



Rechtsbelehrung für Zeuginnen und Zeugen

ENGLISCH

Extract from the Swiss Criminal Proceedings Order (StPO)

Art. 162 Definition

A witness is a person not involved in the commission of a crime who can make statements serving to solve it, and is not an informant.

Art. 163 Competency of a witness and duty to give evidence

¹ A person is competent to give evidence if he or she is older than 15 years of age and is able to judge with regard to the subject matter of interrogation.

² Every person who is competent to give evidence is under a duty to give truthful evidence; the right to refuse to give evidence remains reserved.

Art. 168 Right to refuse to give evidence by reason of personal relationship

¹ The following may refuse to give evidence:

- a. the husband or wife of the accused person or whoever maintains in material respects a long-term relationship;
- b. whoever has natural children from the accused person;
- c. those related in direct line or by marriage to the accused person;
- d. brothers and sisters and step brothers and step sisters of the accused person as well as the husband or wife of a brother or sister or a step brother or step sister;
- e. brothers and sisters and step brothers and step sisters of a person connected to the accused person by marriage as well as the husband or wife of a brother or sister or step brother or step sister;
- f. foster-parents, foster-children and foster-brothers and sisters of the accused person;
- g. the person appointed as guardian, financial protector or adviser to the accused person.

² The right to refuse to give evidence according to paragraph 1 a. and f. continues if the marriage is dissolved or if the foster relationship no longer exists with a foster family.

³ A registered personal partnership is given equal treatment to marriage.

⁴ The right to refuse to give evidence does not apply if:

- a. the criminal proceedings relate to a crime pursuant to Articles 111-113, 122, 140, 184, 185, 187, 189, 190 or 191 StGB; and
- b. the crime is committed against a person to whom the witness is related according to paragraphs 1-3.

Art. 169 Right to refuse to give evidence for the protection of oneself or the protection of a connected person

¹ A person may refuse to give evidence if he or she would so incriminate themselves with their statement that they:

- a. could be made liable under criminal law;
- b. could be made liable under civil law and if the interest in protection outweighs the interest in criminal prosecution

² The right to refuse to give evidence also exists if the person would incriminate with their statement a person connected to them within the meaning of Article 168 paragraphs 1-3; Article 168 paragraph 4 remains reserved.

³ A person may refuse to give evidence if through their statement a substantial risk to life and health or another serious disadvantage threatens to him or her or a person connected to them within the meaning of Article 168 paragraphs 1-3 which may not be prevented with protective measures.

⁴ A victim of a crime against sexual integrity may in all cases refuse to make a statement which concerns his or her privacy.

Art. 170 Right to refuse to give evidence by reason of official secrecy

¹ Civil servants within the meaning of Article 110 paragraph 3 StGB and their assistants as well as members of authorities and their assistants may refuse to testify to secrets that have been entrusted to them in their official capacity or that they have become aware of in the exercise of their office or their auxiliary activity.

² They are required to testify if they:

- a. are subject to a duty to report; or
- b. have been authorised in writing to testify by their superior authority.

³ The immediately superior authority grants authorisation to make a statement if the interest in establishing the truth outweighs the interest in maintaining secrecy.

Art. 171 Right to refuse to give evidence by reason of professional secrecy

¹ Clergymen, lawyers, defence attorneys, notaries, patent attorneys, doctors, dentists, chiropractors, pharmacists, psychologists as well as their assistants may refuse to give a certificate concerning secrets which have been entrusted to them by virtue of their profession or which they have perceived in the exercise of their profession.

² They are required to testify if they:

- a. are required by law to make notification; or
- b. have been released from the duty to maintain secrecy pursuant to Article 321 (2) StGB by the person entitled to confidentiality or by the authority concerned.

³ The prosecuting authority also takes account of professional secrecy on release from the duty to maintain secrecy, if the person required to maintain confidentiality substantiates that the interest in maintaining secrecy of the person entitled to confidentiality predominates.

⁴ The law concerning legal attorneys dated the 23rd June 2000 remains reserved.

Art. 172 Protection of sources of persons engaged in the media

¹ Persons who are vocationally concerned with publication of information in the editorial part of a medium of information appearing periodically as well as their assistants may refuse to give evidence in respect of the identity of the author or in respect of the contents and sources of their information.

