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Is it okay to break the law to get a scoop?



It is illegal under Swiss law to record a private conversation without the consent of all participants. Under Art. 179 of the Swiss Penal Code (click [here for the unofficial English version](#), or the official [French](#), [German](#) or [Italian](#) versions), the penalty is up to one year in prison or a fine. The penalty for unlawful entry under Art. 186 is up to three years in prison or a fine. Whether entry on false pretenses with the intent to commit a crime (recording a private conversation without the consent of all participants) constitutes a felony is for prosecutors and courts to say. The publication of illegally obtained information is a crime under Art. 322 and is subject to up to three years in prison or a fine. It is a question for public debate and coalition decision-making whether such possible unlawful behavior by journalists is "abhorrent and repulsive" or whether the public interest in one country overrides from a journalistic and societal standpoint a criminal violation in another.

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