

VareseNews

Swiss TV explain: “This is why you can’t see us”

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Since the “switch-off”, what has been the most serious loss for many people in Varese? Swiss television, of course. From your comments, it seems clear: RAI4, Mediaset Extra and Cielo interest you precious little, what is more important to you is to be able to see the dear old Swiss TV, with its, possibly, more independent news programme, and high quality broadcasts.

In some parts of the Province, however, the signal has been lost since the “switch-off”, and there has been panic. We are not the only ones to have noticed, the Swiss broadcasting company, RSI, has, too. **“We are fully aware that the people of Varese love our programmes,”** RSI’s foreign relations manager, Stefano Franchini, told us. “For over a year, we have received at least one call per day from Italy, some of them can no longer see us, and they’re sorry about that. Since the ‘switch-off’, we’ve been getting more calls.”

In Canton Ticino, therefore, it is known that we here want see them, but they cannot do much about it. **“There’s an economic and legal problem,”** Franchini explains. “In our programming schedule, there are films, TV series, and sporting events for which we only have the rights for Switzerland. If we intentionally ‘forced’ our signal across the border, we’d have serious problems with the people who gives us the rights for Switzerland.”

So, until one week ago, it was only by luck that we could watch Swiss television. Near the border, the television signal in Canton Ticino was forced a short way past the customs, in order to guarantee full coverage of the country. The signal travels through the air, so it cannot be stopped with precision. However, since the switch-off, with digital technology, the RAI and Mediaset repeaters pointing towards Italy have covered the Swiss signal better, thereby preventing any “unfair” competition.

However, apart from the movies, TV series and matches, **Switzerland also broadcasts high quality programmes**, such as its renowned news, the “weather forecast that never gets it wrong” and documentaries. Can nothing be done for those programmes that belong to RSI? “At least for those, we suggest you **watch them on our official website,**” Franchini explains. “The news programme is put onto our website after a few minutes. There will soon be an interesting documentary about the Mafia available, not to mention other quality productions.”

Some time ago, it was suggested that RSI productions might be rebroadcast in Italy, with a programme schedule of a few hours repeated cyclically. The idea, which emerged in 2005, could also help local television companies to create new channels,

which would be possible thanks to the digital ground-based technology. However, so far, no one knows anything about it. “I haven’t had any requests of this kind,” admits Franchini. “But I’m sure RSI **would assess them carefully**, also because **we often watch Italian television too**, and, after all, we feel part of the same cultural area. There might be linguistic and stylistic differences, but we have a common culture.”

And that is true, because **while we Italians have always had difficulty in watching Swiss television, the Swiss have always seen RAI and Mediaset perfectly**. This is because RAI and Mediaset often have global rights (so, fewer legal problems), and then because, in the small country of Switzerland, cable TV is more widespread, where RAI and Mediaset are almost always part of the offer.

In Bolzano, thanks to some small condition linked to its self-governing status, Swiss television is broadcast integrally. Here in Varese, a few years ago, Swiss television was a favourite topic of the politician, Marco Reguzzoni, and we should not forget that RSI is also part of the cross-border region of Insubria. So, there are the conditions for collaboration. **In the meantime, the fans that cannot see it anymore, should try to find a way to do so, or make do with the Internet.**

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