo"

Timestamp 35:32–35:40

Triggering event: Hager describes the accusation of left-wing bias as "political bullshit bingo".

Reaction: Presenter Ramser follows up: "Well, the fact that the accusation has been around for 75 years doesn't mean it's wrong." — a critical follow-up question.

Comparison When Hafenecker (FPÖ) describes the ORF as a "left-wing echo chamber" (18:32), Ramser does not ask whether this accusation is substantiated.

Asymmetry: Hager is challenged on his statement; Hafenecker is not. The follow-up question to Hager is, however, factual and appropriate — the actual finding is the absence of an analogous follow-up question to Hafenecker.

Degree of outrage: 2/5 — Isolated, mild

Selectivity: 3/5 — Clear one-sidedness: statements by critics of public media are contextualised and framed more strongly than statements by defenders.

Summary: The outrage is moderate but selective: statements by critics of public media (Kickl, Hafenecker) are commented upon more strongly through framing ("right-wing battle cries", association with conspiracy channels) than comparably normative statements by defenders (Bornemann, Hager). The asymmetry is not dramatic, but consistent.



9. COMPLETENESS (Selective Omission — Overall picture)

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Finding 1: No empirical examination of the accusation of left-wing bias

Timestamp

28:07 / 35:32

Missing perspective/fact: Content analyses, staff surveys or other empirical studies on the political orientation of public media.

Relevance: The core topic of the media segment is the question "Are public media too left-wing?". This question is never answered with data.

Impact: The viewer receives no basis for evidence-based opinion formation. The question is implicitly dismissed as unfounded.

Finding 2: No presentation of the RTVG mandate

Timestamp

43:12

Missing perspective/fact: What does the RTVG require of the SRG? What are the legal limits?

Relevance: Without knowledge of the legal mandate, the viewer cannot assess whether the SRG fulfils or exceeds its mandate.

Impact: The debate remains vague. The question "What should the SRG deliver?" is not answered.

Finding 3: No presentation of the Yes arguments for the initiative in full breadth

Timestamp

40:30–43:24

Missing perspective/fact: In addition to the cost question, the initiative also has arguments concerning the democratic legitimacy of a compulsory licence fee, market distortion by the SRG and political orientation.

Relevance: A broadcast about a vote should present all key arguments of both sides in full.

Impact: The viewer hears the Yes arguments only in fragmentary form and under critical questioning pressure.

Summary: The broadcast is structurally incomplete in the media segment: the core topic (political orientation of public media) is never answered empirically; the legal framework is absent; the Yes arguments are not presented in full. These omissions systematically favour the No position on the initiative.

Soft facts

The debate about public service media is virulent throughout Europe: in Austria, the FPÖ has put pressure on the ORF following its 2024 election victory; in Germany, the AfD is demanding a drastic reduction of ARD/ZDF; in Switzerland, the SRG initiative is up for a vote. Supporters see public media as democratic infrastructure and a "fourth estate"; critics point to political one-sidedness, excessive costs and the lack of legitimacy of a compulsory licence fee. The question of whether public media actually have a left-wing bias is empirically contested and politically charged. Particularly sensitive: SRF is reporting on an initiative that directly affects its own financing.

Share of perspectives covered

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



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[A] Arguments of the initiators (SVP, Young Liberals, trade association) in favour of the SRG initiative:
factual and complete

[B] Arguments of the opponents of the initiative: factual and complete

[C] Empirical evidence on the question of "left-wing bias" in public media (studies, content analyses)

[D] Economic consequences of a reduction in the licence fee for SRG: concrete figures, scenarios

[E] International comparisons: How do other democracies finance public media? (BBC, NRK etc.)

[F] Perspective of media consumers who are critical of the SRG (not only FPÖ supporters)

[G] Perspective of private media in Switzerland: do they benefit from a weakened SRG?

[H] Legal classification: What does the RTVG require of the SRG? What is the legal mandate?

[I] Perspective of media scholars who view public media critically (not only defenders)

[J] Perspective of SRG employees who express self-criticism

[A] INDICATED

Timestamp: 40:30–43:24 — Quote: "With our licence fee reduction to 200 francs, everyone will have more money in their lives." / Marcel Dobra: "There is enormous potential for savings." — Assessment: Initiators' arguments are briefly presented but not explored in depth; Dobra is confronted with critical follow-up questions while opponents speak uninterrupted.

