

# Value added tax (VAT)

## 1. General

Upon importation, the following VAT rates are applied:

- Reduced tax rate of **2.6%** on the importation of the goods that are listed in [Article 25 paragraph 2 letters a and a<sup>bis</sup> of the VAT Act](#).
- Standard tax rate of **8.1%** on the importation of other goods.

The delimitation between goods subject to the reduced tax rate and goods subject to the standard tax rate is determined by [Article 55 of the VAT Act](#) in connection with [Article 25 paragraph 2 letters a and a<sup>bis</sup> of the VAT Act](#). According to the nature of the imported goods, [Articles 49 to 52 of the VAT Ordinance](#) must also be taken into consideration.

The tariff classification has no effect on the VAT rate applicable upon importation. Therefore, the information given about the tax rate in Tares is merely an assessment aid. It has no legal force.

Some tariff headings additionally cover goods subject to the reduced rate as well as goods subject to the standard rate. That is why both rates are displayed on the "Display details" page of these tariff headings. If the "Display details" page contains only the reference 2.6% or 8.1%, it cannot be inferred that the goods classified in the corresponding tariff heading are without exception subject to tax at that rate.

## 2. Reduced tax rate (2.6%)

### 2.1 Water delivered by the mains

### 2.2 Foodstuffs in accordance with the Foodstuffs Act

The importation of foodstuffs (excluding alcoholic beverages) in accordance with Article 4 paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Foodstuffs Act (FoodA; [SR 817.0](#)) is subject to VAT at the reduced rate.

Foodstuffs according to the FoodA, with the exception of alcoholic beverages, are also subject to VAT at the reduced rate if they are used to produce products subject to tax at the standard rate or to produce chemical, pharmaceutical or cosmetic industry products.

Foodstuffs include:

- Substances or products, whether processed, partially processed or unprocessed, intended to be, or reasonably predicted to be, ingested by humans. These also include raw materials, intermediate products and semi-finished products according to Article 2 paragraph 1 sub-paragraph 19 of the Ordinance on Foodstuffs and Utility Articles (FUAO; [SR 817.02](#));
- Food supplements according to Article 1 of the FDHA Ordinance on Dietary Supplements (DietSO; [SR 817.022.14](#));
- Flavourings according to Article 2 paragraph 1 sub-paragraph 25 of the FUAO (flavouring substances, flavouring preparations, thermal process flavourings, smoke flavourings, flavour precursors, other flavourings or mixtures thereof);

For the reduced tax rate, it must be indicated on the label, on the packaging or on the container or in the accompanying documents that the flavourings are intended for use in foodstuffs (Articles 8 and 9 of the Flavourings Ordinance; [SR 817.022.41](#)). However, their actual use is of no importance.

- Additives according to Article 2 paragraph 1 sub-paragraph 24 of the FUAO, i.e. authorised additives according to Annex 1 to the FDHA Ordinance on Additives permitted in Foodstuffs (FoodAO; [SR 817.022.31](#)), such as sweeteners, colours, preservatives, antioxidants, emulsifiers, packaging gases, raising agents, firming agents and thickening agents;

For the reduced tax rate, it must be indicated on the label, on the packaging or on the container or in the accompanying documents that the additives are intended for use in foodstuffs (Articles 9, 9a and 9b of the FoodAO). However, their actual use is of no importance.

- Substances aiding preparation according to Article 2 paragraph 1 sub-paragraph 23 of the FUAO, such as anti-sticking oils for bakery machines, mould release oils for baking tins, extraction solutions which are used in the processing of raw materials, foodstuffs or food components or ingredients and food enzymes that are added to food to perform a technological function in the manufacture, processing, preparation, treatment, packaging, transport or storage of such food;

For the reduced tax rate, it must be indicated on the label, on the packaging or on the container or in the accompanying documents that the food processing aids are intended for the handling and processing of raw materials, foods or their ingredients. However, their actual use is of no importance.

The following are subject to tax at the standard rate:

- Beverages with more than 0.5% ABV;
- Tobacco and tobacco products.

### **2.3 Animals, poultry, fish**

The following are subject to tax at the reduced rate:

- Livestock, i.e. horses, asses, mules, bovine animals, sheep, goats and swine, whether or not for slaughter;
- Live poultry, i.e. fowls of the species *Gallus domesticus*, ducks, geese, turkeys and guinea fowls, whether or not for slaughter;
- Fish fit for human consumption.

### **2.4 Cereals**

### **2.5 Seeds, tubers and bulbs for planting, live plants, cuttings, slips, cut flowers and branches, whether or not in the form of arrangements, bouquets, wreathes and the like**

### **2.6 Forage products, acid for ensilage, animal litter**

The following are subject to tax at the reduced rate:

- Forage products, i.e.:
  - Products for direct use as animal feeds, including insects for amphibians, mice for snakes and live worms and larvae for fish farming;
  - Products of all kinds for the preparation of or for adding to forage products.
- Animal litter for use in livestock farming, e.g., straw, sawdust and peat for stables, cat litter, sand for birds, etc.