² They are required to testify if:

- a. evidence is required in order to save a person from an immediate risk to life and health;
- b. one of the following crimes cannot be solved without the testimony:
 1. culpable homicide within the meaning of Articles 111-113 StGB,
 2. crimes which carry a term of imprisonment of at least 3 years,
 3. criminal offences pursuant to Articles 187, 189, 190, 191, 197 (3), 260^{ter}, 260^{quinquies}, 305^{bis}, 305^{ter} and 322^{ter}-322^{septies} StGB,
 4. criminal offences pursuant to Article 19 (2) of the law concerning narcotics dated the 3rd October 1951.

Art. 173 Right to refuse to give evidence for further duties to maintain secrecy

¹ Whoever according to the following conditions is required to safeguard professional secrets, is required to give evidence if the interest in establishing the truth outweighs the interest in maintaining secrecy:

- a. Article 321^{bis} StGB;
- b. Article 139 (3) of the Swiss Civil Code;
- c. Article 2 of the federal law dated the 9th October 1981 concerning motherhood advice centres;
- d. Article 11 of the law concerning assistance for victims dated the 23rd March 2007;
- e. Article 15 (2) of the law concerning narcotics dated the 3rd October 1951.
- f. Article 16 letter f of the Health Professions Act of 30 September 2016.

² Persons holding other secrets protected by law are required to give evidence. The presiding judge may release them from the duty to give evidence if they are able to substantiate that the interest in maintaining secrecy outweighs the interest in establishing the truth.

Art. 174 Decision on acceptance of refusal to give evidence

¹ The following decide on acceptability of refusal to give evidence:

- a. in preliminary proceedings: the interrogating authority;
- b. after institution of proceedings: the court.

² The witness may demand the judgement of the appeal instance immediately after pronouncement of the decision.

³ The witness has the right to refuse to give evidence until the decision of the appeal instance.

Art. 175 Exercise of the right to refuse to give evidence

¹ The witness may at any time invoke the right to refuse to give evidence or revoke a waiver.

² Statements which a witness has made after receiving information on the right to refuse to give evidence may be used as evidence including if the witness invokes the right to refuse to give evidence or revokes a waiver of the right of refusal at a later date.

Art. 176 Unjustified refusal to give evidence

¹ Whoever refuses to give evidence without being entitled to do so, may be punished by a fine and required to bear the costs and pay the damages which resulted from the refusal.

² The person under a duty to give evidence will once more, with reference to Art. 292 StGB, be called upon to make a statement, if they persists with their refusal. Criminal proceedings will be instituted on a repeated refusal.

Extract from the Swiss Penal Code (StGB)

Art. 303 False accusation

1. Whosoever shall accuse an innocent person before the Administration of a felony or misdemeanour contrary to better judgement with the intent to bring about a criminal prosecution against him, whosoever shall in another manner make malicious arrangements with the intent to bring about a criminal prosecution against an innocent person, shall be punished by imprisonment or a fine.

2. The punishment shall be a term of imprisonment of up to three years or a fine if the false accusation shall concern a misdemeanour.

Art. 304 Misguidance of the administration of justice

1. Whosoever contrary to better judgement shall report to the Administration that a criminal act has been committed, whosoever shall himself falsely admit commission of an offence to the Administration, shall be punished by imprisonment of up to three years or a fine.

2. The judge may circumvent a punishment in particularly trivial cases.

Art. 305 Aiding and abetting

¹ Whosoever shall assist another in evading prosecution, execution of sentence or execution of the measures provided for in Articles 59-61, 63 and 64, shall be punished by imprisonment of up to three years or a fine.

^{1bis} Whoever shall assist another who is being prosecuted or shall have been sentenced abroad on account of a crime pursuant to Article 101 in evading prosecution there, or implementation of a custodial sentence there, or a measure within the meaning of Articles 59-61, 63 or 64, shall likewise be punished.

² The judge may circumvent a punishment if the offender shall be so closely in a relationship to the accomplice that his conduct shall be pardonable.

Art. 307 False testimony. False opinion. False translation

¹ Whosoever shall make a false statement, submit false findings or a false expert opinion on a point at issue in judicial proceedings as witness, expert witness, translator or interpreter shall be punished by imprisonment of up to five years or a fine.

² The punishment shall be imprisonment of up to five years or a fine of not less than 180 daily rates if the statement, the findings, the expert opinion or the translation shall be supported by an oath or affirmation.

³ The punishment shall be a fine of up to 180 daily rates if the false statement shall refer to circumstances immaterial for the judicial decision.