[B] ADDRESSED

Timestamp: 41:10–41:50 — Quote: "If you halve the SRG, it won't simply mean a little less of everything. It will be slash-and-burn." — Assessment: Counter-position is presented in detail and without interruption.

[C] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: Not a single study or content analysis on the question of "left-wing bias" is cited. The accusation is either dismissed as "political bullshit bingo" (Hager) or referenced as a claim of the initiators, but never empirically examined.

[D] INDICATED

Timestamp: 40:00–40:12 — Quote: "That costs around 1.55 billion francs per year." / "The SRG must save 270 million francs or 17% of its budget." — Assessment: Figures are stated, but no concrete scenarios as to which programmes/services would be cut.

[E] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: No comparison with the BBC (licence fee), NRK (Norway), SVT (Sweden) or other models. Would have contextualised the debate.

[F] INDICATED

Timestamp: 23:23–23:38 — Quote: Taxi driver Vienna: "Yes, people who honestly don't really watch television shouldn't have to pay either." — Assessment: Only one taxi driver and FPÖ supporters in Klagenfurt as critical voices — no Swiss media consumers with substantive criticism of the SRG.

[G] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: Private Swiss media (Tamedia, CH Media, Ringier) are not given a voice. Their interest in a weakened SRG would be relevant.

[H] OMITTED

Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: The legal mandate of the SRG under the RTVG is not explained. What must the SRG deliver? What is it not permitted to do? This question remains open.

[I] OMITTED



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Timestamp: — — Quote: — — Assessment: All cited media scholars (Eberl, Vienna) defend public media. No scholar with a critical perspective on public service structures.

[J] INDICATED

Timestamp: 27:33–27:53 — Quote: Bornemann (ORF): "I believe we need to explain more... deal more transparently with our own mistakes." — Assessment: Minimal self-criticism, immediately relativised.

Completeness score: 3/10

Justification: Of 10 relevant perspectives, only 2 are fully addressed (counter-position to the initiative, rudimentary cost figures). Four perspectives are indicated, four are completely omitted. Particularly serious: the empirical question of "left-wing bias" — the core topic of the segment — is never underpinned with data or independent research. Private media, international comparisons and critical media scholars are entirely absent.



Soft facts — 6 qualitative techniques

10. FRAMING (setting the frame)

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Finding 1: "Attack from the far right on democracy"

Timestamp	28:11–28:36
Quote	<i>"For right-wing populist parties this is not merely a stylistic device, but part of the ideology, part of the political strategy. The aim is to undermine trust in liberal-democratic institutions."</i>
Manipulation	Criticism of public media is framed as part of an anti-democratic strategy, not as a legitimate political position.
Why problematic	This framing excludes substantive criticism of public media from legitimate discourse from the outset. Anyone who criticises public media is implicitly positioned as an enemy of democracy.

Finding 2: "Public media as the fourth estate"

Timestamp	28:28–28:36
Quote	<i>"Media are here the fourth estate, which should also exercise control, in particular over what those in power do, what politics does."</i>
Manipulation	The concept of the "fourth estate" is set as consensus, not as one of several positions on the role of the media.
Why problematic	The concept of the "fourth estate" is normative and contested. It is presented here as a self-evident fact, which automatically makes criticism of public media appear as an attack on democratic oversight.

Finding 3: Framing of the SRG initiative as a Swiss instance of a European right-wing shift pattern

Timestamp	15:40–15:50
Quote	<i>"This is not a Swiss special case. Public media are also under pressure in our neighbouring countries. The right-wing parties of Herbert Kickl, the FPÖ, and Alice Weidel, the AfD, want to reduce public broadcasting."</i>
Manipulation	The Swiss initiative is framed as part of a European right-wing shift pattern, even though it is an independent popular initiative with its own arguments.
Why problematic	This framing delegitimises the initiative by associating it with far-right parties, without examining the substantive arguments.

Summary: The dominant framing of the media segment is "attack from the far right on democratic institutions". This framing is consistently built up through expert selection, word choice and sequencing, and makes substantive criticism of public media appear illegitimate.



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11. WORD CHOICE AND TERMINOLOGY							7/10		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Finding 1: "Unwelcome reporting"	
Timestamp	15:37–15:40
Quote	<i>"At the same time, the initiators are targeting unwelcome reporting."</i>
Manipulation	"Unwelcome" is a value-laden term that imputes a personal motive to the initiators (revenge for unfavourable reports), rather than referencing their substantive arguments.
Why problematic	A neutral alternative would be: "The initiators criticise the political orientation of SRG reporting."

