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## FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

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# Switzerland

[Switzerland](#)[Freedom of the Press 2013](#)

Freedom of expression is guaranteed under Article 16 of the constitution, while Article 93 explicitly guarantees the independence of broadcast media. The penal code prohibits public incitement to racial hatred or discrimination, spreading racist ideology, and denying crimes against humanity. The law does not specifically prohibit anti-Semitic speech or Holocaust denial, though there have been convictions for such expression in the recent past. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled in June 2012 that Swiss prison officials' 2004 refusal to allow a television station to air an interview with an inmate serving time for murder violated freedom of expression because the authorities "failed to establish that the ban on filming met a pressing social need."

It is a crime to publish information based on leaked "secret official discussions," particularly regarding banking information. In January 2011, Swiss authorities arrested a former banker after he gave information on wealthy tax evaders to the antisecrecy organization WikiLeaks. In 2012, the media continued to report on similar whistle-blower scandals. A 2006 transparency law has not been used

extensively due to a lack of awareness of its existence and provisions.

Members of the press rarely suffer attacks or physical harassment in the course of their work.

Large publishing houses control most of the print sector, and such concentration of ownership has forced many stand-alone newspapers to merge or shut down. Broadcast media are dominated by the public-service Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR), which is obliged to carry content in each of Switzerland's four official languages—French, German, Italian, and Romansh. There are 3 German, 2 French (also broadcasting in Romansch), and 1 Italian television channels, and 17 radio stations. Radio has maintained its popularity, though because of the country's linguistic divisions, most private stations are local or regional. Swiss television viewers also have extensive access to cable services and foreign channels. To accommodate multiplatform access, consultations started in May 2012 on a reform that would substitute the radio and television reception fee with a universal fee paid by every household. The internet, which is generally unrestricted, was accessed by approximately 85 percent of the population in 2012.

## 2013 SCORES

PRESS STATUS

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PRESS FREEDOM SCORE

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