



14 January 2019

---

## **Geneva Circular no. 1**

Subject: **Swiss radio and television license fees**

1. The purpose of the present circular is to inform staff members of a diplomatic note dated 20 December 2018 received from the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations Office and to the other international organizations in Geneva on legislative amendments to the Federal Act on Radio and Television, which took effect on 1 January 2019. Please consult the attached text of the diplomatic note for further information.
2. This information circular will remain in effect until further notice.

*(signed)* Clemens Adams  
Director  
Division of Administration  
United Nations Office at Geneva

Annex

**Diplomatic note dated 20 December 2018 from the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations Office and to other international organizations in Geneva**

The Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations Office and to the other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the International Organizations based in Switzerland and has the honour to communicate the following information regarding concerning amendments to the Federal Act on Radio and Television which take effect on 1 January 2019.

In June 2015, the Swiss electorate approved a revision of the Federal Act on Radio and Television (RTVA) and the applicable implementing Ordinance (RTVO). The new provisions take effect on 1 January 2019. From that date, the licence fee linked to the ownership of a radio and/or television will be replaced by a flat fee, which will no longer be based on a customer's declaration but will be charged automatically to all persons resident in Switzerland (Art. 69a RTVA). One fee per household will be charged, amounting to CHF 365 per year. The licence fee will be collected by SERAFE AG, and no longer by BILLAG AG.

International organizations will continue to be exempt from the fee, provided they are not considered as undertakings under Article 70 RTV A (under this article, an undertaking is defined as any entity registered with the Federal Tax Administration in the register of persons subject to VAT).

Currently all staff members of the international organizations, irrespective of their status, are subject to payment of the licence fee. From 1 January 2019, senior management and senior officials who hold a type 'B' or 'C' legitimation card of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, as well as their family members holding the same type of legitimation card, will be exempt from payment of the licence fee (Art. 61 para. 3 (b) RTVO). For further information, please refer to the notice published on the Swiss mission's website.<sup>1</sup> The above-mentioned persons will be automatically exempt from the fee. Persons subject to the fee until 31 December 2018 will be exempt from it automatically from 1 January 2019. No action is required on their part.

Other staff members of the international organizations, including those of Swiss nationality, will continue to remain subject to the fee.

The Swiss Mission thanks the international organizations in advance for informing their staff members of the contents of this circular verbal note.

The Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations Office and to the other international organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to convey to the international Organizations based in Switzerland the assurances of its highest consideration.

---

<sup>1</sup> Information note on Radio and television licence fee: <https://www.dfae.admin.ch/missions/mission-onu-geneve/en/home/manual-regime-privileges-and-immunities/introduction/manual-taxation/Redevance-radio-TV-OI.html>