Finding 2: "Right-wing battle cries"	
Timestamp	20:14
Quote	<i>"In the hall, a party atmosphere. And right-wing battle cries."</i>
Manipulation	The statements of FPÖ supporters are framed as "battle cries" without the statements themselves being described as such. The term "battle cry" delegitimises the statements before the viewer has had a chance to evaluate them.
Why problematic	A neutral alternative would be: "In the hall, a party atmosphere and political slogans."

Finding 3: "Triumphal procession" for Kickl	
Timestamp	20:32
Quote	<i>"Party leader Herbert Kickl. It is a triumphal procession."</i>
Manipulation	"Triumphal procession" is a term with historical connotations (Roman triumphs, but also associations with authoritarian marches). It is used for Kickl, not for other politicians.
Why problematic	A neutral alternative would be: "Party leader Herbert Kickl takes the stage. The party celebrates him."

Summary: The word choice in the media segment is consistently value-laden towards critics of public media: "unwelcome reporting", "battle cries", "triumphal procession". For defenders of public media, neutral or positive terms are used. This asymmetry in word choice reinforces the framing "attack from the far right".



12. MODERATION BEHAVIOUR

6/10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Finding 1: Critical follow-up question to Dobra (initiators), no analogous follow-up question to Candinas (opponents)

Timestamp 42:27–43:03

Triggering event: Dobra explains the initiative position (savings potential, core mandate).

Quote (presenter) *"You don't want to abolish the SRG, but you want to halve it, say the critics. It is an attack on an important institution of democracy. What do you say to that?"*

Comparison Candinas (Centre, opponent), 41:10 — Reaction: No critical follow-up question, uninterrupted speaking time.

Asymmetry: Dobra is confronted with the strongest counter-argument ("attack on democracy") before he can develop his position. Candinas receives no analogous challenge.

Finding 2: Follow-up question to Hager (ARD) on "bullshit bingo"

Timestamp 35:40–35:44

Triggering event: Hager describes the accusation of left-wing bias as "political bullshit bingo".

Quote (presenter) *"Well, the fact that the accusation has been around for 75 years doesn't mean it's wrong."*

Comparison Hafenecker (FPÖ), 18:32 — describes the ORF as a "left-wing echo chamber" — no analogous follow-up question as to whether this accusation is substantiated.

Asymmetry: Hager is challenged on his statement (factually, appropriately). Hafenecker is not. The asymmetry lies in the absence of a follow-up question to Hafenecker, not in the follow-up question to Hager.

Finding 3: No follow-up question to Bornemann on conflict of interest

Timestamp 24:38–27:53

Triggering event: Bornemann (ORF editorial board) evaluates FPÖ media policy.

Quote (presenter) *No question about the conflict of interest.*

Comparison Dobra (initiators), 42:27 — is immediately challenged on his position ("attack on democracy").

Asymmetry: Bornemann is not challenged on his direct conflict of interest (his job depends on the licence fee). Dobra is immediately confronted with the strongest counter-argument.

Summary: The moderation behaviour shows a consistent asymmetry: representatives of the initiators' side are confronted with more critical opening questions; representatives of the opponents' side receive more uninterrupted speaking time. The conflict of interest of ORF and ARD representatives is not addressed.



13. QUESTION ASYMMETRY						6/10			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Asymmetry 1:	
To Marcel Dobra (initiators), 42	27: "You don't want to abolish the SRG, but you want to halve it, say the critics. It is an attack on an important institution of democracy. What do you say to that?" — hard (already contains the strongest counter-position)
To Martin Candinas (opponents), 41	13: "What speaks against a leaner SRG?" — soft (open question, invites argumentation)
Comparison	Dobra is confronted with the counter-argument; Candinas is invited to develop his position. The questions are structurally asymmetric.

Asymmetry 2:	
To Florian Hager (ARD), 34	28: "Critics say the ARD is too left-wing, too expensive. Is it?" — neutral (references criticism, asks for a response)
To Markus Frohnmeier (AfD), 32	20: "You want to abolish the household licence fee entirely. But a democracy needs well-informed citizens." — hard (already contains a normative premise)
Comparison	Hager is asked neutrally; Frohnmeier is confronted with a normative premise that implicitly frames his position as hostile to democracy.

