For a Strong Public Service Broadcasting in Switzerland – No to "No-BILLAG!

UNI MEI and its 140 affiliates representing more than 400 000 media and entertainment workers around the world would like to express our solidarity with all workers and their unions who are campaigning for the sustainability of quality public service media in Switzerland. We join colleagues and activists in your demands for the preservation of strong and independent public service broadcasting.

Switzerland is preparing to vote on the initiative "No-Billag" which, if it passes, will lead to the removal of the licence fee that is the cornerstone of the funding of public service broadcasting. The initiative also prohibits any state subsidies to public service broadcasting. Without a licence fee or state subsidies to fund their activities, 60 public TV and radio channels are facing a threat of closure. Local media and minority-language services could in essence be eradicated. Such hits to the public service broadcasting sector will have a substantial impact on the quality of journalism and the functioning of democracy in Switzerland. Switzerland will be more reliant on foreign media as well as on media that is not truly independent but guided by the market forces.

The initiative will have a substantial impact on the jobs in the sector, directly leading to the loss of 7'000 jobs. When taking into account jobs indirectly linked to the sector, the estimated reduction of jobs could be as high as 13'000 jobs. These jobs represent the cultural know-how of the Swiss nation.

UNI MEI supports the Swiss trade unions in their demand that the "No-Billag" initiative be rejected, to ensure that Switzerland continues to have a strong public service broadcasting sector.

The global community of broadcasting, media and entertainment workers affiliated to UNI Global Union stands with you to preserve the quality and independence of public service media, and to protect the jobs in the sector.

In solidarity,

Johannes Studinger
Head of UNI MEI