### **2.7 Fertilisers, products for the protection of plants, mulches and other covering materials of plant origin**

The following are subject to tax at the reduced rate:

- Fertilisers, i.e.:
  - Natural or artificial nutritive substances for improving the yield of the soil;
  - Additives for fertilisers;
  - Compost;
  - Cultures of micro-organisms for treating soil, seeds or plants;
  - Peat, peat replacement products derived from plant residues (for example, coconut shells) and other organic amendments, whether or not containing nutritive substances;
  - Earth containing added fertiliser for flowers or plants;
  - Products for keeping cut flowers fresh and providing nutrients.
- Products for the protection of plants. These products shall be taken to mean all products contained in the directory of products for the protection of plants approved in Switzerland that is published in electronic format by the Federal Office for Agriculture.
- Covering materials of plant origin (finely chopped materials, wood chips, tree bark, etc.) used as mulches in gardening, agriculture, horticulture and viticulture to reduce weeds or to improve or maintain the soil.

### **2.8 Medicaments**

The following shall be taken to be medicaments subject to tax at the reduced rate:

- Authorised ready-to-use medicinal products and premixed veterinary medicinal products in accordance with [Article 9](#) paragraph 1 of the Federal Act on Medicinal Products and Medical Devices (TPA) and the related finished Galenic products;
- Ready-to-use medicinal products that do not require authorisation under Article 9 paragraph 2 of the TPA, with the exception of human and animal whole blood;
- Ready-to-use medicinal products that have been authorised for a limited period under Article 9 paragraph 4 of the TPA;
- Non-authorised ready-to-use medicinal products under the Articles [48](#) and [49](#) of the Ordinance of on Licensing in the Medicinal Products Sector (MPLO) and [Article 7](#) of the Ordinance of on Veterinary Medicinal Products (VMPO).

## **2.9 Newspapers, magazines, books and other printed matter without advertising character, as well as products with the same function in electronic format**

The following are subject to tax at the reduced rate:

- Printed newspapers and magazines without advertising character

Printed newspapers or magazines without advertising character are printed matter that fulfils the following conditions:

- a) They appear periodically, at least twice a year;
- b) They provide up-to-date information or entertainment;
- c) They always bear the same title;
- d) They are consecutively numbered and contain the date and the frequency of publication;
- e) They are outwardly presented as newspapers and magazines;
- f) They are not made up predominantly of space for entering text or other material.

- Printed books and other printed matter without advertising character

Printed books and other printed matter without advertising character include printed matter which fulfils the following conditions constitutes:

- a) They are in the form of books, brochures or loose leaf books; loose leaf products are books if they consist of a binding cover, fitted with a screw post, spiral or ring binder and the loose leaf pages to be filed therein contain when complete at least 16 pages and the title of the work appears on the binding cover;
- b) Including the jacket and the cover page they contain at least 16 pages, with the exception of children's books, printed music and parts of loose leaf works;
- c) The content is religious, literary, artistic, entertaining, educational, instructive, informative, technical or scientific;
- d) They are not designed to be written in or to store pictures for collection, with the exception of school and instruction books and certain children's books, such as exercise books with illustrations and supplementary text and drawing and painting books with designs and instructions.

- Electronic newspapers and magazines without advertising character

Electronic newspapers or magazines without advertising character include electronic products that fulfil the following conditions:

- a) They are transmitted electronically or offered on data carriers;
- b) They are primarily text or image-based;
- c) They essentially fulfil the same function as the printed newspapers and magazines described above.

Electronic newspapers and magazines without advertising character also include audio newspapers and magazines that largely correspond to the original in terms of content.

- Electronic books without advertising character

Electronic books without advertising character include electronic products that fulfil the following conditions:

- a) They are transmitted electronically or offered on data carriers;
- b) They are self-contained primarily text or image-based individual works that are not interactive;
- c) They essentially fulfil the same function as printed books described above.

Electronic books without advertising character also include audio books that largely correspond to the original in terms of content.

- Advertising character

Printed and electronic products have an advertising character if their content focuses on advertising the commercial activity of the publisher or of a third party on behalf of whom the publisher is acting.

Third parties behind the publisher are:

- persons and businesses on whose behalf the publisher acts, that control the publisher; or
- other persons closely related to the publisher within the meaning of Article 3 letter h of the VATA.

Advertising includes both direct advertising such as advertisements and indirect advertising such as advertorials or infomercials.

## **2.10 Menstrual hygiene products**

The following are subject to tax at the reduced rate:

- Sanitary pads;
- Panty liners;
- Tampons;
- Period underwear;
- Menstrual sponges;
- Menstrual cups.

The reduced tax rate does not apply, for example, to incontinence hygiene products (such as incontinence pantyliners or incontinence underwear) or nappies for adults and children.

## **3. Standard rate (8.1%)**

The following are subject to tax at the standard rate:

- All items not listed under point 2.