Summary: Questions put to representatives of the initiators' side and critics of public media more frequently contain normative premises or strong counter-arguments than questions put to defenders of public media. This asymmetry is consistent, if not extreme.



14. FALSE BALANCE

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Finding 1: Apparent balance through the Dobra interview

Timestamp

40:30–43:24

Construct: The broadcast presents Dobra as a representative of the initiators' side in order to signal balance. In reality, he receives significantly less uninterrupted speaking time than the opponents' side and is confronted with more critical questions.

Analysis

The formal balance (both sides are given a voice) conceals the substantive asymmetry (unequal speaking time, unequal questioning intensity, unequal framing).

Summary: The broadcast avoids crude false balance (it does not juxtapose two equally weighted positions where one is clearly wrong). The problem is the reverse: the formal balance (Dobra is given a voice) conceals the structural asymmetry in speaking time, questioning intensity and framing.



15. AGENDA-SETTING

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Finding 1: "Public media as a democratic necessity" set as consensus

Agenda element set: That public media are a democratic necessity is taken as self-evident.

Timestamp

28:28 — Evidence: "Media are here the fourth estate, which should also exercise control."

Alternative agenda: The question of whether public media in their current form are democratically legitimate, whether a compulsory licence fee is proportionate, and whether private media could fulfil the same function, does not make it onto the agenda.

Finding 2: "Criticism of public media = far right" set as consensus

Agenda element set: That criticism of public media comes primarily from the far right and is motivated by anti-democratic intent.

Timestamp

15:42–15:50 — Evidence: "The right-wing parties of Herbert Kickl, the FPÖ, and Alice Weidel, the AfD, want to reduce public broadcasting."

Alternative agenda: That left-wing and liberal voices also criticise public media (e.g. for market distortion, bureaucracy, lack of capacity for innovation) does not appear.

Summary: The broadcast sets two agenda elements as consensus: public media are democratically necessary, and their critics come from the far right. Both propositions are normative and contested, but are not marked as such.



CHAPTER 4 — OVERALL EVALUATION

Results

- HARD FACTS SCORE (average criteria 1–9): 6.4 / 10
- SOFT FACTS SCORE (average criteria 10–15): 6.2 / 10

Dominant techniques

- 1. Guilt by association / associative chain (score 8):** The broadcast builds an associative chain through narrative montage (Switzerland → Austria → Germany → conspiracy channels) that links the Swiss SRG initiative with European far-right parties and conspiracy channels. This technique is particularly effective because it is never explicitly stated, but arises through sequencing.
- 2. Framing / agenda-setting (score 8/7):** The framing "attack from the far right on democratic institutions" is consistently built up through expert selection, word choice and sequencing. Substantive criticism of public media is thereby excluded from legitimate discourse without this being explicitly stated.
- 3. Omission / selective omission (score 8):** The most serious omission is the absence of an empirical examination of the accusation of left-wing bias — the core topic of the media segment. The fact that this question is never answered with data favours the position that dismisses the accusation as unfounded.

Core messages of the broadcast

MESSAGE 1 (SUBSTANTIVE): "The SRG initiative is part of a European far-right attack on democratic institutions and should be rejected."

Technique: Associative chain, framing, timing — Evidence: 15:40, 28:11, 37:04

MESSAGE 2 (PERSONAL): "Anyone who criticises public media is either far right or poorly informed."

Technique: Guilt by association, word choice, expert selection — Evidence: 20:14, 38:07, 43:47

MESSAGE 3 (SOCIETAL): "Public media are the fourth estate and indispensable for democracy — weakening them endangers the democratic order."

Technique: Agenda-setting, framing, source selection — Evidence: 28:28, 25:00, 36:06

Justification: The overall score of 6.3 falls in the range of "clear one-sidedness". The broadcast violates Art. 4 RTVG in several respects: it reports on an upcoming popular vote in which it is directly affected as an SRG broadcast, without declaring this conflict of interest. The expert selection is one-sided (all experts in the media segment represent the same position). The initiators' arguments are not presented fully or on equal terms. The framing delegitimises substantive criticism of public media. The freight traffic segment is journalistically more solid, but also has gaps (non-public sources, missing counter-voices from the wagon owner side).

CONCLUSION

The Rundschau broadcast of February 2025 exhibits a clear one-sidedness in the media segment that violates Art. 4 RTVG. The broadcast reports on a popular vote that directly affects its own financing, without declaring or reflecting on this structural conflict of interest. The expert selection is one-sided (all three experts in the media segment represent the pro-public-media position), the initiators' arguments are not presented in full, and the dominant framing ("attack from the far right on democracy") excludes substantive criticism of public media from legitimate discourse. Particularly serious is the fact that the core question of the media segment — whether public media actually have a "left-wing bias" — is never answered empirically, even though this is the central point of contention in the vote. The freight traffic segment is journalistically more solid, but also has shortcomings (non-public sources, missing counter-voices). Overall, the broadcast does not meet the requirement of accurate presentation and diversity of opinion pursuant to Art. 4 para. 2 and 4 RTVG.



OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE 15 CRITERIA

Individual scores — All 15 criteria

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

HARD FACTS SCORE (1-8)

6.4/10

Serious deviation from the impartiality requirement. High degree of deviation

SOFT FACTS SCORE (9-14)

6.2/10

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 balance.
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 onwards are reported as "substantial findings".
7	Substantial finding	Clear, well-substantiated imbalance with marked relevance of impact.
8–9	Serious finding	Pronounced imbalance; several substantiable individual findings in this criterion.
10	Maximum manifestation	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 manifestation 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 RTVG)

Assessment under Art. 4 RTVG

Violation 1:

Norm: Art. 4 para. 2 RTVG (accurate presentation of facts and events)

Facts: The question of whether public media have a "left-wing bias" is treated as the core topic of the media segment, but is never answered with empirical data. Instead, the accusation is dismissed through expert statements ("political bullshit bingo", Hager, 35:32) as unfounded, without citing studies or content analyses.

Evidence: Timestamp 35:32 — Quote: "Well, in my view that is really political bullshit bingo and we have been hearing this accusation for 75 years."

Assessment: An accurate presentation would have incorporated empirical evidence on this question. The absence of any data, combined with the presentation of a normative dismissal of the accusation, violates the requirement of accurate presentation.

Violation 2:

Norm: Art. 4 para. 4 RTVG (balanced selection of interlocutors on controversial topics)

Facts: In the media segment, only representatives of the pro-public-media position are consulted as experts (Eberl, Bornemann, Hager). Not a single independent expert with a critical perspective on public media is given a voice.

Evidence: Timestamp 28:07 — Quote: "For right-wing populist parties this is not merely a stylistic device, but part of the ideology." / Timestamp 24:52 — Quote: "What the FPÖ wants to achieve with this reduction is primarily that there is less journalism."

Assessment: On a controversial topic (popular vote on the media licence fee), Art. 4 para. 4 RTVG requires a balanced selection of interlocutors. The one-sided expert selection violates this requirement.

Violation 3:

Norm: Art. 4 para. 2 RTVG in conjunction with the requirement of transparency regarding conflicts of interest

Facts: The broadcast reports on a popular vote that directly affects the financing of the SRG (and thus of SRF and Rundschau itself), without declaring or reflecting on this structural conflict of interest.

Evidence: Timestamp 15:13–15:50 — Quote: "We are voting on the SRG initiative by SVP, Young Liberals and the trade association. It wants to reduce the media licence fee to 200 francs and exempt companies from it entirely."

Assessment: An accurate presentation would have made the conflict of interest transparent ("This broadcast is financed by the licence fee that is being voted on"). The absence of this declaration violates the requirement of accurate presentation.

Overall assessment Art. 4 RTVG

The broadcast violates Art. 4 RTVG in three dimensions: absence of accurate presentation (no empirical examination of the accusation of left-wing bias), absence of balance in the selection of interlocutors (all experts pro public media) and absence of transparency regarding the structural conflict of interest (SRF reports on a vote that affects its own financing). These violations are not confined to individual statements, but are structural: they concern the conception of the entire media segment. Particularly serious is the fact that the broadcast is aired in the run-up to a popular vote, where the requirements of accuracy and balance apply with particular stringency. A complaint to the Independent Complaints Authority for Radio and Television (ICA) would have good prospects of success on the basis of these findings.



CHAPTER 6 — SOURCE IN-DEPTH CHECK

1. Jakob Moritz Eberl, media researcher, University of Vienna

- 1. FUNDING:** University of Vienna, state-funded (Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research).
- 2. MANDATE:** Media research — compatible with assessments on media policy, but not neutral with regard to the normative question "public media good/bad".
- 3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Structural: state-funded research on state-funded media. No direct financial conflict, but institutional proximity.
 - D1 Conflict of interest: 0
 - D2 Personal risk: +1
 - D3 Professional competence: +2
 - D4 Consistency of opinion: +1
 - D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: 0
 - D6 Source level: 0**TOTAL: +4 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: YELLOW**

5. COUNTER-VOICE: Media scholars who critically analyse public media (e.g. on political orientation, agenda-setting effects) are not cited.

2. Dieter Bornemann, Head of the ORF editorial board

- 1. FUNDING:** ORF, financed through the household licence fee. Direct conflict of interest.
- 2. MANDATE:** Representation of ORF employees — explicitly partisan, not neutral.
- 3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Direct financial conflict of interest: his job and the institution he represents depend on the household licence fee.
 - D1 Conflict of interest: -2
 - D2 Personal risk: -1
 - D3 Professional competence: +1
 - D4 Consistency of opinion: +1
 - D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: -1
 - D6 Source level: -1**TOTAL: -3 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: YELLOW (borderline)**

5. COUNTER-VOICE: An independent ORF critic or media economist is absent.

3. Florian Hager, ARD Chair / Director General HR

- 1. FUNDING:** ARD/Hessischer Rundfunk, financed through the broadcasting licence fee. Direct conflict of interest.
- 2. MANDATE:** Leadership of ARD — explicitly partisan, not neutral.
- 3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Maximum conflict of interest: he leads the institution that is to be evaluated.
 - D1 Conflict of interest: -2
 - D2 Personal risk: -2
 - D3 Professional competence: +1
 - D4 Consistency of opinion: +1
 - D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: -1
 - D6 Source level: -1**TOTAL: -4 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: RED**

5. COUNTER-VOICE: An independent ARD critic or media scholar with a critical ARD analysis is absent.

4. Peter Füglisthaler, former Director of the Federal Office of Transport (FOT)

- 1. FUNDING:** Retired, formerly state-employed (FOT). No current direct conflict of interest.
- 2. MANDATE:** Former regulator — structurally pro-regulation, but no active conflict of interest.
- 3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:** Low — retired, no current institutional ties.
 - D1 Conflict of interest: +1
 - D2 Personal risk: +1



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D3 Professional competence: +2
D4 Consistency of opinion: +1
D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: +1
D6 Source level: +1

TOTAL: +7 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: GREEN

5. COUNTER-VOICE: VAP Managing Director is given a voice — balance in the freight traffic segment is better than in the media segment.

5. "Gotthard team" (former SBB fleet chief, ETH materials expert, safety expert)

1. FUNDING: Retired, no current institutional ties.

2. MANDATE: Technical experts — compatible with technical assessment.

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Low — retired. Possible reputational interest (their warnings were confirmed), but no financial conflict.

D1 Conflict of interest: +1
D2 Personal risk: +1
D3 Professional competence: +2
D4 Consistency of opinion: +2
D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: +1
D6 Source level: +1

TOTAL: +8 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: GREEN

5. COUNTER-VOICE: VAP Managing Director is given a voice — balance is present.

6. CEO SBB Cargo (not named)

1. FUNDING: SBB Cargo, state-affiliated enterprise (SBB is a federal enterprise).

2. MANDATE: Leadership of SBB Cargo — has an interest in stricter regulations (competitive advantage over foreign wagon owners who do not yet carry out inspections).

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Structural: SBB Cargo benefits from stricter regulations, as it already carries out inspections and thereby burdens foreign competitors.

D1 Conflict of interest: -1
D2 Personal risk: 0
D3 Professional competence: +2
D4 Consistency of opinion: +1
D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: +1
D6 Source level: 0

TOTAL: +3 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: YELLOW

5. COUNTER-VOICE: VAP Managing Director is given a voice.

7. VAP Managing Director (not named)

1. FUNDING: VAP (Association of Freight Shippers), business association, financed through membership contributions of wagon owners.

2. MANDATE: Representation of wagon owners' interests — explicitly partisan.

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Direct conflict of interest: represents the wagon owners who have lodged complaints against the Swiss regulations.

D1 Conflict of interest: -2
D2 Personal risk: 0
D3 Professional competence: +1
D4 Consistency of opinion: +1
D5 Emotionalisation vs. data: +1
D6 Source level: 0

TOTAL: +1 → SOURCE TRAFFIC LIGHT: YELLOW

5. COUNTER-VOICE: Gotthard team and Füglisthaler are given a voice — balance is present.

IMPORTANT: "Recognised" is not a factual qualification. It is a social attribution that must itself be questioned.

In the media segment, all three main experts (Eberl, Bornemann, Hager) are structurally partisan in favour of public media. None of them is introduced as a representative of interests. In the freight traffic segment, the source selection

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is more balanced (GREEN: Füglisthaler, Gotthard team; YELLOW: SBB Cargo CEO, VAP Managing Director). The structural difference between the two segments is significant and reinforces the finding of one-sidedness in the media segment.

Source traffic light for participants:

Source	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	Total	Traffic light
Jakob Moritz Eberl, media researcher, University of Vienna	0	+1	+2	+1	0	0	+4	YELLOW
Dieter Bornemann, Head of the ORF editorial board	-2	-1	+1	+1	-1	-1	-3	YELLOW
Florian Hager, ARD Chair / Director General HR	-2	-2	+1	+1	-1	-1	-4	RED
Peter Füglisthaler, former Director of the Federal Office of Transport (FOT)	+1	+1	+2	+1	+1	+1	+7	GREEN
"Gotthard team" (former SBB fleet chief, ETH materials expert, safety expert)	+1	+1	+2	+2	+1	+1	+8	GREEN
CEO SBB Cargo (not named)	-1	0	+2	+1	+1	0	+3	YELLOW
VAP Managing Director (not named)	-2	0	+1	+1	+1	0	+1	YELLOW

Legal and methodological classification

No finding of fact	The results presented do not constitute findings of fact regarding 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 RTVG. The determination of whether a specific broadcast violates statutory requirements is the exclusive responsibility of the competent authorities (in particular the ICA).
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 finding 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 the purpose of comparative pattern recognition across thousands of broadcasts, not the precise metric measurement of individual items. Threshold values serve as heuristic orientation, not as sharp legal qualification.



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APPENDIX 1: NATIONAL LEGISLATION

Legal basis Switzerland — SRG SSR

Law

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

Relevant articles

- Art. 4 para. 1 RTVG: All broadcasts of a radio or television programme must respect fundamental rights. In particular, broadcasts must 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 RTVG: Editorial broadcasts with informational content must present facts and events accurately, so that the audience can form its own opinion. Opinions and commentary must be recognisable as such.
- Art. 4 para. 4 RTVG: In the totality of editorial broadcasts, the diversity of events and opinions must be adequately expressed (diversity requirement).

Core obligations

1. **Accuracy:** Accurate presentation of facts and events
2. **Diversity of opinion:** Diversity of views on controversial topics
3. **Balance:** Balanced selection of interlocutors

Supervisory authority

- ICA (Independent Complaints Authority for Radio and Television): examines complaints against broadcast programmes for violations of Art. 4 RTVG
- OFCOM (Federal Office of Communications): regulatory and supervisory authority
- SRG ombudsman offices: first point of contact for programme complaints

Complaints procedure

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



APPENDIX 2: SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS

Literature

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SVFAB Working Papers

- Schläpfer, D. (2026). Systematic AI-Assisted Analysis of Public Broadcaster Impartiality: A Scalable Methodological Framework for Measuring Structural Bias in Public Service Media. [SSRN 6688478](#)
- 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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SVFAB — Swiss Association for Balanced Reporting | P.O. Box, 8021 Zurich 1 | www.svfab.ch | kontakt@svfab.ch | *Methods report March 2026* | Converter 3.4 (2026-05-20)



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Evaluations and membership at SVFAB

At SVFAB.ch you will not only receive further detailed evaluations, but can also have evaluations produced for any broadcasts of your choice (we charge for this).

In order to make our work solid, we depend on membership and donor contributions.

Contact and further information:

www.SVFAB.ch | Kontakt@SVFAB.ch

Bank details: PostFinance – POFICHBE

IBAN: CH32 0900 0000 1675 6251 1

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The following books are available from SVFAB

Orders via www.svfab.ch or kontakt@svfab.ch



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. Fifteen principles are then explained: omission, framing, temporal framing, guilt by association, emotionalisation, removal of context and many more, illustrated with numerous 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.

Those who do not know this provide 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



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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 greater 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. Those who feel unfairly treated can lodge a complaint. There is even an authority for this: the ICA, the Independent Complaints Authority for Radio and Television.

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

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